

# **TRUTH AND LIFE**

Doctrinal and Ethical Notes on the Bible

G. Wright Doyle, MDiv, PhD

Part II

**THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Volume 8

**THE EPISTLES (OR LETTERS) & REVELATION**

# TRUTH AND LIFE

## DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL NOTES ON THE BIBLE

### PART II

### THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### VOLUME 8

#### THE EPISTLES [OR LETTERS] AND REVELATION

G. Wright Doyle, MDiv, PhD

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Note: *Truth and Life* is a work in progress. Sections will be posted over time and may be incomplete. Check back for new and updated documents. This is *Truth and Life: The New Testament – The Epistles (or Letters) and Revelation (August 2019)*.

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# INTRODUCTION to *TRUTH AND LIFE*

## Origin and Nature of this Book

*Truth and Life: Doctrinal and Ethical Notes on the Bible* grew out of a study that I did with several men over a period of three-and-a-half years. Following the order found in *Search the Scriptures*,<sup>1</sup> a Bible reading guide I used at the beginning of my Christian life, we asked two questions of each passage:

What does it say about the usual topics discussed in books on systematic theology (such as the doctrines of revelation, God, Christ, man, sin, salvation, God's people, and "the last things")?

What does it say about how we should live? That is, what does it say about what is usually called "Christian ethics"?

As time went on, I discovered that this way of looking at the Bible was quite helpful for me, since it required me to look closely at the biblical text and to search it carefully for teachings not only on doctrine – that is, general "truth" – but also on the application of doctrine to daily life. Thus, the title: "Truth and Life." Of course, all that the Bible says is true, and all of it bears upon life. Indeed, Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."<sup>2</sup> We cannot separate doctrine from our proper response to it.

That is why this book includes notes both about general truths revealed by God in the Bible and about ways in which we could apply these truths at home, school, work, and church, and in society. As much as possible, the advice in each "Life" section comes directly from the corresponding passage of the Scriptures.

## *Distinctive Features*

To my knowledge, this book is unique, at least at present.

There are plenty of study Bibles, Bible commentaries of all sorts, and books on systematic theology and on Christian ethics. I am not aware that anything exists that

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<sup>1</sup> Alan M. Stibbs, general editor, *Search the Scriptures: A Three-Year Bible Study Course* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> John 6:63.

provides brief comments on what each passage of the Bible says both about the usual topics [*topoi*, or *loci*] of theology and about ethics.

As a glance at any page of this book will show, the “Truth” sections follow a topical order based on the standard theological categories, as mentioned above. The “Life” sections follow the order of the passage itself and are not arranged topically.

In treating the theology of each passage, I sometimes spend a large amount of time drawing out what we can learn from it about the doctrine of revelation – that is, mostly about the Scriptures themselves (“special revelation”). How God has revealed himself to us in his written Word is foundational to everything else we believe about him and his works in the world and in our lives. Sometimes we also find teaching on what is often called “general revelation” – revealed through our moral constitution, the created order, and the events of history.

You will also see that I devote significant attention to the doctrine of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – which I usually discuss under the headings of “His greatness” and “His goodness.” My goal is to draw our attention away from ourselves and this world so that we may focus again on our great, glorious, and gracious God. Such a reorientation of thinking has been very beneficial to my own soul and life.

After looking at God and his works, we examine what the passage might teach about angels, Satan and demons, mankind, sin, salvation, God’s people, and the last things.

### *Other Characteristics*

Since the Bible is a big book and since the authors of the Scriptures, under God’s inspiration, frequently write about the same topics many times, you will encounter a great deal of repetition here. It simply could not be avoided. Please be patient with me – and with how God has chosen to present what he thinks we need to know! I have found in my own life that I need constant exposure to the same truths day after day, year after year, for them to “sink in” and then be “worked out” into my life.

I have attempted to express myself as concisely as possible. Most sections are presented in outline form for easy reading. I have not aimed for literary elegance or fullness of expression; otherwise, the book would be twice as long. My goal is to give

you as much information as possible in the briefest format. I have written other non-scholarly commentaries and thematic biblical studies in the usual expository style.<sup>3</sup>

*Truth and Life* is not a study Bible or a commentary in the usual sense. It is not at all meant to replace these fundamental aids to understanding the Scriptures, but to be used in conjunction with them. You will not find extensive explanations of historical or cultural backgrounds, word studies, or a verse-by-verse or even paragraph-by-paragraph running commentary.

This book is not exhaustive, but suggestive; much more could have been said. Nor is it an academic publication, though I have drawn upon the writings of learned scholars.

In addition, the wording and format of these notes are not always consistent. I wrote them over a period of several years and did not always adhere to the same format. My editorial assistants and I have tried to make the text consistent as much as possible, but irregularities remain.

In particular, some passages receive very detailed treatment, while others are discussed much more briefly. Further, some include references to a number of parallel or related passages of Scripture, while others merely cite the relevant verse(s) in the section under consideration. Again, this disparity reflects the long time I have spent writing the notes, as well as the amount of energy I had on any particular day! As I said above, the notes are meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive.

Note: When only verse numbers are given, they refer to the chapter (or psalm) being discussed. Thus, in the notes on Romans 1:1–17, “1, 5” means “1:3, 5.” If chapter and verse are given, but no book, the reference is to the book being discussed.

## **My Background**

Though I am not now a professional biblical scholar or an academic theologian, I have had some opportunities to engage in advanced study of the Bible and theology.

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<sup>3</sup> G. Wright Doyle, *Worship and Wisdom: Daily Readings from Psalms and Proverbs with Commentary* (Durham, NC: Torchflame Books, 2015); *Christ the King: Meditations on Matthew* (Durham: Light Messages, 2011); *Jesus: The Complete Man* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2008); and *The Lord's Healing Words: Six Months of Daily Readings from the Bible on Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health (with Commentary)* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2008).

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I majored in Latin but also took three years of classical Greek. After graduation I attended the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. Though it was (and is) a theologically liberal Episcopal school, the seminary faculty included a few outstanding evangelicals, and I was able to learn some things even from those who did not believe that the Bible is God's Word written.

From seminary I moved to the pastorate, serving three small Episcopal churches in Eastern North Carolina for two years. This entailed careful study and exposition of the Scriptures along with daily pastoral visitation and care for the people of these congregations.

In 1971 I began doctoral studies in Classics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with the aim of equipping myself to teach in a seminary. For two years I read Greek and Latin literature under the instruction of some of the finest Classicists in the world. My doctoral exams dealt with the Greek New Testament, Hellenistic philosophy, and early Christian rhetoric – that is, preaching. My dissertation focused on Augustine's theory of the exegesis and exposition of Scripture as outlined in *de Doctrina Christiana*, as well as on how Augustine "applied" his theory to his sermons on the Gospel of John. The year that I spent with this master-student of the Bible has profoundly affected the way I read and teach the Bible. Always, Augustine aimed to communicate the truths of Scripture in a fashion that would change people's lives.

My wife Dori and I went to Asia as missionaries in 1975. After two years of Chinese language study and two years away on furlough, we returned to Taiwan, where I began teaching Greek and New Testament at China Evangelical Seminary, Taipei. Over the next seven years, I labored to help Chinese Christians understand and apply the Bible to their culture. My familiarity with the Bible also benefitted immensely from the five years I spent supervising the translation of Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich's *Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* into Chinese (and then, later, from five more years revising the work).

Since our permanent return to the United States in 1988, I have taught intensive courses on New Testament and Systematic Theology for various seminaries in Taiwan and North America, preached regularly, composed the volumes mentioned in the note on page ii, and continued my daily study of the Bible. I have also learned a great deal from Carl F. H. Henry. I made an abridgment of his six-volume *God, Revelation, and*



*Authority* for publication in Chinese, and I authored an introduction to his *magnum opus*.<sup>4</sup> From him I was taught just how fundamental is the doctrine of revelation.

## Sources

In addition to my own daily reading of the Bible over the past 54 years, other sources have contributed to *Truth and Life*. These are too many to list individually, but here are the main ones:

### *Systematic Theology*

Augustine of Hippo. *Enchiridion; City of God; Confessions; and On Christian Doctrine (Teaching)*. Various editions.

John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960.

Jonathan Edwards. *Religious Affections; The End for Which God Created the World; Charity and its Fruits*; various sermons; and other works. Various editions.

Carl F. H. Henry. *God, Revelation, and Authority*. 6 vols. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976–83.

Douglas F. Kelly. *Systematic Theology*. Vols. 1 and 2. Tain, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2008, 2014.

Matthew Levering. *The Theology of Augustine. An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works*. Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.

Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest. *Integrative Theology: Historical, Biblical, Systematic, Apologetic, Practical*. 3 vols. in 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott. *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

### *Biblical Theology*

Several works of biblical theology have helped to shape my general outlook and interpretative stance:

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<sup>4</sup> G. Wright Doyle, *Carl Henry: Theologian for All Seasons. An Introduction and Guide to Carl Henry's God, Revelation, and Authority* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

Richard Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Philip Edgcumbe Hughes. *Interpreting Prophecy: An Essay in Biblical Perspectives*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.

George Eldon Ladd. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Leon Morris. *The Cross in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.

Leon Morris. *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

Herman Ridderbos. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1975.

### *Study Bibles*

To supplement those mostly older studies, in the composition of this book I have relied heavily upon recently published study Bibles. These contain the results of the best evangelical scholarship. After writing my notes, I mined study Bibles for further information about background, parallel passages in the Scriptures, and generally accepted interpretations. In this way, I hope that I have avoided major errors of interpretation. I freely and gladly acknowledge my debt to the scholars who have contributed to these essential guides for understanding the Bible.

The most useful to me have been:

***ESVSB***: *ESV [English Standard Version] Study Bible*. Wayne Grudem, general editor. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008.

***HCSBSB***: *HCSB [Holman Christian Standard Bible] Study Bible*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010.

***MSB***: *MacArthur Study Bible*. John MacArthur, author and general editor. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 1997.

***NIVSB***: *NIV [New International Version] Study Bible*. Kenneth Barker, general editor. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1985.

***ZNIVSB***: *Zondervan NIV Study Bible*. D. A. Carson, general editor. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

### *Commentaries*

Over the years, I have read a number of commentaries on various parts of the Bible. It would be tedious to list all the volumes that have helped me understand the Scriptures,

but I shall merely acknowledge my debt to the many able scholars who have enriched my understanding of the Scriptures.

Finally, I thank Anna Barnes and Casey Houseworth for their painstaking and skillful editing of my initial draft. They have eliminated many mistakes, made excellent suggestions for improvement, and reduced the inconsistencies to a minimum.

### **The Purpose of *Truth and Life***

Despite all its limitations, this series of doctrinal and ethical notes on the Bible aims to help the ordinary reader discern in the Holy Scriptures what God has said about himself – his nature, will, and ways – and about how we should live in response to his Word.

I pray that God will use these notes to encourage you to read the Bible both *theologically* and *ethically*, with the goal of loving God and your neighbor by the power of the Holy Spirit.

To him be all the glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

G. Wright Doyle

# ROMANS

# Romans 1:1–17

## Truth

---

### Revelation

#### Its content and source

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through messengers chosen by God, including Paul, who was called to be an apostle, 1, 5; and the prophets of Old Testament times, 2.
- ♦ Biblical revelation includes the Old Testament, called “Scriptures” in the New Testament, 2.
- ♦ Biblical revelation came from God and is about God, 1.
- ♦ Biblical revelation focuses on this gospel, the good news of God’s saving his people, 1–4.
- ♦ This gospel is for all people, including Gentiles [nations], 5.
- ♦ And this gospel enters on the Son of God, our Savior, 9.
- ♦ The gospel is meant to create the obedience of faith, that is, first faith in God’s saving Word, and then obedience to God’s revealed will, 5.
- ♦ The gospel is the power of God for all who believe, that is, it brings salvation transforming sinners into followers of God, 16.
- ♦ God’s righteousness is revealed in the gospel, 17.

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as a Trinity of Father (often called “God” in the New Testament), Son (called “Lord” in the New Testament), and Holy Spirit, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is eternal, 1.
- ♦ He determines all events, including the coming of his Son into the world and the journeys of Paul, before time began, 2, 10.
- ♦ He is powerful, able to raise Jesus from the dead, 4.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He promised salvation from sin for his people, through Old Testament prophets, 1–2.

- ♦ He is utterly pure and holy, 4.
- ♦ He gives grace, the grace of salvation, to his chosen people, 5, 7.
- ♦ He loves his people, 7.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing the heart, 9.
- He is righteous, 17.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the truly human descendant of King David, 1, 3, 6, 7.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the promised Messiah who would save his people, 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 16.
- ♦ He is the fully divine Son of God, 4, 9.
- ♦ As the God-man, the Christ, he was appointed “Son of God with power,” that is, “powerful Son of God,” by his resurrection, 4.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh come to us in the flesh, 7.

### His work

- ♦ He died for our sins, 4. *See Romans 5:7, 8.*
- ♦ He rose again from the dead, 4.
- ♦ He chose some men to be apostles of Christ and messengers of the gospel, 1, 5.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is holy, as his name asserts, 4.
- ♦ Being God, he is omnipotent, and raised Jesus from the dead, 4.
- ♦ He is the giver of life, 4. *See Romans 8:11, 13.*

## Salvation

### Its source

- ♦ Salvation comes entirely from God, 2, 5, 16.
- ♦ Salvation comes through Jesus Christ, 5, 7.

### It includes

- ♦ The knowledge of God’s revelation, especially the gospel, 1–3, 17

- ◆ Being effectually called to belong to Christ, 6
- ◆ Being loved by God, 7
- ◆ Being called saints, that is, those who have been set part by the Holy Spirit for God's possession and use, 7
- ◆ God's grace, that is, his unmerited favor, 7
- ◆ Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 7; *see also Romans 5:1.*
- ◆ Life, that is, knowing God and being in his favor, 17
- ◆ Righteousness, that is, imputed righteousness through faith in Christ, 17

### Its recipients

- ◆ It comes to those who believe the gospel, 5, 8, 12, 16, 17.

## The Church

### Its substance

- ◆ The church is "apostolic," because it believes and follows the teachings of the Apostles, 1, 5, 16–17.
- ◆ The church is "catholic," that is, universal, because it is composed of people from all nations, 5, 14.
- ◆ It is "holy," because its members have been set apart by the Holy Spirit and are therefore "saints," people owned by God, 7. *See Romans 8:9–10, 15–17.*
- ◆ The church builds itself up as each member shares his spiritual gift with other members, 11–12. *See Romans 12:1–31 and Ephesians 4:1–16.*

## Life

---

### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read and heed the words of Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Thank God for the grace and peace he has given to us who believe in Christ, 7.
- ◆ Thank God for the salvation he has given us in Christ, 16.
- ◆ Speak words of love [grace] and truth to each other, 7.
- ◆ Thank God for each other, 8.
- ◆ Pray for each other constantly, 9–10.
- ◆ Seek to build others up in their faith by exercising our spiritual gifts for others' benefit, 11–12; chapter 12.
- ◆ Do all we can to communicate the gospel to all sorts of people all around the world, 14.





# Romans 1:18–32

## Truth

---

### Revelation

#### General revelation

- ♦ General revelation comes to all mankind through seeing the things that are made, that is the creation, including humans, 20.
- ♦ General revelation shows that there is a God, 20–21, 32. This God is
  - One who is eternal, powerful, and uniquely “God,” that is, a transcendent Being far “above” us and over us in all ways, 20–21
  - One who is Righteous, 32
  - One who will judge men according to their deeds, 32
- ♦ General revelation leaves us without excuse for our sins (see below), 20.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is invisible, 20.
- ♦ He is eternal, 20.
- ♦ He is all–powerful, 20.
- ♦ He created the visible world, 20, 25.
- ♦ He is God, the unique transcendent Ruler of the world, 21.
- ♦ He is glorious, that is, uniquely beautiful in every way, 23.
- ♦ He is incorruptible, that is, not subject to any decay or degeneration, 23.
- ♦ He governs the hearts and destinies of men, 24, 26, 28.
- ♦ He has the authority to judge the world, 32.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He has revealed himself generally in the things that he has made, 19.
- ♦ He is righteous, 18, 32.
- ♦ He responds to sin with righteous wrath and judgment, 18, 32.

### Mankind

Our human nature: As we are now, we are all fallen into a state of incurable sin, 18–32.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Ungodliness, that is, a lack of worshiping and obeying God, 18
- ♦ Unrighteousness, that is, a failure to do what is right, 18
- ♦ Suppressing the truth we know about God, 18
- ♦ Not glorifying God as God, that is, not worshiping him, 21; *see Psalm 50:23.*
- ♦ Not thanking God, 20
- ♦ Imagining that we are wise, 22
- ♦ Exchanging our glorious God for images of mortal men or animals, 23
- ♦ Disordered desires, that is, evil lusts, 24
- ♦ Dishonoring our bodies through sexual sin, including homosexual desire and practice, 24, 26–27
- ♦ Believing lies, 25
- ♦ Worshiping any creature, rather than our Creator God, 25
- ♦ Not wanting to keep God in our minds, 28
- ♦ All the things listed in verses 29–31
- ♦ Approving of those who commit sin, 32.

*Note: This would include enjoying dramas, etc., that portray sin as good and acceptable.*

### Its consequences

- ♦ God's wrath, 18
- ♦ Thinking that is futile, that is, thoughts that do not accord with reality, especially moral reality, and thus incapable of bringing us any good, 21
- ♦ Increasing "darkness" of mind, that is, an inability to know God or what is good, 21
- ♦ Becoming utter fools, 22
- ♦ Worship of what cannot benefit us, 23
- ♦ Sexual uncleanness that goes from bad to worse, 24–27
- ♦ Being given over to a debased mind, 28
- ♦ An ever-deepening spiral into sin, 29–32
- ♦ The righteous judgment of God, 32

# Life

---

## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Observe the created order and worship God, its Maker.
- ♦ Honor and glorify God and give him thanks.
- ♦ Refuse to put our hope, trust, love, adoration upon anything or anyone but God, 25.
- ♦ Avoid people and situations that would tempt us to enjoy and approve of sin, 32.

*Note: That would include most popular entertainment today.*

# Romans 2:1–16

## Truth

---

### Revelation

#### General revelation

- ♦ Most interpreters believe that 2:14–15 refers to non-Christian Gentiles, who have God's moral law "written in their hearts," that is, in their conscience, 15.
- ♦ C.E.B. Cranfield, however, in his commentary on Romans, argues persuasively that Paul here described Christian Gentiles, who do not by nature have the Law of Moses, but who now, by the Holy Spirit, have the moral law of God written on their hearts. *See Romans 7:16, 22–23, 25.*

#### Special revelation

- ♦ Special revelation includes the Old Testament, beginning with the Torah, the five books of Moses, often called "the Law," with an emphasis here upon the moral law as summarized in the Ten Commandments, 12–15.
- ♦ The gospel of Jesus Christ was later revealed through the Apostles, including Paul, 16.
- ♦ This gospel includes the pronouncement of God's righteous judgment, rewarding obedience and punishing disobedience, 12–16.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ As Creator and King, he has the authority and power to judge our conduct, 2, 3, 5–10, 12–13, 16.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing the thoughts of our hearts and all our actions, even those done in secret, 1–2, 5–10, 16.
- ♦ He is eternal, 7.
- ♦ He has life in himself and can grant it to others, 7.
- ♦ He possesses in himself glory, honor, and immortality, and can confer these on those who trust and obey him, 7, 10.
- ♦ He revealed his will to his people through the Mosaic Law, 12–16.
- ♦ He revealed the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Apostle Paul, 16.

### His goodness

- ♦ He judges according to the truth, 2.
- ♦ He judges righteously, 5–10.
- ♦ He judges impartially, 11.
- ♦ He is good: forbearing, longsuffering [patient], giving us time to repent, 4.

*Note: See 2 Peter 3:9, which, by the way, is about Christians, not unbelievers. Not wanting any of his people to perish, God gives Christians time to repent before they die or Christ returns.*

- ♦ He will punish all evil thoughts and deeds, 5–10.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human man from Nazareth, 16.
- ♦ He is the divine–human Christ, the Messiah sent by God to save us from our sins, 16.

His work: He will judge every person according to his works, including thoughts, 1. *See Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12.*

## Mankind

### Our nature

- ♦ We tend to criticize others for things of which we ourselves are guilty, 1–2.
- ♦ We have a conscience that either approves or rebukes our conduct, 15. *See 13:5; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 4:2; 8:7, 12; 10:25, 29; 2 Corinthians 5:11; and 1 Timothy 4:2.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Judging others for things of which we are also guilty, 1–3; *see Matthew 7:1–5.*
- ♦ Imagining that we shall escape God’s judgment for our sins, 3
- ♦ Displaying hardness and impenitence of heart, 5
- ♦ Being self–seeking, 8
- ♦ Not obeying the truth, 8

### Its consequences

- ♦ God's judgment on the final day, 3, 8–9
- ♦ God's indignation, wrath; trouble and anguish, 5, 8–9
- ♦ Perishing, that is, eternal loss of fellowship with God; spiritual death, 12

## Salvation

### Its nature and benefits

- ♦ A just recompense for good deeds, 6
- ♦ Eternal life, 7
- ♦ Glory, honor, immortality, and peace from God, 10
- ♦ Having the moral law written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit, 15; *see Romans 2:2; 8:2–4, 13; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26–27; and Hebrews 10:16.*
- ♦ Justification: that is, vindication from God for those who, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, have demonstrated their faith by doing good works, 13; *see James 1:22–23; 2:14–26.*
- ♦ Power to obey God's commands, 14

### Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who

- ♦ Repent of their sins, 4
- ♦ Seek glory and honor and immortality from God, 7
- ♦ Patiently continue to do good, by God's power and grace, 7, 10

## The Church

Its members: The church consists of people of all races and religious backgrounds, including Jews and Gentiles, 10, 14.

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ♦ At the end of this age, God will come to judge all people, 2, 3, 5, 6–12, 16.
- ♦ He will render to each person according to what he has done, 6. *See Psalm 62:12.*
- ♦ To those who have, by his grace, sought to do his will, he will give eternal life, along with glory and honor and everlasting peace, 7, 10.

- ◆ Upon those who have persistently refused to repent or to turn from their wicked ways, he will inflict terrible wrath and indignation, 5, 8, tribulation and anguish, 9, and eternal destruction [they will “perish”], 12.

## Life

---

### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Avoid criticizing others for things which we ourselves are guilty, 1–3.

*Note: This does not mean that we refrain from all moral evaluation of others, but that we do not self-righteously regard them as morally inferior to ourselves.*

- ◆ Take advantage of God’s patience to repent of our sins and seek to follow his ways, 4.
- ◆ Trust God to judge all people justly at the end of the age, 6.
- ◆ Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to cause us to seek eternal glory and honor rather than the fleeting vanities of this world, 7.
- ◆ Preach a gospel message that includes the Last Judgment and its eternal consequences; urge Christians and unbelievers to repent of their sins before it is too late, 16.

# Romans 2:17–29

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ It includes “the law,” that is, the Law of Moses, contained in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, especially Exodus 20 – Leviticus 27, and the book of Deuteronomy, 17–18.
- ♦ God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the disobedience of his people, 24. *See Ezekiel 16:27; 36:22; and Isaiah 52:5.*
- ♦ It emphasizes circumcision of the heart, that is, a heart that sincerely seeks to know God and obey his will, 29. *See Leviticus 26:41; Deuteronomy 30:6; and Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25–26.*

Its literary forms: In Romans, Paul often uses the “diatribe” style employed by ancient Greek and Roman philosophers when debating with their ideological opponents; this style features rhetorical questions and other figures of speech.

### God

His Triune nature: God is a Trinity of three equal persons: Father [“God”], Son, and the Holy Spirit, 17, 23, 29.

His greatness: He is omniscient, knowing the heart, 29.

His goodness

- ♦ He revealed his will to his people in the Law of Moses, which was true and excellent, 17–20.
- ♦ He identified himself with his people, 24.
- ♦ He praises those who serve him from the heart, 29.



## The Holy Spirit

His work: He comes into the hearts of God's people and transforms them morally, 29.  
*See Romans 8:2, 13; and Ezekiel 36:27.*

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our fallen state, we are very prone to criticizing others for things we ourselves do.

## Sin

It includes

- ♦ Boasting in one's relationship with God, especially one's knowledge of God's Word and will, 17–24
- ♦ Hypocrisy, that is, teaching one thing and doing the opposite, 21
- ♦ Stealing, 21
- ♦ Adultery, 22
- ♦ Idolatry, 22
- ♦ Any transgression of God's law, 27

## Salvation

Its substance: Salvation includes inner transformation by the Holy Spirit, leading to a desire and ability to obey God, 26–29.

## The Last Things

The final judgment: At the end of the age, there will be a judgment of all people, in which the just will be vindicated and unrepentant sinners will be shamed, 27.

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Beware of religious pride based on our knowledge of the Bible or our participation in religious rites, such as baptism the Christian equivalent of circumcision.

- ♦ Search our own hearts to see whether we are obeying God before we instruct or censure others.
- ♦ Ask God to transform us inwardly by the Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Seek praise from God, not from people, 29.

# Romans 3:1–19

## Truth

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### Revelation

Special revelation: Special revelation, unlike general revelation, was given only to God's people the Jews, and then in the New Testament to the apostles and prophets chosen by God, 2.

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones, especially in this section of Romans.

- ♦ “To them were committed the oracles of God,” 2; *see Deuteronomy 4:5–8 and Psalm 147:19–20.*
- ♦ “Some (Jews) did not believe,” 3; *see 1 Corinthians 10:1–10 and Hebrews 4:2.*
- ♦ “Let God be true but every man a liar,” 4; *see Psalms 62:9; 116:1.*
- ♦ “That You may be justified . . . when You are judged,” 4; *see Psalm 51:4.*
- ♦ “For then how would God judge the world?” 6; *see Genesis 18:25.*
- ♦ “And why not say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come?’” 8; *see Romans 5:20.*
- ♦ “Both Jews and Greeks . . . are all under sin,” 9; *see Romans 1:18–2:24; 3:19; and Galatians 3:22.*
- ♦ “There is none righteous . . .,” 10–11; *see Psalms 14:1–3; 53:1–3; and Ecclesiastes 7:20.*
- ♦ Throat, tongue, lips, mouth, 13–14; *see Psalms 5:9; 140:3; 10:7.*
- ♦ Feet, 15–17; *see Isaiah 59:7–8.*
- ♦ Eyes, 18; *see Psalm 36:1.*
- ♦ “No fear of God,” 18; *see Psalm 36:1.*

Its literary forms: In Romans, Paul often uses the “diatribe” style employed by ancient Greek and Roman philosophers when debating with their ideological opponents; this style features rhetorical questions and other figures of speech, 1–9.

### Its purpose

- ♦ God's revelation is meant to communicate truth about God, 4, 7.
- ♦ God's law, especially the Law of Moses, is meant to give us a knowledge of our sin, 20.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ As Creator and King of the universe, he will judge the world, 6, 19.
- ♦ He can use even the sins of men to glorify himself, 7.

### His goodness

- ♦ He chose Abraham and his descendants to be his special people, 1–2.
- ♦ He revealed his will and his ways to his people Israel, using spoken and written words, 2, 4, 19.
- ♦ He is faithful, 3.
- ♦ He is true and reliable, 4, 7.
- ♦ He judges and acts with complete justice, even though men may “judge” him to be wrong, 4.
- ♦ He inflicts wrath on unrepentant sinners, 5.

## Christ

His person: He is the only man who was not guilty of all the sins mentioned in 10–18.  
*See 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22; 3:18; and John 2:1.*

*Note: Remember that Peter and John spent three years in intimate fellowship with Jesus and knew him thoroughly.*

## Mankind

### Our fallen state

- ♦ In our fallen state, we are all guilty of sin before God, 9, 19.
- ♦ We are not able to establish our righteousness by keeping the moral law of God, 20.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Unbelief, 3
- ♦ Lying and deceit, 4, 13
- ♦ Presuming on God’s grace in order to continue in sin, 8
- ♦ Distorting the clear gospel of God, 8
- ♦ Not understanding God, despite his clear revelation, 11

- ♦ Not seeking after God, 11
- ♦ Turning away from God's revealed way, 12
- ♦ Not doing good on a persistent basis, 12
- ♦ Malicious speech, 13
- ♦ Cursing, 14
- ♦ Bitter words, 14
- ♦ Murder, 15
- ♦ Not fearing God, 18

#### Its consequences

- ♦ The eternal wrath of God, 5
- ♦ The just judgment of God, 6
- ♦ Condemnation by God, 8
- ♦ Destruction, 16
- ♦ Misery, 16
- ♦ Lack of peace, 17

## The People of God

Their identity: In the Old Testament, God's people were the Jews, the descendants of Abraham, who kept God's covenant by circumcising their sons, and to whom were given the "oracles of God," that is, the writings of the Old Testament, 1-2.

## The Last Things

#### The final judgment

- ♦ At the end of the age, God will judge the world, 6.
- ♦ At that time, he will inflict wrath upon unrepentant sinners, 5.
- ♦ He will condemn and punish all who have maliciously maligned the gospel and his messengers, 9.

## Life

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#### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for revealing to us, even to Gentile Christians, his will and his ways in the Scriptures.
- ♦ Believe that God's judgment is always just.

- ♦ Read the Bible, including the Old Testament, to understand our true condition before God.
- ♦ Renounce any attempt to justify ourselves before God on the basis of our ethical performance.
- ♦ Preach a message that includes specific elucidation of the nature of sin.
- ♦ Preach a message that warns people of the coming wrath of God upon all unrepentant sinners.
- ♦ Thank God for sending Jesus to save us from our sins!

# Romans 3:21–31

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its nature and content

- ♦ The Old Testament is often called “the Law and the Prophets,” 21.
- ♦ The Old Testament was revealed by God, 21.
- ♦ The Old Testament reveals God’s righteousness, 21
- ♦ “The law” sometimes refers to the entire Pentateuch, including the narratives, 31. *See Romans 4:1–4.*

*Note: Paul here is not referring to the moral law or the Mosaic Law, but the entire narrative of the Pentateuch, which shows that God justified his people by faith. See Genesis 15:6.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is glorious, 23.
- ♦ He has the authority to punish sin and to provide an alternative way of salvation, 25.
- ♦ He is eternal, 25.
- ♦ He is the God of all mankind, 29.
- ♦ He is unique, the only God, 30. *See Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4; and James 2:19.*

#### His goodness

- ♦ He is righteous, and confers a righteous status on his people, 22, 24–26, 30.
- ♦ He retains his justice (righteousness) even when not punishing sinners in Old Testament days and when justifying sinners in our age, because he has satisfied his justice by punishing sin in the person and death of Jesus Christ, 25–26.
- ♦ He is patient and long-suffering, slow to anger, 25. *See Exodus 34:6 and Psalm 103:8.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the man Jesus, fully human, 2, 24.
- ♦ He is the divine–human Messiah, the Christ, who came to save his people from their sins, 22, 24.

### His work

- ♦ He died on the cross for our redemption, 24. *See Titus 2:14 and Galatians 2:20.*
- ♦ He offered himself as a propitiation, that is, a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice in our place and for our sins, 25. *See Leviticus 16:15–16; Isaiah 53:6; Mark 10:45; John 1:21; and 1 John 2:2.*

## Mankind

### Our fallen state

- ♦ In our fallen state, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory that God intended us to display in our lives, 23.
- ♦ We are utterly incapable of justifying ourselves by keeping God’s moral law, 27–30.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Any failure to reflect the moral excellence = glory of God in our lives, 23
- ♦ Boasting in our moral performance or in our salvation by God. *See Ephesians 2:9.*

## Salvation

### Its source

- ♦ It comes solely from God, 22, 24, 25, 26, 30.
- ♦ It comes solely from God’s grace, that is, his unmerited favor given to us, 24.

### Its benefits

- ♦ God’s righteousness is given to those who believe, that is, the status of being righteous before God, 21–22, 26.



- ◆ This conferral of the status of righteousness is also called “justification,” or being “justified,” 24, 26.

*Note: Proponents of a “New Perspective on Paul” deny this interpretation of justification. Their arguments have been ably refuted by evangelical scholars, however. These notes assume the correctness of the traditional understanding of justification by faith.*

- ◆ It includes redemption, that is, being freed from slavery to sin, Satan, death, and God’s wrath through the payment of a price, the violent death = blood, of Jesus, 24. *See Exodus 6:6; 15:13; and Psalm 111:9 for the Old Testament background, which was the redemption by God of his people from slavery in Egypt, the cost of which was the firstborn of all the Egyptians and lamb slain for each household of the Jews.*

Its recipients: It includes all those who truly believe in Jesus Christ, 22, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for sending Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins and the one through whom we receive justification and redemption.
- ◆ Preach a gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, through the saving work of Jesus Christ alone, as testified in the Scriptures alone.

# Romans 4:1–12

## Truth

---

### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “Abraham believed God . . .,” 3. *See Genesis 15:6 and Galatians 3:6.*
- ♦ “The sign of circumcision, . . . while still uncircumcised,” 11; *see Genesis 17:11 and Galatians 3:15–18.*

### God

His greatness: He has the power to give life and to multiply humans, 3. *See Genesis 15:5–6.*

#### His goodness

- ♦ He promised childless Abraham that he would make his descendants as numerous as the stars visible in heaven, 3. *See Genesis 15:5.*
- ♦ He justifies the ungodly (on the basis of the saving atonement of Jesus Christ), 5–9. *See Romans 3:24–26.*

### The People of God

#### Their identity

- ♦ God chose Abraham and his descendants to be his special people, 1.
- ♦ Now, all who believe are spiritual children of believing Abraham, 12.

### Salvation

#### It includes

- ♦ Justification, that is, the conferral [imputation, reckoning, accounting] of a righteous status before God, apart from the performance of good works, 2–8

*Note: This is a legal, forensic term, referring to a sentence of acquittal by a judge. It does not refer to moral transformation, as Roman Catholics say.*

- ♦ Forgiveness; the covering over of sin; non-imputation of sin to one, 7–8; *see Psalm 32:7–8; Psalm 51:1–2; Ephesians 1:7; and 1 John 1:9.*

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God's free grace, not from our works, 4–6.

Its recipients

- ♦ All those who truly believe in Jesus Christ receive justification, forgiveness, salvation, 3, 5–8, 9, 11–12.
- ♦ Salvation comes to believing people of all races and nations, 9–12. *See Galatians 2:28; and Revelation 5:9; 7:9.*

## Life

---

Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for giving us justification and forgiveness simply on the basis of his grace, received by faith.
- ♦ Refuse to boast in our salvation.
- ♦ Believe that God really does acquit and count righteous those who trust in him.
- ♦ Preach a gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone, as revealed in the Scriptures alone.

# Romans 4:13–25

## Truth

---

### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ The promises to Abraham, 13; *see Genesis 17:4–6; 22:17–18.*
- ♦ The law brings about wrath, 15; *see Romans 3:9–19; 7:7–11.*
- ♦ Faith and grace, 16; *see Romans 3:24; Galatians 3:22; and Ephesians 2:8.*
- ♦ Abraham, the father of us all, 16; *see Isaiah 1:2.*
- ♦ “A father of many nations,” 17; *see Genesis 17:5.*
- ♦ “So shall your descendants be,” 18; *see Genesis 15:6.*
- ♦ Abraham’s and Sarah’s advanced age, 19; *see Genesis 17:17.*
- ♦ Abraham’s faith in God’s promise, 17, 18, 20, 21; *see Genesis 15:6.*
- ♦ “It was accounted [reckoned, credited] to him for righteousness,” 3; *see Genesis 15:6.*
- ♦ Jesus was “delivered up because of our offenses,” 25; *see Isaiah 53:4–5 and 1 Corinthians 15:7.*
- ♦ Jesus was raised up from the dead, 25; *see Romans 1:4; 6:4–5 and 1 Corinthians 15:4–8.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He owns the whole world and can give it to whom he pleases, 13.
- ♦ He is eternal and can make promises concerning the distant future, 13.
- ♦ He is omniscient and thus able to foresee the future, 13.
- ♦ He has the power to multiply a family and to give it authority over other nations, 17.
- ♦ He is omnipresent, 17.
- ♦ He has life in himself and can thus give life to others, 17.
- ♦ He has all power, including the power to raise the dead, 17. *See Romans 4: 21, 25; 8:11.*

- ♦ As eternal and omnipotent Creator, he brought the world out of nothing; likewise, he brought Isaac out of non-being, 17. *See Genesis 1:1; 21:1-3.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He chose Abraham and promised that he would inherit the world, that is, that his descendants would be innumerable and would inherit the world, 13.
- ♦ He promised this to Abraham entirely by grace, before Abraham had done anything morally good, 16.
- ♦ He gives grace to all who believe, 16.
- ♦ He gives new life – both physical and spiritual – to those who believe, 17. *See Romans 6:4, 8; 8:10-11.*
- ♦ He has grafted believing Gentiles into the spiritual family of Abraham, 16. *See Romans 1:16-17; 9:6-9; 11:17-18; and Ephesians 1:11-14; 2:11-22; 3:6.*
- ♦ He sent Jesus to die for our sins and rise for our justification, 24-25. *See Romans 3:24-25; 5:6-10.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human man from Nazareth, 24.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh in the flesh, 24. *See Philippians 2:6-10.*

### His work

- ♦ He was delivered up for our sins. *See Matthew 20:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:7.*
- ♦ He was raised up for our justification, 25.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Transgression of God's law, 15
- ♦ Unbelief in God's promises, 20

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God's free, unmerited grace, as expressed in his promises, and completely apart from our moral efforts, 13, 16, 17, 21.

### Its benefits

- ♦ Inheriting the world, 13
- ♦ Imputation of righteousness, that is, justification, 22–24

### Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who

- ♦ Believe in God's written promises, 13–24
- ♦ Believe in Jesus Christ as risen Lord and Savior, 24

## The Church

Its members: The church consists of all people of any race or nation who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, 16–8, 23–25.

## The Last Things

### The new creation

- ♦ God will raise his people from the dead, as he raised Jesus, 17, 24.
- ♦ God will give the “world,” that is, the new heavens and new earth, to those who had believed in his promises, 13–17. *See Revelation 21–22.*

*Note: Pre-millennial eschatology emphasizes God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the Promised Land (Israel) and holds that this promise will be literally fulfilled when Christ returns for the first time (of several times) to set up a kingdom on earth for one thousand years. This passage seems to make that interpretation unlikely, and to focus instead on one return of Christ to set up an eternal kingdom on earth.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Read the Bible to know his will for us – the law of God – and to repent of our sins, 15.
- ♦ Trust in Jesus Christ alone as the one who died for our sins and was raised up so that his death could be applied to us as justification by faith alone, 24–25.
- ♦ Thank God for including us in the “seed” or among the descendants of Abraham, since we believe God's promises just as he did, 16.
- ♦ Hold on to God's written promises in the Bible, regardless of circumstances, as Abraham did, trusting that God can perform what he has promised, 18–21.

*Note: This means that we must understand how to discern which promises of the Bible apply to us now and which were spoken only to certain people for a certain time. For example: We are not recipients of God's promise to Israel that they would inherit the land of Israel or any other parcel of real estate, so we cannot claim the promise that any place that our foot touches will be ours, as some falsely claim.*

- ♦ Look eagerly for our final inheritance of a new heaven and new earth. See *1 Peter 1:3–5* and *2 Peter 3:13*.

# Romans 5:1–11

## Truth

---

### Revelation

Its source: God reveals himself in and through history, especially the history of his chosen people Israel, and supremely through Jesus Christ – his incarnation, life, death, and resurrection, 8.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father [“God”], Son, and Holy Spirit, 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is the heavenly King, into whose royal presence he grants access to some, 2.
- ♦ He is glorious, and grants glory to those who trust in Christ and follow in his ways, 2.
- ♦ He uses all events to his glory, 2–4. *See Romans 8:28.*
- ♦ He has the authority and power to inflict wrath upon unrepentant sinners, 9.
- ♦ He has life and gave it to Jesus in raising him from the dead, so that Christ lives forever, 10. *See John 5:26 and Hebrews 7:25.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He has effected reconciliation with himself for sinners who believe in Jesus Christ, 1, 11. *See 2 Corinthians 5:19–21.*
- ♦ He grants constant access to his presence to those who continue to believe, 2.
- ♦ He promises glorification to believers in Christ, 2. *See Romans 8:18, 20; Philippians 3:20; and Colossians 2:27.*
- ♦ He is full of love, and gives this love to his people, 5, 8. *See Galatians 2:20; and Ephesians 2:4; 3:17–19; 4:32–5:1.*
- ♦ He gives the Holy Spirit, that is, himself, to those who believe in Christ, 5.
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to die for sinners, 8. *See Romans 8:32.*



# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh come in the flesh, 1, 11.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the true man from Nazareth, 1, 11.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah, the God-man who came to save his people from their sins, 1, 11.

## His work

- ♦ By his atoning death, he has secured for believers reconciliation with God, 1, 10, 11.
- ♦ He has also provided for them constant access to the grace of God the Father through faith, 2.
- ♦ He has given them the sure hope of one day being glorified, 2. *See 8:18, 20; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:27; and 1 Thessalonians 1:12.*
- ♦ He died for the ungodly, 6, 8.
- ♦ He shed his blood for us, 9.
- ♦ He rose again from the dead and lives eternally, 10.

# The Holy Spirit

## His person and work

- ♦ He is the love of God in person, 5.
- ♦ He has been poured into the hearts of those who trust in Christ, 5. *See Acts 2:33.*
- ♦ He has been given to believers by God the Father and God the Son, 5. *See John 14:16, 23, 26; 15:26; 16:7.*

# Mankind

## Our fallen state: We are

- ♦ Morally weak and without strength, 6
- ♦ Ungodly, 6
- ♦ Capable of some acts of righteousness and goodness, 7
- ♦ Sinners, 8

- ◆ Enemies of God, alienated from him because of our evil deeds, 10; *see Colossians 1:21.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ◆ Ungodliness, that is, a lack of trust, love, and obedience towards God, 6; *see Romans 1:18–23.*
- ◆ Sinful actions and attitudes, 8; *see Romans 1:22–32.*

### Its consequences

- ◆ Lack of peace with God; alienation from him, 1
- ◆ God's wrath, 9
- ◆ A state of hostility with God, 10

## Salvation

### Its source

- ◆ It comes entirely from God's grace, 2.
- ◆ It comes through Jesus Christ, 1.
- ◆ It is effected in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is a gift of God, 5.

### Its nature and benefits

- ◆ Justification, that is, being considered righteous by God, 1, 9
- ◆ Peace with God, 1
- ◆ Access to God's throne of grace, 2
- ◆ The hope of eternal glory, 2
- ◆ Joy amidst trouble, 3
- ◆ Growth in moral character, 3–4
- ◆ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 5
- ◆ Salvation from God's wrath, 9–10
- ◆ Rejoicing in God himself, 11; *see Philippians 4:4.*

### Its recipients

- ◆ Salvation comes to those who believe in Jesus Christ, 1.

## The Last Things

### The last days

- ♦ Believers in Christ will be given glorified bodies that cannot sin, 2. *See Romans 8:18, 20; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:27; and 1 Thessalonians 1:12.*
- ♦ God will pour out his wrath upon unrepentant sinners, 9.
- ♦ God's people will be entirely "saved" from sin and all its consequences, 10.

## Life

---

### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for making us right with himself through Jesus Christ and for all the other benefits of salvation.
- ♦ Rejoice in troubles.
- ♦ Trust in God's love at all times since he has demonstrated it for us once and for all by sending Jesus to die for us.
- ♦ Rejoice in God and in his love for us.

# Romans 5:12–21

## Truth

---

### Revelation

#### Its cumulative fullness

- ♦ Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.
- ♦ The Old Testament contains many “types” of Jesus Christ; these are persons (like Moses), institutions (like the priesthood and sacrificial system), and even structures (like the Tabernacle and the Temple) that point towards the fulfillment of God’s redemptive purposes in Jesus Christ, 14.

#### Its content: Biblical revelation includes

- ♦ The Pentateuch (five books of Moses), including the narrative portions of Genesis, 12–21

*Note: These early chapters of Genesis are assumed to be historical by all other writers of the Bible, as well as Jesus. They describe events which happened in history.*

- ♦ The Law of Moses, 13–14, 20
- ♦ The revelation of God’s grace in the propitiatory death of Jesus Christ, 15–19

#### Its literary forms: The Bible uses literary features to communicate its message.

- ♦ To emphasize the abundance of grace contrasted with the consequences of sin Paul uses more words to describe the effects of God’s saving work for us in Christ than he does in describing sin and its baneful results, 16–18, 20–21.

#### Its purpose

- ♦ The law was given to convict people of their sins, 13.
- ♦ The law was given to aggravate sin, 20.
- ♦ The revelation of grace in Jesus Christ came to bring life, 21.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ As eternal Creator, he is the source of all life, and has the power to confer life or inflict death upon people, 12, 14, 17, 18, 21.
- ♦ As Creator and King of the universe, he holds the authority and power to act as universal Judge, both to acquit and to condemn all human beings, 13–21.

### His goodness

- ♦ He grants “the free gift” of grace – that is, forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, and eternal life – to all who trust in Christ, 15–21.
- ♦ He gives “superabundant” grace that overcomes the effects of sin, 16–21.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, who was liable to death, 15, 1–19, 21.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed and divine–human Messiah, sent by God to save his people from their sins, 15, 17, 21.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh come in the flesh, 21.
- ♦ He is the federal head and representative of all the redeemed, 14–21.

### His work

- ♦ He performed one “righteous act,” that is, his self–offering as a sacrifice for sin, 18.
- ♦ He obeyed God’s will on our behalf as our representative, 19.
- ♦ He rose from the dead, as is implied in 21.

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ We are all “in Adam,” that is, connected to him as our federal head and representative, 12–21.
- ♦ We are all, therefore, liable to death because of Adam’s sin, 12, 14, 15, 17, 21.
- ♦ As a result of Adam’s sin, we are all under God’s righteous condemnation, 16, 18.
- ♦ We are all, therefore, reckoned as “sinners” by God, both by our relationship to Adam and by our own active sins, 19.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Disobedience of God's oral command, that is, transgression of God's known will, 12, 14
- ♦ Disobedience of the Law of Moses, or any other written command of God, including those in the New Testament, 13
- ♦ Disobedience of the moral code written on the conscience of each person, 14; *see Romans 1:28-32.*

### Its consequences

- ♦ Death, physical and spiritual, 12, 14, 15, 17, 2; *see Romans 6:33; 8:10, 13; and 1 Corinthians 15:22.*
- ♦ God's judgment, 16; *see Romans 1:32; 2:3, 5, 16.*
- ♦ Condemnation by God, 18; *see Romans 3:8.*

## Salvation

### Its source

- ♦ God's free grace, 15, 16, 17, 21; *see Ephesians 2:8-10.*
- ♦ The saving work of Jesus Christ, 15, 17-19, 21; *see Romans 5:8-11.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ Justification, that is, the status of being counted righteous before God, 16, 17, 19, 21; *see Romans 3:24; 4:3-8; 5:1; and Galatians 2:16; 3:24.*
- ♦ Reigning in eternal life, 17, 21; *see Romans 8:2.*

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who believe in Jesus Christ: as implied by the repeated use of "grace," "free gift," and "justification," 16-17, 21; *see Romans 3:22, 24; 4:1-9, 16.*

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ♦ God will condemn and punish with eternal death unrepentant and unbelieving sinners, 12, 16, who will be consigned to everlasting death, 12, 21.
- ♦ God will justify and reward with eternal life all who have trusted in Christ, 16, 17, 19, 21.

# Life

---

## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God constantly for delivering us from condemnation and death through the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- ♦ Thank and praise him for his superabundant grace that overcomes and overwhelms all our sins, 20–21.

# Romans 6

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its content: Biblical revelation consists of

- ♦ The Law of Moses, contained in the Pentateuch, 14
- ♦ The doctrines of grace revealed in the New Testament in the Gospels that tell us of the earthly career of Christ, 4, 9–10, and the teachings of the Apostles in the Epistles, 17

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 4, 11, 13.

His greatness

- ♦ He possesses unique, glorious power, as shown in the resurrection of Jesus, 4–5, 9.
- ♦ He possesses eternal life, 10, 22–23.
- ♦ He is able to break the power of sin in humans, 4, 6, 11, 14, 18.
- ♦ He is omnipresent, being “alive” to all those who trust in Christ, 11.

His goodness

- ♦ He sent Jesus to die for us to save us from our sins, 3, and raised him from the dead, 9–10.
- ♦ He gives new life to those who trust in Christ, 4, 8, 11, 13.
- ♦ He is righteous and grants the power to be righteous to his people, 13.
- ♦ He is holy and grants holiness to those who trust and follow Christ, 19, 22.

### Christ

His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human man from Nazareth who was able to die, 3, 11, 23.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah, the anointed Savior sent by God to deliver us from our sins, 3, 4, 8, 11.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh come in the flesh, 11, 23.



### His work

- ♦ He died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice to redeem us from our sins, 3, 7–10.
- ♦ He rose from the dead, 4, 5, 9.
- ♦ He now enjoys eternal life in the presence of the Father as the God–man, our Mediator and Savior, 10.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our fallen state, we are all enslaved to sin, 6, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20.

## The Church

Its members: The church consists of all those who, having repented of their sins and fully trusted in Christ, are baptized in his name, 3–4.

Its ordinances: Baptism is one of two ordinances for believers, the other being Lord's Supper, 3–4.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Disordered desires [lusts], 12
- ♦ Moral uncleanness, 19
- ♦ Disobedience to God's law, 19
- ♦ Presenting ourselves to anything other than God, 13, 19

### Its consequences

- ♦ Utter loss of freedom to do good from the heart, 16–20
- ♦ Death, physical and spiritual (that is, alienation from God), 12, 16, 21, 23

## Salvation

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who believe in Jesus, as evidenced in baptism, 3–4.

Its source: Salvation comes to us entirely from God's free grace, working through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, 4, 14, 17, 23.

Its conveyance: Salvation comes to us through the preaching of the doctrine of Christ, 17; *see Romans 1:16-17; 10:14-17; 15:16, 19-21.*

#### Its benefits

- ♦ Identification with Christ in his death, 3-6, resulting in the disarming of the "old man," that is our sinful nature, 6
- ♦ New life in Christ, 4, 8; this life consists in an intimate relationship with God, being "alive to God," 11
- ♦ Death to sin, that is, freedom from its bondage, 7, 11, 14, 18, 22
- ♦ The ability now to present ourselves to God as his liberated "slaves," able to do his will, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22
- ♦ Being under grace, not under law, that is, relating God on the basis of his forgiveness of us and our reconciliation with him by grace alone, and thus our freedom from the law as a means of being "right" with God, 14-15
- ♦ Increasing holiness of life, 19, 22
- ♦ Eternal life, 22-23

## The Last Things

Christ's return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, those who have trusted in Christ will be given eternal life with God; unrepentant sinners will suffer unending death, 21-23.

## Life

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#### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Absolutely refuse to abuse God's grace by continuing in sin, 1-15.
- ♦ Thank God for disarming the power of sin in us and giving us the ability to do what is right, 4-14.
- ♦ Consider ourselves "dead" to sin, that is, longer liable to its claims upon us or under its power over us, 6-11.
- ♦ Refuse to let sin reign in us, but, rather, actively present ourselves - every member of our bodies - to God as "alive" to him and as his liberated "slaves," 12-13, 19.

# Romans 7

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ The command against adultery, 1–3; *see Exodus 20:14*.
- ♦ “You shall not covet,” 7; *see Exodus 20:17 and Deuteronomy 5:21*.

### Its nature

- ♦ The law of God, in whatever form we find it, is holy, just, and good, 12, 13.
- ♦ The moral law is “spiritual,” that is, intended to be used by the Holy Spirit to transform us from the inside out, 14.

Its content: Biblical revelation includes the Law of Moses (probably “the law”) in this passage, but also all other “laws” and particular commandments in the Bible, including the New Testament, including the teachings of Jesus, as Paul would have known, 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and throughout most of the passage, except for 21, 23.

### Its purpose and effects

- ♦ The laws – and total “law” – in the Bible are meant to teach us God’s will, 1–4.
- ♦ The law thus reveals our sin, since do not follow God’s commands, 7.
- ♦ Since we are inherently evil, the law actually provokes us to sin, 5, 8–9.
- ♦ The law’s original intent – as in the Garden of Eden – was to bring “life” to those who obey it, 10. *See Romans 10:5; Leviticus 18:5; Ezekiel 20:11, 13, 21; Luke 10:28; and Galatians 3:12*.
- ♦ The law is used by our indwelling sin to “deceive” us, since it appears to say that we can actually keep its requirements.
- ♦ Thus, knowledge of the law’s commands, when we understand the meaning of them, brings “death” to us, in that it shows us that we are spiritually dead, 9–11.

*Note: This could refer either to when Paul entered religious adulthood at around the age of thirteen and knew the Law of Moses more fully, or to when the Spirit used the Law to convict him of sin as part of the process of his conversion. It “killed” his self-righteousness and revealed that he was liable to eternal death.*

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ As universal Creator and King, God has the authority to establish authoritative laws for mankind and to inflict penalties for disobedience, 1–3 (and throughout the chapter).
- ♦ He is omnipotent and thus able to raise Jesus from the dead, 4.
- ♦ He is able to transform us morally and ethically, 4.
- ♦ He has the power to deliver us from this mortal body, 24–25.

### His goodness

- ♦ He kindly revealed his moral will to mankind, 1–12.
- ♦ He sent Jesus to save us from our sins by dying for us, 4, 25.
- ♦ He will deliver us from this body, which is enslaved to sin and bound for death, 25.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the truly human man from Nazareth who could die, 4, 25.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah anointed and sent by God to save us from our sins, 25.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh come in the flesh, 25.

### His work

- ♦ He died on the cross for our redemption, 4.
- ♦ He rose from the dead, 4.
- ♦ He is now united to all those who believe in him, 4, 6.
- ♦ He produces the “fruit” of righteous conduct in the lives of his people, 4. *See Romans 8.*

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ Human beings are “composed” of two “parts,” a material part – the body with its members, 24, sometimes called the flesh, to stress its moral frailty, 5, 17 – and an immaterial part, called “the inner person [man], 22, and including the understanding = the mind, 15, 25, and the will, 15, 16, 18–20. In the Gospels and elsewhere, the immaterial part of man is often called the soul. *See Matthew 10:28.*
- ♦ The “flesh” in Paul, and in this chapter, often refers not only to the body, but specifically to the body, including the mind, in rebellion against God, 18. *See Galatians 5:16–24 and Ephesians 2:3.*
- ♦ Before regeneration, believers in Christ were “in the flesh,” 5 (see Romans 8:8–9), that is, totally dominated by their sinful nature. Now, they are “in the Spirit,” that is, indwelt by the Spirit, alive in the Spirit, in principle dominated by the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:9–11, 15–16), and able to rely on the Holy Spirit to produce good works in and through them. *See Romans 8:13 and Galatians 5:22–25.*
- ♦ Though “in the Spirit” and not “in [or, of] the flesh,” believers still dwell in mortal bodies and are therefore subject to the pull of the “lusts [inordinate desires] of the flesh,” 14–25. *See Galatians 5:16–21.*
- ♦ As long as they live in the body, therefore, Christians endure a fierce inner struggle between the “flesh” – that is, the still-sinful part of their bodily existence – and the Holy Spirit, who has changed their minds so that they hate what is evil, 15, 19; do not will to do wrong, 16; will to do good, 18–19; delight in the law of God in their inner being, 22; and long to be delivered from this mortal body, 24.

*Note: Interpreters disagree about whether in 13–15 Paul is describing his condition as a regenerate believer, before conversion, or as one who is not relying on the Holy Spirit to transform his conduct. Phrases such as “I am carnal, sold under sin,” 14, suggest that an unconverted person is in view, especially in light of chapter 6. Historically, most interpreters have believed that Paul here describes a truly regenerate person who struggles with sin constantly, with a conscience so awakened by the Holy Spirit that he realizes just how much he is still “carnal,” or “fleshly” in his desires and actions, and how he is still, at least in his “flesh,” captive to sin.*

- ♦ Still, the believer enjoys substantial freedom from sin (see chapter 6) and can, by calling upon the Holy Spirit, “put to death the [evil] deeds of the body,” 8:13.
- ♦ The believer in Christ is also greatly comforted by the knowledge that, despite the continuing presence of sin in his life, (1) “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” 8:1 (see 8:31–35); and (2) God will deliver him from this mortal body when Christ returns and transform him, body and soul, into the likeness of the risen and glorified Jesus Christ, 24–25. *See Romans 8:9–2; 1 Corinthians 15:35–58; and Philipians 3:20.*

### It includes

- ♦ Committing adultery, 1–3
- ♦ Divorce; *see 1 Corinthians 7:10–13, 39.*
- ♦ Remarriage after divorce if one’s spouse is still living, 3; *see Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11–12; and Luke 16:18.*
- ♦ Sinful passions (see “coveting,” below), 5
- ♦ Coveting; greed; discontent with what God has given us; an inordinate desire for “more” or “other,” 7

### Its consequences

- ♦ Physical death, 24
- ♦ Spiritual death, 11

## Salvation

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who have “died” to their self-righteousness through the convicting work of the moral law of God that shows them their sinfulness, 7–10).

### Its source

- ♦ Salvation comes to us through the initiative of God, who sent Jesus to die and rise for us and who gives us the Holy Spirit, 4, 6, 25.

### Its benefits

- ♦ “Death” to the moral law, in the sense that we are no longer bound to it as a way of becoming right with God, 4

- ◆ Being “married” to Jesus, that is, being joined to him in an intimate spiritual union, 4
- ◆ “Bearing fruit for God,” that is, doing good works by the power of the Holy Spirit, 5–6
- ◆ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 6; *see Romans 8:13 and Galatians 5:22–23*.
- ◆ Delight in the moral law of God in our deepest being, 22, 24
- ◆ Eventual deliverance from this mortal body through the risen Lord Jesus Christ, 24–25; *see Romans 8:2, 11*.

## The Last Things

Christ’s return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, he will deliver us from this mortal body and give us a glorified body, 24–25. *See Romans 8:11, 29–30; and Philippians 3:20.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Remain faithful to our marriage vows as long as both we and our spouse are alive.
- ◆ See ourselves as “married” to Jesus Christ, that is, see ourselves as in a vital union with him, and see him as overriding, supreme “person” in our lives, as well as the object of our deepest affection and the standard and source of all ethical conduct.
- ◆ Read the whole Bible, so that we might know the moral will of God and repent of our as-yet-unconscious sins.
- ◆ Expect to have a moral struggle as long as we live.
- ◆ Depend upon the Holy Spirit to produce good works in us.
- ◆ Eagerly long for the return of Christ and our deliverance from this “body of sin.”

# Romans 8:1–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ Revelation comes to us through the written law of God, including the Law of Moses and all laws in the New Testament, 3–4.
- ♦ These laws are “righteous requirements,” that is, they are totally faithful, just, right, and good for us, 2. *See Romans 7:12.*
- ♦ The revelation of law, however, cannot transform people, 3.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has the authority to condemn and punish sin, and he exercised this in the death of Christ, 3.
- ♦ He has the power to enable people to do what is right, 4.
- ♦ He has the power to raise people from the dead, starting with Jesus, 11.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He freely forgives and does not condemn those who believe in Christ, 1. *See Romans 3:24–25; 5:1.*
- ♦ He gives new spiritual life to believers in Christ, 2, 10. *See Romans 6:4.*
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to die for us, 3. *See Romans 5:8.*
- ♦ He will raise believers in Christ from the dead, 11.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the truly human man from Nazareth who could die, 1, 3, 11.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed divine–human Messiah sent by God to save his people from their sins, 1, 2, 9, 10.



### His work

- ♦ He was sent by God the Father to this earth, 3.
- ♦ He was condemned as a sinner by men and by God, 3.
- ♦ He condemned and punished sin by his own suffering, breaking its power over us, 3–4.
- ♦ He indwells his people – those who believe in him—by the Holy Spirit, 10.
- ♦ He was raised from the dead by God, 11. *See Romans 6:4, 9.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is spiritual, and possesses things that are “spiritual,” that is, here, what pleases God, 5, 8.
- ♦ He is the Spirit of God, 9, 11.
- ♦ He is the Spirit of Christ, 10–11.

### His work

- ♦ He is the one who enables us to “walk” in a new life; that is, he empowers us to live according to God’s spiritual law, 1, 5. *See Romans 7:14.*
- ♦ He sets us free from the “law,” that is, operating principle, of sin and death, 2.
- ♦ He lives in the hearts of those who trust in Christ, 9, 11.
- ♦ He is the “realm,” or “domain,” or “sphere” in whom Christians now live, 9, in contrast to the domain of the flesh.
- ♦ He is the life of people who believe in Christ, 10.
- ♦ He is the one by whom God raised Jesus from the dead, 11.
- ♦ He will also give life in a new body to those who trust in Christ, 11. *See Romans 7:24–25.*

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ In our fallen state, we are “in the flesh,” that is, totally immersed in the world of sin, 1–9.
- ♦ We therefore think about the things of the flesh, including attempts to justify ourselves by obeying God’s law, 5–7. *See Galatians 3:1–6 and Philippians 3:1–6.*

- ♦ As a result, we are at enmity with God and cannot please God, 7–9. *See Romans 5:6–10; 7:13–23; and Colossians 1:21.*
- ♦ In consequence, our bodies are destined to die and carry in them the degenerative operations of death, 10–11.

## Sin

It includes: Setting our mind on things of the flesh, that is, on all that fallen humans inordinately desire and on all attempts to justify ourselves by keeping God’s moral law, 5–7

### Its consequences

- ♦ We are in bondage to a “law,” that is, operating principle, of more and more sin, 2.
- ♦ We cannot please God, 8.
- ♦ We die, physically and spiritually, 2, 6, 10, 11.

## Salvation

Its recipients: Salvation comes to all who are “in Christ Jesus” by faith, 1.

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God, at his initiative, 3, 11.

### Its benefits

- ♦ No condemnation by God for our sins, 1
- ♦ Freedom from the moral law as a means of being right with God, 2
- ♦ New life in Christ, 2, 6, 10, 11
- ♦ The ability to keep God’s moral law, 4
- ♦ A new mind-set, 6–7
- ♦ Life and peace, 6
- ♦ The indwelling of the Triune God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 9–11
- ♦ A state of being right with God, 10
- ♦ The certain expectation of resurrection from the dead, 11; *see Romans 19–21.*

## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ The church consists of all who are “in Christ Jesus,” and who show this by a new mind-set and a new course – “walk” – of life, 1, 4, 5.

- ♦ The church consists of all who have received the Holy Spirit, 9–10.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, he will raise all his people from the dead and give them new and glorified bodies, 11. *See Romans 19–20.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for all the incomparable blessings of salvation mentioned in this passage.
- ♦ Rely on the Holy Spirit to produce moral obedience in us.
- ♦ Set our minds consciously on things of the Spirit, that is, all that God has done for us in Christ and all that pleases God.
- ♦ Eagerly await our future resurrection.

# Romans 8:12–17

## Truth

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### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father [“God”], Son [“the Lord Jesus Christ”], and Holy Spirit, 13–17.

#### His greatness

- ♦ As Creator and King, he owns the universe, including this earth, and can bestow parts upon it to those whom he will, 17.
- ♦ Being holy, he has the power to suppress sin, 13.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He sends the Holy Spirit into the hearts of his children, 13–16.
- ♦ He grants the status of “son,” that is, beloved child and heir, to those who trust in Christ, 15–17.
- ♦ He calls into an intimate relationship with himself through the Holy Spirit and in our union with Christ, his Son, 15–17.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is the divine Son of God and thus rightful heir to all that God the Father owns, 17.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah, the Divine–human Savior whom God has sent, 17.
- ♦ He was fully human (and remains so) and was thus capable of suffering and death, 17.
- ♦ He was glorified by the resurrection with a glorious body and then by his ascension into heaven, 17.

#### His work

- ♦ He made it possible for us to cry out, “Abba! Father,” just as he had, 15–17. *See Matthew 6:9 and Mark 14:36.*

- ♦ He suffered for us, in our place, to save us from our sins, 17. *See Romans 3:25; 5:6, 8.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the very Spirit of God, and thus he is fully divine, 14.

### His work

- ♦ He enables us to put to death the evil deeds of the body, as we call upon him in prayer, 13.
- ♦ He leads God's children into righteous conduct, 14.
- ♦ He dwells within God's people as a gift from God, 15.
- ♦ He convinces us that we have been adopted as sons of God through Christ, 15–16.

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ We have “the flesh,” that principle and power of sin that operates in our bodies, 12–13.
- ♦ We are destined to die for our sins and the sin of Adam, 13. *See Romans 5:12–21.*

## Salvation

### Its source

- ♦ Salvation comes entirely from God, who gives his Spirit to believers in Christ at his own initiative, 15.
- ♦ Salvation comes to us through the propitiatory suffering of Jesus Christ, 17.

### Its benefits

- ♦ See under “God: His goodness,” above.
- ♦ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to gain victory over sin, 13
- ♦ The status of being “sons” and “children” of God, 14–17
- ♦ Boldness and confidence to approach God as our heavenly Father, 15
- ♦ An inner conviction that we are children of God, 16

## The Church

Its members: The church consists of all those who have received the Holy Spirit and whom the Spirit is transforming into the moral likeness of Christ, 13, 15–16. *See Romans 8:29.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ See ourselves as liberated from the power of the “flesh,” that is, our sinful nature, 12.
- ♦ Constantly call upon God to put our evil deeds to death by the power of his indwelling Holy Spirit, 13.
- ♦ Boldly approach God’s throne, seeing him as our loving Father and calling out to him in affectionate prayer, 15.
- ♦ Thank God that he has adopted us as his children and given us the hope of inheriting his kingdom, 16–17.
- ♦ Prepare to suffer as followers of Jesus, 17.
- ♦ Eagerly anticipate our coming glorification after death, 17. *See Romans 8:30.*

# Romans 8:18–27

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “The glory that will be revealed in us,” 18; *see Romans 8:30.*
- ♦ “The revealing of the sons of God,” 19; *see 1 John 3:1–2.*
- ♦ “The creation was subjected to futility,” 20; *see Genesis 3:17–19.*
- ♦ “The creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption,” 21; *see Revelation 21–22.*
- ♦ “First fruits,” 23; *see Exodus 23:16–19.*

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father [“God”], Son [“Christ”], and Holy Spirit, 26–27.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He possesses divine glory and beauty, 18.
- ♦ He is eternal and almighty, and he created the entire universe, 21. *See Genesis 1:1–2:2.*
- ♦ He has the power to subject all creation to futility and decay, 20–21.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing all things, 27.
- ♦ He has a will that will surely be accomplished, 27.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He has determined that someday this creation will be restored and redeemed, 20–23.
- ♦ He has chosen some to be his “sons” and “children” through faith in Jesus Christ, 19, 21.
- ♦ He has given the Holy Spirit to those who trust in Christ, 23, 26.

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is fully divine, knowing God's will and praying accordingly, 27.

### His work

- ♦ He lives within the hearts of those who trust in Christ, 23.
- ♦ He prays for us from within us, 26.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen condition, we are subject to futility, corruption and decay, inner sorrow, and general ignorance of the particulars of God's will, 20–21, 23, 26.

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes to us entirely from God and according to his sovereign, gracious, will, 23, 24, 27. *See Romans 8:28–30.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ The knowledge, experienced as a sure and certain hope, that we shall one day be glorified, 18–19, 23–25; *see Romans 8:30.*
- ♦ The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is a “first-fruits” or “down payment” of our future total salvation, 23; *see 2 Corinthians 5:5 and Ephesians 1:13–14.*
- ♦ The intercessions of the indwelling Holy Spirit, who prays for us according to God's will, 26–27.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ At the end of the age, when Christ returns, we shall be completely transformed into the glorious likeness of the risen Lord Jesus, 18–19, 21, 23.
- ♦ At that time our status as sons of God will be revealed for all to see, 19.
- ♦ We shall then enjoy “glorious liberty” as sons of God, that is, freedom from all bondage to sin, corruption, sorrow, and death, 21.
- ♦ Our bodies will be redeemed from death and mortality, 23.



# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Expect to suffer and to be sorrowful in this life, 18, 23.
- ◆ Avoid the error of thinking that we can build a perfect society on earth, 19–22.
- ◆ Eagerly await the return of Christ, who will usher us into endless glory, 23–25.
- ◆ Thank God for giving us the Holy Spirit to pray for us, 26–27.

# Romans 8:28–39

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “For your sake we are killed . . .,” 36; *see Psalm 44:22*.

Its nature: God’s special revelation teaches us abiding truths about the present and the past, 28–29, 31, 33–34, and the future, 29–39: “We know,” 28; “I am persuaded,” 38.”

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipotent working “all things together for good for those who love him and are the called according to his purpose,” 28.
- ♦ He has a will for his people which he will fulfill, 28–30.
- ♦ He is eternal, existing before time, 28–30.
- ♦ He is all-knowing and has been from all eternity, 29.
- ♦ His sovereignty in history is seen in the death of Jesus Christ, 32, and in the sufferings of his people, 35–36.
- ♦ He is able to effect both physical and moral transformation and renewal in his people, 29, 30.
- ♦ He owns “all things” and bestows upon his people whatever he wills, 32.
- ♦ He rules as King of the universe from his throne in heaven, 34.
- ♦ He has power over the present and the future, including death and life, 38.
- ♦ He rules over all other powers and authorities, 38.
- ♦ He created the world, 39.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He causes all things to work for the good of his people, 28.
- ♦ He “foreknew” those whom he would save, that is, he chose to “know” them personally, as Adam “knew” Eve and she conceived, 29. *See Genesis 4:1*.
- ♦ He predestined many to salvation to be conformed to the physical and moral image of his Son, 29.

- ♦ He effectually called many, giving them faith to trust in Christ, 30; justified those who believed in Christ, 30, 33; and planned to give his own glory to those whom he justified, 30.
- ♦ He is “for” us as our friend and advocate, 21.
- ♦ He sent his own Son to die for us, 32.
- ♦ He freely gives “all things” – that is, all spiritual benefits – to his people, 32.
- ♦ He allows great suffering to come to his people, 35–37, but gives them power to overcome and be faithful to him, 37.
- ♦ He loves his people, 39.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the unique, eternal, fully divine Son of God, 29.
- ♦ He shares the love of God the Father, and has from all eternity, 39.

### His work

- ♦ He lived a perfectly good life, 29.
- ♦ He died for our sins, 34.
- ♦ He rose from the dead, 34.
- ♦ He rules now with God the Father from their heavenly throne, 34.
- ♦ He prays for his people, 34.
- ♦ He loved his people, and still loves them, 35, 39.

## Mankind

Our fallen world: In our current fallen world, we must expect to encounter every kind of trouble –distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, violence, 35.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Accusing others falsely, in mind or speech, 33–34
- ♦ Persecuting God’s people, 35
- ♦ Violence against innocent people, 35

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God, at his initiative, according to his eternal plan and decision, 28–30.

### Its benefits

- ◆ Being “foreknown” by God, that is, being the object of his intention to enter into an intimate relationship with us, 29
- ◆ Predestination unto transformation into the likeness of Christ through union with him by faith, 29
- ◆ Effectual calling, by which God allows us to hear the gospel, repent, and truly believe it, 30
- ◆ Justification, that is, being counted righteous before God because of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, 30; *see Romans 8:33; 3:24–25; 4:3–12; 5:1.*
- ◆ Glorification, that is, being given a new, glorious body with a new and completely transformed soul that will fully love God and reflect his glory, 30; *see Romans 3:23.*
- ◆ Having God be “for” us, that is, on our side, fully committed to our defense and prosperity, 31
- ◆ All the benefits of Christ’s sacrificial death for us, 32
- ◆ All other “good things” that God intends to give us, 32
- ◆ The constant intercession of Jesus Christ for us, 34
- ◆ Eternal security in the love of God in Christ, 35–39
- ◆ Victory over all that would harm or distress us; that is, a sense of God’s presence, power, and peace while suffering, and the assurance that we shall one day be glorified and free from all harm, 37–39

Its recipients: From the preceding context of Romans, we know that all these benefits come to those who simply trust in Jesus Christ as God’s Son and their Savior. *See Romans 1:16–17; 3:24; 5:1; etc.*

## The Church

Its membership: The church consists of all the elect of God, who have been effectually called, who trust in Christ, and whose lives reflect his transforming power.

### Its characteristics

- ♦ In this life, the church must expect to suffer persecution, even though they are innocent from of crimes, 31–39.
- ♦ We must also expect to be attacked by evil spiritual beings, 38.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ At the end of the age, when Christ returns, his people will be raised from the dead and glorified forever, 30.
- ♦ They will consciously enjoy the love of God in Christ for all eternity, 38–39.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Trust God that everything that happens to us is from his loving, wise, and all-powerful hand, and will tend to our good, 28.
- ♦ Give thanks to God and praise him at all times and for everything. *See Ephesians 5:18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18.*
- ♦ Thank God for sending Jesus to die for our sins and procure for us “all things” that are good for us, 32.
- ♦ Trust God to give us “all things” that are good for us, 32.
- ♦ Resist any attempts by Satan to accuse us of sins that we have confessed and for which we have been forgiven, that is, rest in the assurance that God is “for” us and that he justifies us, 33–34.
- ♦ Expect to be persecuted, even unto death, even though we are innocent of any crime, 36.
- ♦ Call upon God to give us overcoming faith in the midst of troubles, 37.
- ♦ Trust constantly in the sure love of God for us in Jesus Christ, 35–39.

# Romans 9

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “The adoption,” that is, God’s adoption of Israel as his “firstborn son,” 4; *see Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:9; and Hosea 11:1.*
- ♦ “The glory,” that is, God’s manifestation of himself as glorious among his people, 4; *see Exodus 16:10; 24:16–17—with Abraham; 40:34–35; Leviticus 9:23; Numbers 14:10; 16:19, 42—with Moses; and Numbers 25:12–13—with the Levites.*
- ♦ “The covenants,” 4; *see Genesis 15:17–21; 17:1–8; Exodus 19:5; 24:7–8; 34:10–28; Deuteronomy 29:1–14; Numbers 25:12–13; with David, 2 Samuel 7:1–17; Psalm 89:3–4, 28–29; 132:11–12.*
- ♦ “The giving of the law,” 4; *see Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy.*
- ♦ “The service [worship] of God,” 4; *see Exodus 21–40; Leviticus.*
- ♦ “The promises,” 4; *see Genesis 12:7; 13:14–17; 17:4–8; 22:16–18—to Abraham; messianic promises: 2 Samuel 7:12, 16; Isaiah 9:6–7; Jeremiah 23:5; 31:31–34; and Ezekiel 34:23–24; 37:24–28.*
- ♦ “The patriarchs,” 4; *see Genesis 12–50.*
- ♦ “In Isaac your seed shall be blessed,” 7; *see Genesis 21:12 and Galatians 4:23.*
- ♦ “At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son,” 9; *see Genesis 18:10, 14.*
- ♦ “The older shall serve the younger,” 12; *see Genesis 25:23.*
- ♦ “Jacob I have loved,” 13; *see Malachi 1:2, 3.*
- ♦ “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy,” 15; *see Exodus 33:19.*
- ♦ “For this very purpose I have raised you up,” 17; *see Exodus 9:16.*
- ♦ The potter’s power, 20–23; *see Proverbs 16:4.*
- ♦ “I will call them My people,” 25; *see Hosea 2:23.*
- ♦ “And it shall come to pass,” 26; *see Hosea 1:10.*
- ♦ “Though the number of the children of Israel,” 27–28; *see Isaiah 10:22–23.*
- ♦ “Unless the LORD of Sabaoth,” 29; *see Isaiah 1:9.*
- ♦ “We would have become like Sodom,” 29; *see Genesis 19:1–29 and Isaiah 13:19.*
- ♦ “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling block,” 33; *see Isaiah 8:14; 28:16.*

Its content: Biblical revelation includes

- ♦ The Old Testament, including the Pentateuch, which records all of God's blessings to Israel as listed by Paul, 4
- ♦ The law of God, including the instructions for proper worship, 4

## God

His greatness

- ♦ He is uniquely glorious, 4, 23.
- ♦ He deserves our worship [service], 4.
- ♦ He is eternal and omniscient, and can thus make promises concerning the future, 4–5, 6, 9, 11–12.
- ♦ He is omnipotent, enabling the aged Abraham and Sarah to conceive and to demonstrate his power in his dealings with kings and ordinary individuals, 9, 17, 22.
- ♦ He has a will – a purpose – that will surely be fulfilled, 11. *See Ephesians 1:11.*
- ♦ He is sovereign in choosing who will be blessed and saved, and who will be punished, 11–12, 14–16, 18, 22–24.
- ♦ He rules over kings and nations, and all the events of history, 17.
- ♦ He is jealous for his name and reputation, 17.
- ♦ He is Creator and Maker, and thus has total authority over his creatures, including each individual person, 21.
- ♦ He is living, the source of all life from eternity, 26.
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to be a stone that makes people stumble, 32–33.

His goodness

- ♦ He chose Abraham and his descendants to be his own special people, with unique blessings, including a unique revelation and the promise of a unique Savior to come, 4–5.
- ♦ He made promises [The word] to his people, which he will now allow to fail, 6.
- ♦ He chooses many to be saved, 11. *See Romans 8:28–30.*
- ♦ He effectually calls them to faith, 11, 24. *See Romans 8:28, 30.*
- ♦ He is completely righteous, 14.
- ♦ He shows mercy to undeserving sinners, 16, 18, 23.
- ♦ He wills that all nations of the earth will hear of his saving power and glory, 17.

- ♦ He inflicts his holy wrath upon unrepentant sinners, 22, 29.
- ♦ He is loving towards his people, 25.
- ♦ He has called non-Jews into his family as his people and his sons, 25–26.
- ♦ He is the omnipotent Lord of heavenly armies [Sabaoth, hosts], 29.
- ♦ He saved a righteous remnant from among his people Israel, not only in past history but also in the age of the New Covenant, 27.
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to be the fully trustworthy Savior from shame and guilt for all who believe, 33.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 1, 5.
- ♦ He is equal with God, eternal and eternally blessed, 5.
- ♦ He is God over all, 5. *See Titus 2:13.*

### His work

- ♦ He came as a cause of stumbling and spiritual ruin for those who would not believe in him, 33. *See Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; and 1 Peter 2:6–8.*
- ♦ He has come to be the Savior of all who believe, 33.

## The Holy Spirit

His person: The indwelling Holy Spirit not only “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” (see 8:16), but also “bears witness” to us that we are acting from a clear conscience and are speaking the truth about ourselves, 1.

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ We have a sense of moral right and wrong, a conscience, 1. *See Romans 1:32; 2:15.*
- ♦ We have a kind of natural kinship with those who are related to us by blood, 3, 8.
- ♦ Among mankind there is also a fundamental distinction between those who have a relationship with God and those who do not, 7. *See Romans 2:28–29.* This distinction is God’s doing, according to his hidden plan, 11–16, 21–24.



- ◆ Among those who belong to God, there is a spiritual kinship that obliterates tribal and family distinctions, 24. *See Romans 1:16; 4:16-17, 23-24.*
- ◆ We are all creatures of God, who has authority over us and our destiny, 21.

## Sin

### It includes

- Questioning the right and authority of God to save whom he will, 18-23
- Seeking to be justified by keeping the moral law, rather than by grace, 31-32
- Refusing to believe in Jesus Christ as our only Savior, 32-33

Its consequences: Sin leads to the suffering of God's wrath, 22.

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God, according to his sovereign choice, 8-24.

### Its benefits

- ◆ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 1
- ◆ Membership in the people of God, 8, 25-26
- ◆ Mercy, 15-18, 23
- ◆ Eternal glory, 23; *see Romans 8:30.*
- ◆ God's love, 25; *see Romans 5:8.*
- ◆ Righteousness, that is, justification before God and by God for all who believe, 28-30; *see Romans 3:24-26; 4:1-12; 5:1.*
- ◆ Vindication before the world, 33

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who

- ◆ Have been chosen by God, 11-13
- ◆ Have been prepared by God from all eternity for eternal glory, 23
- ◆ Belong to any race or nation, 24
- ◆ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior from their sins, 32-33

## The Church

Its membership: The church consists of all those of any race or nation who have been chosen by God and who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, 24, 32.

## The Last Things

### The final judgment: At Christ's return

- ♦ Some people will suffer God's wrath, 22.
- ♦ Other people will enter into eternal glory, 23.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Ask God to give us a heart of compassion for those who don't believe in Jesus, 1-2.
- ♦ Honor the Jews for their heritage and seek to share the gospel with them, 3, 4-5.
- ♦ Acknowledge God's sovereignty in saving whom he will, 9-26.
- ♦ Thank God for saving us by grace.
- ♦ Continue to trust in Christ for salvation, 33.

# Romans 10

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “Zeal for God,” but without true knowledge, 2; *see Acts 21:20*.
- ♦ God’s righteousness, 3; *see Romans 1:17; 3:21–22*.
- ♦ “Seeking to establish their own righteousness,” but not submitting to the righteousness of God, 3; *see Luke 9:9–14 and Philipians 3:9*.
- ♦ “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness,” 4; *see Galatians 3:24; 4:5*.

*Note: “End” could also be translated, goal, terminus; the Mosaic Law reached its goal, and had fulfilled its purpose, with Christ’s incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and giving of the Holy Spirit to his people.*

- ♦ “The man who does these things . . .,” 5; *see Leviticus 18:5*.
- ♦ “Do not say in your heart . . .,” 6; *see Deuteronomy 30:12–14*.
- ♦ “Or who will descend . . .,” 7; *see Deuteronomy 30:13*.
- ♦ “The word is near you . . .,” 8; *see Deuteronomy 30:14*.
- ♦ “Whoever believes on Him . . .,” 11; *see Isaiah 28:16*.
- ♦ “For there is no distinction . . .,” 12; *see Galatians 2:28; Ephesians 3:6; and Colossians 3:11*.
- ♦ “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord . . .,” 13; *see Joel 2:32*.
- ♦ “How beautiful are the feet . . .,” 15; *see Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15*.
- ♦ “Lord, who has believed our report?” 16; *see Isaiah 53:1*.
- ♦ “Their sound has gone out . . .,” 18; *see Psalm 19:4*.
- ♦ “I will provoke you to jealousy . . .,” 19; *see Deuteronomy 32:21*.
- ♦ “I was found by those . . .,” 20; *see Isaiah 65:1*.
- ♦ “All day long . . .,” 21; *see Isaiah 65:2*.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient and thus can hear prayers uttered in the heart, 1.

- ♦ He is transcendent, dwelling high above us in heaven, 6.
- ♦ He is omnipotent, as seen by his raising of Jesus from the dead, 9.
- ♦ He is utterly sovereign in whom he allows to hear the gospel and be saved, 20.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is righteous, and he grants righteousness to those with faith in Christ, 3.
- ♦ He saves all those who call upon his name, 10–13.
- ♦ He revealed his saving word of the gospel to and through the Old Testament as his apostles interpreted the Scriptures in the light of Christ, 15–17.
- ♦ He made known the gospel to people of all nations, including the Jews, 18.
- ♦ He “provoked” his people “to jealousy” by the preaching of the gospel, that they might believe in Christ and be saved, 19.
- ♦ He revealed his saving word to Gentiles who did not seek or even ask for him, 21.
- ♦ He patiently communicated his invitation to life to the stubbornly disobedient Jews, 21.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the “end of the law” in that, in his person, he fulfills all the types of a coming prophet, priest, and king in the Old Testament, 4.
- ♦ He is “above,” that is, in heaven, whither he ascended after God raised him from the dead, 6. *See Romans 1:4; 6:4.*
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh come in the flesh, 9, 12–13. *See Acts 9:14.*
- ♦ He is Jesus, the completely human man from Nazareth, 9.
- ♦ He is the author of salvation to all who call upon his name, 10–11, 13.

### His work

- ♦ He is the “end of the law,” in that his obedience and his death fulfilled the demands of the law for perfectly righteous conduct and for a propitiatory sacrifice and thus makes “life” possible for those who believe, 4–5.
- ♦ He replaces the Mosaic Law as a potential means of salvation, as Paul’s application of Old Testament Scriptures about the Mosaic Law to him demonstrates, 6–9.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Having a zeal for God, but without true knowledge of him and his will, 2
- ♦ Seeking to establish our own righteousness by our moral performance, 3
- ♦ Not submitting to God's way of putting people right with himself through faith in Christ, 3
- ♦ Not believing the message of the gospel, especially concerning the atoning death of Christ, 16; *see Isaiah 53*.
- ♦ Persistent disobedience and stubborn resistance to God's revelation, 21

Its consequences: Not being saved (by inference from 1–13)

## Salvation

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who

- ♦ Believe the message of the gospel, including the truth that Jesus is Lord and that God raised him from the dead, 9–11, 14
- ♦ Call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in faith for salvation, 13
- ♦ Confess publicly that Jesus is Lord, 10

*Note: This "confession" is not a mere mouthing of words, but the expression of heartfelt faith in the essentials of the gospel, as expressed by Paul in the first eight chapters of Romans.*

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God, at his initiative, based on his righteousness, not our own, 1–13, 20.

Its conveyance: Salvation comes to us through

- ♦ The sending of preachers of the gospel, 14–15
- ♦ Hearing the words of the gospel, 14

Its benefits

- ♦ "Life," that is, a lasting relationship with God (by inference from 5)
- ♦ Being put right with God; having a status of righteousness before him, 10; *see Romans 3:21–25; 4:1–8; 5:1*.
- ♦ No shame before God; no disappointment with God, 11
- ♦ "Finding" God, that is, coming to a true and personal knowledge of him, 20
- ♦ Receiving God's self-revelation, his being "made manifest" to us, 20

## The Church

Its membership: The church is composed of all those, whether Jew or Gentile, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation, as the word, “whoever” demonstrates, 9–13.

## The Last Things

Christ’s return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, all those who have truly trusted in Jesus Christ will be “saved” from God’s righteous wrath, and will enter into eternal life with him, 9, 13. *See Romans 1:1–18; 5:9–11.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for sending Jesus Christ to die and rise for our salvation.
- ♦ Renounce any and all efforts to build our own righteousness through our moral conduct, 3.
- ♦ Refuse to be bound by the Mosaic Law as a means of being right before God.

*Note: The ethical commands of that law are repeated and amplified in the New Testament (except for the command to keep the Sabbath).*

- ♦ Thank God for sending preachers of the Word to us, that we might hear and be saved.
- ♦ Pray earnestly for the salvation of the Jews, 1.
- ♦ Do all we can to send preachers of the gospel to places and people who have not yet heard, 14–15.
- ♦ Share the gospel with our friends, that they too may hear, believe, and be saved.

# Romans 11

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “Lord, they have killed your prophets . . .,” 3; *see 1 Kings 19:10, 14.*
- ♦ “I have reserved for Myself . . .,” 4; *see 1 Kings 19:18.*
- ♦ “A remnant according to grace,” 5; *see Romans 9:27.*
- ♦ “Israel has not obtained what it seeks,” 7; *see Romans 9:31.*
- ♦ “God has given them a spirit of stupor,” 8; *see Isaiah 29:10, 13.*
- ♦ “Eyes that should not see,” 8; *see Deuteronomy 29:3–4.*
- ♦ “Let their table become a snare . . .,” 9–10; *see Psalm 69:22–23.*
- ♦ “To provoke them to jealousy,” 11; *see Romans 10:19.*
- ♦ “First-fruits,” 16; *see Leviticus 23:10.*
- ♦ “The lump (of dough) is holy,” 16; *see Numbers 15:17–21.*
- ♦ “Olive tree,” 17; *see Jeremiah 11:16.*
- ♦ “Wise in your own eyes,” 25; *see Romans 12:16.*
- ♦ “The Deliverer will come out of Zion . . .,” 26–27; *see Isaiah 59:20–21.*
- ♦ “This is My covenant with them,” that is, the New Covenant, 27; *see Jeremiah 31:31–34.*
- ♦ “Who has known the mind of the Lord?” 34; *see Isaiah 40:13 and Jeremiah 23:18.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is eternal, knowing ahead of time whom he would save and existing in glory throughout all eternity, 2, 36.
- ♦ He is omniscient and omnipresent, hearing the prayers of his people, 2–4.
- ♦ He moves people to serve him as prophets and priests, 3.
- ♦ He is sovereign over those whom he will save, 4.
- ♦ He is also sovereign over those to whom he will not reveal himself, 8–10, 32.
- ♦ He uses even wicked unbelief to accomplish his saving purposes, 11–14.

- ♦ He is able to do things that are not according to “nature;” that is his usual way of doing things, 23–24.
- ♦ He is beyond our full comprehension, 34.
- ♦ He “owns” everything, including all knowledge and all goodness and mercy, 35.
- ♦ He is the source of all things, the Agent through whom all things exist and happen, and the goal of all things, 36.
- ♦ He is infinitely glorious, that is, beautiful and excellent in every way, 36.
- ♦ He deserves total worship, 36.

### His goodness

- ♦ He chose Israel to be his people, 1.
- ♦ He did not cast away his people, despite the rejection of Christ by most of them, 2.
- ♦ He decided to “know” the people of Israel, in the sense that he chose to enter into a personal, covenant relationship with them, 2.
- ♦ He instituted the sacrificial system among his people so that they could draw near to him in worship, based on sacrificial offerings, 3.
- ♦ He chose a remnant of his people to be saved by grace, 5.
- ♦ He did not spare the unbelief of his people Israel, 21.
- ♦ He is both good and severe at the same time, 22.
- ♦ He will eventually honor his promise to send a Deliverer to Zion, from Zion—that is the Jewish Messiah, Jesus—to save them from their ungodliness and sin, 26–27.
- ♦ He will not revoke his promises to his chosen people, 29.
- ♦ He shows mercy, 30.

## Christ

His person: He is a Jew, “out of Zion,” 26.

### His work

- ♦ He will turn the people of Israel from ungodliness, 26.
- ♦ He is the Deliverer through whom God will fulfill his covenant to take away the sins of Israel, 27. *See Jeremiah 31:31–34.*



## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ◆ Each person has a conscience, a sense of right and wrong, 1.
- ◆ We, including Israel, are all locked in ungodliness and sin, 26–27.

## Sin

### It includes

- ◆ Killing God's prophets and tearing down houses of worship, or otherwise interfering with worship, 3
- ◆ Idolatry, 4
- ◆ Boasting, especially boasting in one's salvation, 18–20
- ◆ Failure to "continue" in God's goodness by resting in his grace alone, 22
- ◆ Unbelief in the Word of God, especially the gospel, 23
- ◆ Being wise in our own eyes, 25
- ◆ Ungodliness, that is, not being centered on God in all our thoughts and actions, 26; *see Romans 1:18–25; 3:11, 18.*
- ◆ Any disobedience to God's revealed will, 30–32.

Its consequences: Being cast away by God and blinded to his revelation, 8–10, 19–21; this verse speaks of God's sovereign action, while the contexts ascribe responsibility to men.

## Salvation

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who

- ◆ Have been included by God in his remnant people, 4–5
- ◆ Believe the gospel of salvation by grace through Jesus Christ, 20
- ◆ Continue in his goodness by faith, 22

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God, through his sovereign grace and mercy, 5–7, 24, 26–29, 32–36.

Its benefits

- ◆ Being included in God's chosen people, 5, 17–26
- ◆ Reconciliation to God, 15; *see Romans 5:16–11.*

- ◆ Acceptance by God, 15
- ◆ Deliverance from ungodliness, 26
- ◆ Forgiveness of sins, 27
- ◆ Being beloved by God, 28
- ◆ Being called by God for eternal salvation and receiving his gifts, 29
- Receiving God's mercy, 31–32

## The Church

Its membership: The church is composed of all people, whether Jew or Gentile, who believe in Jesus Christ, 1–31.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, “all Israel will be saved,” 26.

*Note: Godly interpreters have understood this passage in various ways. The NIV Study Bible, for example, describes “three main interpretations . . . (1) the total number of elect Jews of every generation (equivalent to the ‘fullness’ of Israel [v. 12]), which is analogous to the ‘fullness [full number] of the Gentiles’ [v. 25]; (2) the total number of the elect both Jews and Gentiles, of every generation; (3) the great majority of Jews of the final generation.”*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for keeping all his promises to his elect people.
- ◆ Avoid spiritual boasting of any kind; we are saved by God's grace alone, through faith alone.
- ◆ Praise God for his matchless wisdom.
- ◆ Praise and worship God for being the source, means, and goal of all things.
- ◆ Seek, love, and serve God alone; he alone is worthy of all we have.

# Romans 12

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “The mercies of God,” 1; *see Romans 1–11; 9:15–16.*
- ♦ “Present your bodies,” 1; *see Romans 6:13.*
- ♦ An acceptable service of worship, 1; *see Romans 15:16; Ezra 6:10; Psalm 20:3; Isaiah 56:7; Hebrews 4:18; and Hebrews 12:29.*
- ♦ This world, the present evil age, 2; *see 1 Corinthians 2:6, 8; 3:18; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:2; 1 Timothy 6:17; and 2 Timothy 4:10.*
- ♦ “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” 2; *see Ephesians 4:23 and Philipians 2:5–11; 4:8.*
- ♦ The will of God, 2; *see Ephesians 5:17 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:19.*
- ♦ One body, different fits, 4–6; *see 1 Corinthians 12.*
- ♦ Prophecy, 6; *see 1 Corinthians 12:8–10.*
- ♦ Love without hypocrisy, 9; *see 1 Timothy 1:5.*
- ♦ “In honor giving preference to one another,” 10; *see Philipians 2:3–7.*
- ♦ Hope and patience, 12; *see Romans 5:5.*
- ♦ Hope, 12; *see Romans 8:18–30.*
- ♦ “Continuing steadfastly in prayer,” 11; *see Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18; and Colossians 4:2.*
- ♦ “Be of the same mind,” 16; *see Philipians 2:2; 4:2.*
- ♦ “Repay no one evil for evil,” 17; *see Matthew 5:38–48.*
- ♦ “Vengeance is Mine,” 19; *see Deuteronomy 32:35.*
- ♦ “If your enemy is hungry,” 20; *see Proverbs 25:21–22.*

Its literary forms: Biblical revelation employs normal “rules” of logic, which come from the mind of God himself. These are indicated here by “therefore,” 1, which shows that Paul is drawing out the inference(s) of his previous teaching on God’s mercy in chapters 1–11. *See also Romans 5:1; 8:1.*

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He is the unique, transcendent Being who deserves and total worship, and wholehearted service, 1, 11.
- ♦ He is personal and has a will, which is a sovereign will, 2. *See Romans 1:10; 9:19.*
- ♦ He has the power to enable his people to do good works according to each person's special gift and calling, 3–8.
- ♦ He is full of love and wants us to love others, 9. *See Romans 5:8.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He is full of mercy towards his people, 1.
- ♦ He established the sacrificial system among his people, which becomes the pattern for our spiritual worship in New Testament times, 1.
- ♦ His will—that is, what delight him and what he has purposed—is good, acceptable, and morally perfect, 2.
- ♦ He gives faith and grace to do certain things to each individual Christian, 3, 6.
- ♦ He cares for the welfare of those in need, 13.
- ♦ He is just and will repay evil, 19.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human, anointed Messiah sent to save us from our sins, 5.
- ♦ He is morally perfect; this passage describes him, and him alone, fully, 6–21.

### His work

- ♦ He has joined himself to his people in an intimate and indissoluble union, his “body,” 5.
- ♦ He performed all the works mentioned in 6–8, 13, 21.

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ We are created to worship and serve God, 1–2.
- ♦ We are all different, 4–8.
- ♦ We all have capacities to do different sorts of things, 5–8.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Pride and self–deception, 3
- ♦ Hypocrisy, 9
- ♦ Laziness, 11
- ♦ Persecuting Christians, 14
- ♦ Setting our minds on “high things,” that is, aspiring to things too great for us, or having ambitions that exceed our capacity; or, perhaps, seeking to be “great” and to associate with “great” people, 16
- ♦ Being wise in our own eyes, 16
- ♦ Repaying evil with evil, 17–21

Its consequences: Suffering God’s righteous judgment, 19

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God and his mercy, 1.

### Its benefits

- ♦ All the “mercies of God” presented in chapters 1–11
- ♦ The right to approach God in worship, 2
- ♦ An increasingly renewed mind that is liberated from the lies of the world, 2
- ♦ Faith to serve God, 3
- ♦ Membership in the Body of Christ, 4; *see 1 Corinthians 12:13, 27.*
- ♦ Some gift to serve God and his people, 6–8
- ♦ A new ability to do good and abstain from evil, 9–21; *see Romans 6:6–7:4; 8:3–4, 13.*

## The Church

### Its membership

- ♦ The church consists of all those who have received God's mercy.
- ♦ The church is the Body of Christ, with each believer a living member, 4.
- ♦ Each member has some particular gift, which must be exercised, 6.
- ♦ The church is a fellowship of like-minded and like-hearted people who share their lives and abilities with each other, 9-15.
- ♦ The church will suffer persecution in this age, 17-21.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, God will repay all who have, without repentance, done evil, especially those who have persecuted his people, 19.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Reflect on God's mercies often, 1.
- ♦ Offer ourselves, body and soul, to God in whole-hearted worship and service, 1.
- ♦ Ask God to transform our inner man by the renewing of our mind, which takes place as we meditate upon Scripture, 2. *See Psalm 1:1-3; 19:7-14; and John 8:32.*
- ♦ Ask God to give us humble wisdom to understand what we can and should do in serving him, especially within the Body of Christ, 3-5.
- ♦ Bend all efforts to fulfill the ministry God has given us, 6-8.
- ♦ Meditate upon the commands in 9-21, asking God to change us increasingly into the image of Christ.
- ♦ Resist the temptation to return evil with evil, 17-21.

# Romans 13

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “Be subject to the governing authorities,” 1–7; *see Titus 3:1–2 and 1 Peter 2:13–17.*
- ♦ “There is no authority except from God,” 1; *see John 18:11.*
- ♦ “He is God’s minister [servant],” 4; *see Isaiah 45:1–7.*
- ♦ Pay taxes, 7; *see Matthew 22:21.*
- ♦ “Love is the fulfillment of the law,” 10; *see Galatians 5:13–14 and Matthew 22:37–40.*
- ♦ “The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery . . .,’” 9; *see Exodus 20:13–17 and Deuteronomy 5:17–21.*
- ♦ “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” 9; *see Leviticus 19:18.*
- ♦ Now is the time to put off works of darkness, 11–13; *see Ephesians 5:8–14 and 1 Peter 4:2–3.*
- ♦ “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” 14; *see Galatians 3:27.*
- ♦ “The night is far spent, the day is at hand,” that is, the end is near, 12; *see Matthew 24:33; 1 Corinthians 7:29; Philipians 4:5; James 5:8–9; 1 Peter 4:7; and 1 John 2:18.*
- ♦ “Make no provision for the flesh,” 14; *see Romans 8:12–13.*

### God

His greatness: He is the source of all rule and authority, 1.

His goodness

- ♦ He has established civil authorities for the good of society, to prevent chaos from ruling, 1–6.
- ♦ He rules through earthly rulers, 6.
- ♦ He has communicated to us his moral will in the Ten Commandments, 9.

- ♦ He is full of love and wills for us to manifest his love to others, 8–10. *See Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:7–8.*
- ♦ He has promised eternal salvation to us, 11. *See Romans 5:9.*
- ♦ He is light and requires us to walk according to the light of his commands, 12–13. *See 1 John 1:5.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Lord, that is God, Yahweh come in the flesh, 14.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, 14.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 14.

### His work

- ♦ He submitted to earthly authorities, even though they were wicked and being used by Satan (as well as God), to kill him, 1–7. *See Matthew 18:24–27; 26:57–68; 27:1–56; and 1 Peter 2:13–25.*
- ♦ He fulfilled all righteousness by completely obeying all God's commands, 8–10. *See Matthew 3:15; 5:18; John 8:29; and Hebrews 10:7.*
- ♦ As risen Lord, he is intimately related to us by the Spirit, so that Paul could tell people to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” 14. In other words, he continues his saving work by enabling us to overcome lust and do the will of God.

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ We all have a conscience, an inner sense of right and wrong, 5.
- ♦ We are created to love one another, 8–10.
- ♦ We are prone to nourish sinful attitudes and engage in sinful actions, 12–13.

Earthly rulers: By God's decree, governments have been established among us to promote order and restrain evil, 1–7.



## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Breaking human laws, 2–4
- ♦ Breaking God’s moral laws, 9–10
- ♦ Being spiritually and moral slothful and unaware, 11
- ♦ Drunken parties, lust and sexual immorality, strife, and envy, 13

Its consequences: Judgment from rulers and from God, 2, 4

## Salvation

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who believe in the risen Lord Jesus Christ and call on his name for deliverance, 11. *See Romans 10:8–13.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ Deliverance from God’s wrath, the power of sin, corruption, and this mortal body when Christ returns, 11; *see Romans 5:9; 8:24.*
- ♦ The ability to resist evil and do good, by the power of the indwelling Christ, 14

## The Last Things

### The last days

- ♦ We already live in the “last days,” the era when the Lord Jesus rules over his people by the Spirit, 11–12.
- ♦ This is the age with light and darkness co-exist, but darkness is receding and about to disappear at the coming of the light of Christ, 12.

Christ’s return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, he will save his people, 11.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Submit to earthly rulers; that includes paying taxes.

*Note: Some situations are very complex. For a discussion of the events leading up to the American War of Independence, see G. Wright Doyle, Christianity in America: Triumph and Tragedy.*

- ♦ Ask God to give us hearts to love others as we already love ourselves, and to avoid harmful actions.
- ♦ Be spiritually alert, always on guard against evil and attentive to what is right.  
*See 1 Peter 4:7-8 and 2 Peter 3:10-14.*

# Romans 14

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Religious food and holy day regulations of the Mosaic Law, 1–23; *see Exodus 20:8–11; Leviticus 11; and Deuteronomy 14.*
- ♦ Different convictions on ceremonial regulations held by Christians, 2; *see 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1.*
- ♦ Eating vegetables only, in order to avoid eating meat that had been offered to idols, 2; *see Daniel 1:8, 10, 12, 16.*
- ♦ Do not judge others on the basis of the ceremonial law, 3; *see Colossians 2:16.*
- ♦ Each day is alike in God’s eyes, that is, the Old Testament laws about the Sabbath are no longer in force for Christians, 5; *see Galatians 4:10 and Colossians 2:16–17.*
- ♦ The coming judgment, 10–12; *see Isaiah 45:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:10.*
- ♦ Judgment will be according to works, not as a ground for justification, but for assessment and receiving rewards or incurring loss, 10–12; *see 2 Corinthians 3:10–17; 5:10.*
- ♦ Stumbling block, 13, 20; *see Exodus 23:33; Joshua 23:13; Psalm 106:36; Isaiah 8:14; Matthew 18:7; 1 Corinthians 8:9; and 1 John 2:10.*
- ♦ Freedom from the regulations of the Mosaic law, 14; *see Matthew 15:10–11, 16–20; Mark 7:14–23; Acts 10:15, 28; Timothy 4:4; and Titus 1:15.*
- ♦ Righteousness, 17

*Note on righteousness: NIV Zondervan Study Bible: “either one’s righteous status before God [4:3; 5:17] or behavior that meets God’s standard [e.g., 6:16, 18].”*

- ♦ “The work of God,” that is, the converted Christian, 20; *see Ephesians 2:10; or, perhaps, the unity of the Christian community; see 1 Corinthians 3:5–17.*

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of Father ["God"], Son ["Lord"] and Holy Spirit, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is the source of all good things, including our food, 6.
- ♦ He is omnipresent, omniscient, and all-powerful; he knows what we do and will hold us all accountable, 12, 22.
- ♦ He is the King of the universe, 17.

### His goodness

- ♦ He "receives," that is, accepts, those who serve him according to his conscience, 3.
- ♦ He is able to make his faithful followers "stand" at the day of judgment, 4.
- ♦ He is righteous, 17.
- ♦ He gives peace – that is reconciliation and a relationship of love – to all who trust in Christ, 17. *See Romans 5:1.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the risen Lord, before whom all are accountable, 6–8.
- ♦ He is the Lord of all people, 8.
- ♦ He is the coming judge of all, 10. *See 2 Corinthians 5:10.*
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, Yahweh come in the flesh, 11, 14.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, 14.

### His work

- ♦ He died and rose again to save us from our sins, 9, 15.
- ♦ He revealed truth to the apostles about the relationship of the Old Testament and New Testament, 14.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: He gives joy to those who continue to trust in Christ, 17. *See Galatians 5:22.*

## Mankind

### Our human nature

- ♦ We tend to look down on or to judge those who do things that we think are wrong, 3, 10.
- ♦ We do not live primarily in the presence of other people, but in God's presence, even if we are not aware of this fact, 6-8.
- ♦ We will all die, 8.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Disputing with other Christians about matters that are unclear in Scripture, 1
- ♦ Despising or judging other believers who disagree with us about minor matters and who act in ways we think are wrong, though they are doing so with a good conscience, 3, 10
- ♦ Doing anything that would cause another believer to feel uncomfortable in our presence or cause him to imitate us against his own conscience and thus commit a sin before God, 15-16
- ♦ Doing anything that violates our own conscience; doing anything that we are not convinced is right before God, 5, 23

Its consequences: Unnecessarily putting a barrier between us and other believers by insisting on doing things that they think are wrong, 15, 9-21

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who believe in Christ, 22-23

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from God, who sent his Son Jesus to die for our sins and rise for our new life before God, 9.

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being "received," that is, accepted, by God, 3
- ♦ The secure knowledge that God will enable us to "stand" before him on the last day, 4

- ♦ The great privilege and joy of knowing whom to thank for all that we have and enjoy, 6
- ♦ New life in Christ, 7–8
- ♦ The privilege, honor, and status of being in God’s presence, of living “before God,” 6–8; *see Romans 5:1; 6:11, 13.*
- ♦ The privilege of serving Christ in all that we do new life in Christ, 7–8
- ♦ Freedom from the Mosaic Law and all its stipulations, except the moral commands repeated in the New Testament, 14
- ♦ Membership in the family of God, the fellowship of all believers, who are now “brothers” (and sisters) in Christ, 15, 21
- ♦ Citizenship in the kingdom of God, 17
- ♦ Righteousness: either justification by faith or the ability to do things that are right before God, 17
- ♦ The gift of the Holy Spirit and the joy he brings, 17

## The Last Things

Christ’s return: At the end of the age, when Christ returns, he will judge all people, including all Christians, 12.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Accept other believers whose conscience is more sensitive than ours, without arguing with them about minor matters of Christian religious conduct, especially the Mosaic Law.
- ♦ Respect those whose conscience is less strict than ours, without judging them; they are serving Christ, as we are.
- ♦ See all members of the Body of Christ as servants of Christ.
- ♦ Do not impose our understanding of the Sabbath upon others, 5.
- ♦ Do everything as in the sight of the Lord and for his sake and glory, 6–8.
- ♦ Abstain from conduct that offends another Christian’s conscience, if possible, 15–16, 19–20.
- ♦ Avoid doing anything that we are not fully convinced is God’s will, 23.

# Romans 15:1–13

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me,” 3; *see Psalm 69:9.*
- ♦ “For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles,” 9; *see 1 Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:48.*
- ♦ “Rejoice, O Gentiles!” 10; *see Deuteronomy 32:43.*
- ♦ “Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!” 11; *see Psalm 117:1.*
- ♦ “There shall be a root of Jesse,” 12; *see Isaiah 11:1, 10.*
- ♦ Promises to the patriarchs, 8; *see Genesis 12:1–3; 17:7; 18:19; 22:18 (Abraham); 26:3–4 (Isaac); 28:13–15; and 46:2–4 (Jacob).*
- ♦ The root of Jesse, 12; *see 1 Samuel 16:5–13; Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 1:6; 21:9; and Revelation 5:5.*
- ♦ Hope, 13; *see Romans 5:5.*

Its purpose: The Old Testament was given for our instruction, that we through the patience and comfort that come through the Old Testament writings might have hope, 4. That is, the Old Testament speaks to Christians today.

Its theological unity: The Old Testament points towards Christ; the New Testament explains the Old Testament, 3–12.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 3, 5, 6, 8, 13.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is eternal and omniscient, knowing all, and thus able to have prophetic words revealed to his servants in the Old Testament and written down for our instruction centuries before their fulfillment in Christ, 4.
- ♦ He deserves our heartfelt praise and adoration, 6, 9–11.

### His goodness

- ♦ He revealed his will and his ways in the Scriptures, 4.
- ♦ He gives patience to his people, 5.
- ♦ He comforts his people, 5.
- ♦ He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 6.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is God, equal with the Father, as the application of the words in Psalm 69 about Yahweh (“You”) to Christ demonstrates, 3.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, Yahweh come in the flesh, and therefore equal with God, 6.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human man from Nazareth, 6, 8.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah sent to save God’s people, 3, 5, 6.
- ♦ He is the descendant of Jesse, father of King David, and heir to all the prophecies about David’s eternal kingdom, 12.

### His work

- ♦ He came to take upon himself the hatred which all unconverted people harbor towards God, 3.
- ♦ Specifically, he came to suffer reproach and other miseries during his ministry and especially on Good Friday, 3.
- ♦ He now accepts all people who trust in him, 7.
- ♦ He was a servant or minister to Israel, in that he confirmed and fulfilled all God’s promise to his chosen people, 8.
- ♦ He brings the knowledge of God to non-Jews and sets them free to praise and worship the one true and living God, 9–11.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: He gives hope, along with joy and peace, to all who believe in Christ, 13.

## Mankind

### Our nature and purpose

- ♦ We are neighbors to each other; this is especially true of other believers, 2. *See Genesis 4:9–10; Matthew 22:39; and Luke 10:25–27.*
- ♦ We were meant to praise God in loving harmony with others, 6.



## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Pleasing ourselves rather than considering the needs of others, 1–2
- ♦ Insulting God and his representatives, 3

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, 13.

Its origin: Salvation comes entirely from God, who sent his Son to die for our sins, 8.

### Its benefits

- ♦ Revelation from God through his Word, 3–4
- ♦ Hope in everlasting life with God, 4, 12, 13
- ♦ Unity of mind with other believers, 5
- ♦ The knowledge of God as Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, 6
- ♦ The ability to praise God, 6
- ♦ Being “received,” that is, accepted, by Christ, 7
- ♦ Inclusion in the people of God, even if we are not Jews, 9–13
- ♦ Joy in God, 10
- ♦ Joy and peace, 13

## The Church

### Its membership

- ♦ Both Jews and Gentiles, 7–12
- ♦ People of all ethnic groups (the real meaning of “nation”), 11

*Note: Far more than in Paul’s day, the church is an international organism, with believers in virtually every nation of the world, though some ethnic groups lack believers within them.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Accept those believers whose conscience about secondary matters, such as food, drink, and religious days, differ from ours.
- ♦ Seek to “please” others, that is, to work for their welfare, not our own.

- ♦ Search the Old Testament to see how God has revealed wonderful things there to give us patience and comfort.
- ♦ Seek opportunities to praise God together with other believers, 6, 9–11.
- ♦ Study the Old Testament to see the ways in which God promised blessings to Jews and Gentiles alike.
- ♦ Believe the promises of God's Word, so that the Spirit may work in us to give us hope and joy and peace.

# Romans 15:14–33

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “To preach the gospel where Christ is not named,” 20; *see Matthew 28:18–20 and Mark 1:38; 16:15.*
- ♦ “Those who have not heard shall understand,” 21; *see Isaiah 52:15.*
- ♦ Paul’s plan to visit Rome, 22–32; *see Romans 1:8–15.*
- ♦ The offering for the Christians in Jerusalem, 25–29; *see 1 Corinthians 16:1 and 2 Corinthians 8:1–9:15.*

Its content: The core and essence of biblical revelation, from Genesis to Revelation, is “the gospel of God,” the message of his saving mercy to people of all nations through the person and work of Jesus Christ, 16. *See Romans 1:2–5.*

Its veracity: In both Old Testament and New Testament times, special epochs of revelation and God’s special messengers have been marked by the working of great miracles to attest to the authority of the message and its messengers, 19. *See Acts 19:11.*

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God to specially chosen messengers, including the apostle Paul, 15–16.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (God), Son (Lord Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit, 16, 17, 19, 30.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to work miracles, such as healing and deliverance from demons, 19.
- ♦ He is omniscient and omnipresent and thus able to hear the prayers of his people and to be in some way manifestly “with” his people, 30, 33.
- ♦ He has a will, a plan for each of us, and this plan will be carried out, 32.

### His goodness

- ♦ He chose and equipped the apostles to preach the gospel and has continued to raise up messengers to this day, 15.
- ♦ He gives peace to his people, 33.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, that is, Yahweh come in the flesh and therefore equal with God, 30.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human man from Nazareth, 17, 30.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah sent to save God's people, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 30.

### His work

- ♦ He appoints ministers, that is, servants, to proclaim the gospel, 15.
- ♦ He works miracles through his servants sometimes, as he did regularly through the apostles, 19.

## The Church

### Its membership

- ♦ The church is a family, the family of the children of God by adoption and grace, 14–15. *See Romans 8:15–17.*
- ♦ Members in the church receive the ability from God to help each other grow in grace, 14.
- ♦ The church stands on, and under, the Scriptures given to us through God's chosen messengers, including the Apostle Paul, 15.
- ♦ Members of the church encourage and refresh each other by their common participation in the grace of God in Christ, 24, 32; *See Romans 1:10.*
- ♦ The church grows through pioneer missionary work, 18–21. *See Matthew 28:18–20 and Acts 1:8.*
- ♦ The church is found all over the world, 26.
- ♦ Members of the church naturally care about the physical needs to their brothers and sisters in other places, 26–27.

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Membership in the family of God, 14, 15
- ♦ A change in character so that we are able to be filled with goodness and spiritual knowledge, to the extent that we can guide others into wise living, 15
- ♦ God's peace, 33

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Exhort and encourage other believers as we see they need words of grace and truth in order to grow in Christ, 14. *See Colossians 3:16, where the phrase "in you" should be translated "among you (plural); and Hebrews 10:24-25.*
- ♦ Expect God to work miracles that accompany and confirm the gospel, 19. *See Mark 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 12:9-10; and Galatians 3:5.*
- ♦ Actively participate in sending cross-cultural missionaries to places where there is no church, or where Christians are few and the church is weak, 20-24.
- ♦ Do all we can to meet the physical needs of Christians who are suffering extreme lack, 26-27.
- ♦ Pray earnestly for Christians, including preachers and missionaries, who face persecution, 30-32.

# Romans 16

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its nature and content

- ♦ Apostolic teaching is unique, once-for-all, and authoritative in the church; anyone teaching contrary to this doctrine—including the Pope—must be avoided, 17.
- ♦ False teachers will craftily insinuate themselves into the church to deceive people, 18.
- ♦ False teaching will be “smooth,” that is, easy to accept, and “flattering,” that is, appealing to our fallen human nature, especially our pride, 18.
- ♦ False teaching comes ultimately from Satan, the father of lies, 20. *See 2 Timothy 2:26.*
- ♦ The Apostles sometimes used secretaries, or amanuenses, to write their letters, but the words were apostolic, 22.
- ♦ New Testament revelation was “gospel,” that is, good news about salvation through Jesus Christ, 25.
- ♦ It came originally as oral preaching from the Apostles, 25.
- ♦ Apostolic teaching confirmed, explained, and fulfilled the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament, as had Jesus’ teaching, 26. *See Romans 1:2; Luke 24:27, 44; and 1 Corinthians 15:1–4.*

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 20, 25–27.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has all power, even over Satan, 20.
- ♦ He is eternal, 25, 26, 27.
- ♦ As God and Sovereign, he deserves our full obedience, 26. *See Romans 1:5.*
- ♦ He is uniquely wise, 27.
- ♦ He is glorious, and he deserves his glory to be recognized and proclaimed by his people, 27.

### His goodness

- ♦ He gives peace to his people, 20.
- ♦ He will crush Satan under their feet, 20.
- ♦ He establishes his people in their spiritual life, 25.
- ♦ He revealed his will through the Old Testament Scriptures and through apostolic teaching, 25.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, that is, God, Yahweh come in the flesh, 18, 20, 24.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine-human Messiah sent by God to save his people from their sins, 5, 16, 18, 20, 24
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human man from Nazareth, 20, 24, 25.

### His work

- ♦ He is now the “sphere,” “environment,” and ultimate reality “in” whom his people live and work, 2, 3, 7, 11, 12, 13.
- ♦ That is to say, he has united himself to his people in the most intimate union possible. *See Romans 7:4.*
- ♦ He rules over his church and works in and through his faithful followers. *See verses listed above.*
- ♦ He gives grace, that is, the unmerited favor, presence, and help of God, to his people, 20, 24.
- ♦ In some mysterious way, he is the agent through whom God the Father is gloried by his people, 27.

## The Church

### Its substance: The church is

- ♦ “One,” being composed of members who are joined together as a body “in the Lord,” that is in union with the one Lord Jesus Christ, 2, 3, 7, 11, 13; *see Ephesians 1:10, 2-23; 2:19-22; 4:15.*
- ♦ “Holy,” being constituted by the work of the Holy Spirit, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and composed of those who are “saints,” see above, 2, 15; *see Ephesians 2:21-22.*

- ♦ “Catholic,” that is, universal (NOT Roman Catholic), composed of people from all nations, races, ethnic backgrounds, and both sexes, as the various names and locations of the people mentioned in this chapter demonstrate
- ♦ “Apostolic,” founded upon, and governed by, the doctrine of the Apostles, 12, 17, 25; *see Ephesians 2:19–20.*

*Note: This does not refer to any so-called “apostolic succession” of bishops through the centuries.*

*Note: Andronicus and Junia were “of note among the apostles” in the sense that they were well-known to the apostles. The presence of a (possibly) feminine name does not prove that this person was herself an apostle.*

- ♦ Marked principally by love from God for each other, 5, 8

### Its worship

- ♦ The church is built up by the working of different people with different gifts who collaborate together, 1–2, 3, 6, 12. *See Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:7–16; and 1 Peter 4:10–11.*
- ♦ The church met in homes, 5, 10, 11, 23. *See 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; and Philemon 1:2.* There were no church buildings for the first two or three hundred years. Home meetings are the biblical norm for church gatherings.

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who were chosen by God, 13

Its source: Salvation comes to us entirely from God’s grace and election, 13. *See Romans 8:29–30; 9:11–24; 11:5.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ Membership in the church of God, 1, 4, 5, 6, 12; *see Romans 12:1–8.*
- ♦ Being set apart by the Holy Spirit for God’s possession and use and being progressively made holy by the indwelling Spirit, thus having the status and name of “saint,” 2, 15
- ♦ Being “in the Lord,” that is, united with the risen Lord Jesus Christ in an intimate spiritual communion, 2, 3, 7, 11, 13
- ♦ The privilege of serving God, 1, 3, 12, 21
- ♦ Grace and peace with God through Jesus Christ, 24



# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for giving us salvation, with all its benefits.
- ♦ Thank God for placing us into the church of God.
- ♦ Do our part to build up the church through the exercise of our spiritual gifts and natural abilities.
- ♦ Try to maintain contact with other believers in our locale and around the world, as Paul did.
- ♦ Try to act in a loving manner to all believers. *See Romans 12:9-16; 13:8-10.*
- ♦ Meet in homes with other believers; not center our “church” life on a building.
- ♦ Be willing to risk our lives for the well-being of other believers, 4.
- ♦ Watch out for false teachers and not allow them entrance into our fellowships, 17-29.
- ♦ Search the Old Testament and New Testament for knowledge of God, his ways, and his will for us.

# 1 CORINTHIANS

# 1 Corinthians 1:1–17

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God through his chosen messengers including the apostles, and including Paul, 1, 17.

Its recipients: Biblical revelation was given first and primarily to God's people, here called "the church" and "the saints."

Its authority: Biblical revelation applies to all churches at all times, unless a passage has a clear indication that it is meant only for one person, church, occasion, or era, 2. This fact is especially important for understanding the relevance of 1 Corinthians to modern Christians.

Its unity: Regardless of the messenger, the message was always the same "testimony of Christ," 6, or "gospel," 12–17.

Its illumination: The understanding of the meaning of apostolic revelation and of its application to daily life is the gift of God, here called "knowledge," 5.

*Note: "Knowledge" in 1 Corinthians almost always refers to knowledge and understanding of apostolic revelation, not to some knowledge of present conditions, such as someone's illness, which is more appropriately termed "prophecy."*

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called God in the New Testament), Son (Jesus Christ, usually called Lord in the New Testament), and Holy Spirit, the sanctifier, 2, 4, 9.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is sovereign and has a will with which he governs his actions and the affairs of the universe, 1.
- ♦ He possesses all wisdom and knowledge, 5.

### His goodness

- ♦ He has chosen followers of Jesus to be his church, 2.
- ♦ He gives us grace and peace through Jesus, 3.
- ♦ He is the loving Father of all who are in Christ Jesus, 3.
- ♦ He gives gifts of grace, such as eloquence and knowledge, to his people, 5.
- ♦ He is faithful to all his promises to his people, 9.
- ♦ He called us into communion with each other in Christ, 9.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 1-4, 7-10.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine-human Messiah, the anointed and empowered Savior sent by God, 2-4, 6-10, 12-13, 17.
- ♦ He is Lord; this is the Greek word used to translate the Hebrew name “Yahweh” in the Greek Old Testament and indicates that Jesus Christ is Yahweh come in the flesh, 2, 3, 7-10.

### His work

- ♦ He strengthens and protects his people all the way through life to eternal life, 8.
- ♦ He – and only he – was crucified for us, 13, 17. *See 1 Corinthians 2:2; Luke 23:33; and Acts 2:33.*

## The Holy Spirit

His work: He is the Sanctifier of his people, 2. *See 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:2.*

# The People of God

## The church

- ◆ God's people
  - Accept the original apostles, including Paul, as uniquely authoritative spokesmen of Jesus Christ; they do not recognize any other authority, 1. See *Galatians 1:6–9*.  
*Note: This means that they do not accept the authority of the Roman Pope as a modern-day apostle.*
  - Are the church of God, the assembly of those who believe, 3
  - Have received sanctifying grace, so that, separated to God by the Spirit, they have a new direction of life, 2
  - Are called saints, 2  
*Note: All true believers are called saints, not just a few of extraordinary faith or virtue have been named by a church hierarchy.*
  - Form a universal body of believers with a common faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, 2
  - Receive the gospel, the testimony, about Jesus Christ with faith, 6
  - Have been baptized into the church through confession of faith in the name of Jesus Christ, 13–16

## Their identity

- ◆ It is the fellowship of the Son of God, 9, all those who call upon and believe in Jesus Christ.
- ◆ It is the family of God, with all members being called brothers and sisters, 11.
- ◆ It is composed of all those who are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, 13–17.  
*Note: those who have only expressed a prayer to receive Christ but have not been baptized should not be considered members of the church of Christ.*
- ◆ It is composed of believers.

## Their marks

- ◆ The church is of God and belongs to God, 2, 9.

- ♦ Its people call on the name of Christ, 2, and thus are marked by faith.
- ♦ It is universal, composed of people all over the world, that is, it is Catholic, 2.
- ♦ The early Christians met in houses, 11, 16; there were no designated church buildings at that time.
- ♦ It is formed by the preaching of the gospel, 17.
- ♦ It is, therefore, gospel based.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Causing church divisions unnecessarily, that is, on secondary matters, 10
- ♦ Quarrels and contentions among believers, 11
- ♦ Dividing the church on the basis of allegiance to human leaders, 12

## Salvation

Its recipients: See “The People of God.”

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being reckoned holy, sanctified, on the basis of our union with Christ in faith, 2
- ♦ Receiving the effectual call of God unto salvation, 2, 9; *see 1 Corinthians 1:26; 7:20; and Romans 8:28–20.*
- ♦ Membership in the church, the body of believers in Christ worldwide, 2
- ♦ Receiving grace, that is, unmerited favor, from God, 3
- ♦ Being reconciled to God and therefore enjoying peace with God, 3; *see John 20:19, 26; Romans 5:1; and Ephesians 2:14–15.*
- ♦ Receiving spiritual gifts from God’s grace, 4–5, 7; *see 1 Corinthians 12:1–13; and Romans 12:1–8.*
- ♦ Being kept spiritually safe by God until the end of time, 8
- ♦ Fellowship with God, including the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, through Christ, 9; *see 2 Corinthians 13:14 and 1 John 1:3.*
- ♦ Membership in the church, the family of all those who have been adopted by God through Christ, and who thus can call each other brothers and sisters, 10; *see Romans 8:15.*

## The Last Things

### The end of the age

- ♦ Jesus Christ will be revealed in all his glory, 7. *See Colossians 3:4.*
- ♦ This event will take place on “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 8. *See 1 Corinthians 3:13 and Malachi 3:2.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Read, believe, and obey the revelation of God from Christ to and through the apostles, including Paul.
- ♦ Seek to fulfill God’s purpose in calling us, to be holy and blameless, 2. *See 1 Corinthians 6:9–20; Ephesians 1:4; 5:26–27; and Hebrews 12:14.*
- ♦ Receive this letter as to us, and not just to the Corinthians, 2.
- ♦ Call daily on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for all that we need, 2.
- ♦ Thank God for his grace and consequent peace, 3.
- ♦ Thank God for his work in other believers, 4–7.
- ♦ Wait eagerly for the revelation of Jesus Christ at his return, 7. *See Philippians 3:20.*
- ♦ Earnestly seek unity of Christian purpose with all believers, 10. *See Ephesians 4:1–3.*
- ♦ Administer baptism to believers and receive baptism when we truly believe, 14–16.
- ♦ Share the gospel with others without relying on fancy eloquence or refined philosophy but focusing only on the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the resurrection following, 17.

# 1 Corinthians 1:18–31

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ Stumbling block, 6; *see Romans 9:32–33; 11:9; and 1 Peter 2:8.*
- ♦ Destroy the wisdom of the wise, 19.
- ♦ “Not many wise,” etc., 20; *see Isaiah 31:18; 1 Samuel 2:1–10; and Luke 1:46–55.*
- ♦ Weak people, 26, 28; *see Matthew 11:25.*
- ♦ Boasting in the Lord, 31; *see Philippians 3:3; Galatians 6:14; and Jeremiah 9:24.*
- ♦ “Signs,” 22; *see Matthew 12:38–39; Mark 8:11–13; and John 2:18–22.*

### Its content

- ♦ It is the message of Christ, 18, 23.
- ♦ It is folly to the lost, 18, 23, 25.
- ♦ It is the power of God, 18, 24, 25.
- ♦ It is opposed to worldly wisdom, 19–20.
- ♦ It is necessary for us to know God, 21.
- ♦ It saves believers, 21.
- ♦ It is a stumbling block to unbelievers, 23. *See Romans 9:32–33; 11:9; and 1 Peter 2:8.*
- ♦ It is wisdom, 24, 25.
- ♦ It is the wisdom of God, 24, 30.
- ♦ It is power, 18. *See Romans 1:16.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is all powerful, 18, especially to destroy all “wisdom,” 20.
- ♦ He possesses wisdom, 21. *See Daniel 2:20; Romans 11:33; and Jude 25.*

#### His goodness

- ♦ He reveals the way of salvation, 18, 21, 24.
- ♦ He sent Christ to die, 18, 23.



- ♦ He called the despised and the weak, 26–28.
- ♦ He shames the powerful, 19–20, 26–28.
- ♦ He is just, he is holy, and he saves sinners through redemption, 30.

## Christ

His person: He is the power of God, 24.

His work: He was crucified for us, 23.

## Sin

It includes

- ♦ Seeking signs, that is, miracles, to authenticate the revealed will of God, 22
- ♦ Seeking rational and philosophical proof of the truth of God, 22
- ♦ Despising people of lower social or intellectual estate, 28
- ♦ Boasting in the presence of God based on our own abilities or status or possessions, 29

## Salvation

Its substance: Salvation is a process, 18.

Its source: Salvation is entirely from God, 30. *See Ephesians 2:8–9.*

Its benefits

- ♦ Being effectually called by God, 24, 26; *see 1 Corinthians 7:17–24; Romans 8:28; and Ephesians 1:18; 4:1.*
- ♦ Election, 27–28
- ♦ Justification, 30; *see Romans 1:17; 3:21–22, 25–26; 5:17–21; 10:3–10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:21; 3:21; and Philippians 3:9.*
- ♦ Sanctification, 30; *see John 17:19; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; and Hebrews 2:11.*
- ♦ Redemption, 30; *see Romans 3:24; 8:23; Galatians 4:5; and Ephesians 1:7.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Seek unity.
- ♦ Avoid division.
- ♦ Baptize true believers.
- ♦ Recognize the role of evangelists, 17. *See Ephesians 4:11.*
- ♦ Preach Christ crucified, not human wisdom.
- ♦ Seek all wisdom in Christ, 30.
- ♦ Especially seek all wisdom for salvation in Christ, 31.

# 1 Corinthians 2

## Truth

---

### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ The chosen messenger of God not rhetorically skillful, 1–4; *see 2 Corinthians 10:10; 11:6; Exodus 4:10; and Jeremiah 1:6.*
- ♦ “Who has known the mind of the Lord?” 16; *see Isaiah 44:3.*
- ♦ “But we have the mind of Christ,” 16; “mind” here could be referring to spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit; *see Joel 2:28.*

### Its historical setting

- ♦ Paul’s insistence that he is relying not on persuasive words of human wisdom, that is, on rhetorical ability, but on the work of the Holy Spirit, is spoken in the context of the Greek elevation of rhetoric and philosophy. Although Paul’s letters are filled with the use of common rhetorical devices, he does not appeal to the authority of the Greek or Roman classics, as most rhetoricians did, but he appeals to the Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament, 9, 16.

### Its content

- ♦ The testimony of God, 1
- ♦ Christ and him crucified, 2
- ♦ Wisdom, 7
- ♦ The mystery of God, 7
- ♦ What God has prepared for those who love him, 9
- ♦ The things of God, 11
- ♦ Spiritual things, 13
- ♦ The mind of God, that is, the thoughts of God and the mind of Christ, 16

### Its source

- ♦ God himself, 7, 10
- ♦ The Spirit of God, 10, 12, 13, 14

Its messengers: The messengers of revelation include the apostle Paul and other apostles, who possessed unique and final authority, 1-4, 6-7, 13-14.

Its recipients: God's special revelation came through his chosen messengers to his people, 1-3, 6, 15.

### Its power

- ♦ The revelation of God had persuasive power not because of human eloquence or rhetorical skill, but because of the working of the Holy Spirit, 4.
- ♦ This power also sometimes included signs and wonders, such as healing. *See 1:22, 24; and Romans 15:19.*

Its illumination: To be understood, God's revelation must be joined with the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of the recipients, 9-15.

## God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is usually called God in the New Testament; the Son is usually called Lord, 2, 4-5, 7-12, 14, 16.

### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to work miracles of healing and inner transformation, 4.
- ♦ He brings the rulers of this age to nothing, 6.
- ♦ He is eternal, 7.
- ♦ He is infinitely wise, 7.
- ♦ He possesses all sovereignty, including the right to reveal himself to whomever he chooses, 7, 10, 12.

- ◆ His thoughts and plans are very deep, beyond the ken of human beings, 8–11.

### His goodness

- ◆ He has revealed his wisdom to us through his messengers, 1, 7–10, 12, 16.
- ◆ He sent his son Jesus Christ to be crucified for us to save us from our sins, 2, 8.
- ◆ He has prepared good things for those who love him, 9.
- ◆ He has given his Holy Spirit to his people, 10, 12.
- ◆ He has given us good gifts, 12.

## Christ

### His person

- ◆ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 2.
- ◆ As a fully human person, he was liable to death, 2.
- ◆ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah, Savior whom God sent into the world, 2, 16.
- ◆ He is the Lord of glory, or, the glorious Lord, and is thus fully equal with God the father, as the title Lord already indicates, 8, 16.

*Note: Paul makes this clear in verse 16, where he virtually equates the mind of the Lord, that is, Yahweh, and the mind of Christ. He is speaking of the mind, spirit, or attitude that the Christian can have here, of course, but still he has joined the mind of the Lord and the mind of Christ in such a way as to make it clear that Jesus Christ is fully divine.*

His work: He was crucified for us, to save us from our sins, 2, 8.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ◆ He is equal with God the Father, having the same power with God the Father, 4–5.
- ◆ He is the Spirit of God, 10, 14.
- ◆ He is the Holy Spirit, 13.

### His work

- ◆ He effects miracles through his servants, 4, 5.
- ◆ He reveals the thoughts and intentions of God to God's people, 10, 12.
- ◆ He searches, that is, he fully understands, the deep things of God, 10–11.

- ♦ He taught the apostles the truth about God's salvation in Christ, giving them words to communicate God's message, 13.
- ♦ He enables God's people to understand and discern the things of God, 14–15.
- ♦ In other words, he reveals to God's people the mind of the Lord, that is, the mind of Christ, 16.

## Mankind

### Our nature

- ♦ There is a part of us that is called spirit, which understands the depths of our mind, 11.
- ♦ There are two kinds of people in the world, those who are "natural," that is, without the Spirit of God, and those who are "spiritual," who have received the Spirit of God, 14–15.

## The People of God

The church: The people of God, that is, the church, are those who have heard, received, and believed the word of the gospel, the message of salvation from sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, 2–6, 12.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Putting our faith in the words of eloquent and learned men, rather than in the word of God; seeking to persuade others by eloquence rather than by God's word and the working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the hearers, 4–5
- ♦ Killing or executing innocent people, 8
- ♦ Considering the message of God about Christ to be foolishness, 14

## Salvation

### It includes

- ♦ Experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit, who persuades us to believe the word of the gospel, 4.

- ◆ Being given the wisdom of God, that is, the knowledge of God's saving plan for his people, 6–7.
- ◆ Receiving the Holy Spirit, 12; *see Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9–11, 15, 23; Galatians 3:2–3; and Ephesians 1:13–14.*

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ◆ When Christ returns, he will raise his people from the dead and give them new and glorified bodies, as well as hearts and wills that are conformed fully to his moral image, 9. *See Romans 8:21, 23, 29–30; and Philippians 3:20–21.*
- ◆ We are already in the last period of time, because even now this age and the rulers of it are coming to nothing, that is, they are passing away, 6. *See 1 Corinthians 7:31 and 1 John 2:17.*

## Life

---

### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Rely not on eloquence of speech or the wisdom of this world in communicating the gospel, but focus our message on the cross of Jesus Christ, as well as his resurrection; we should use words that come from God and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to convince people of the truth of the gospel and cause them to believe, 1–7.
- ◆ Thank God for revealing to us the hidden wisdom of his plan of salvation, that is, the mystery that is contained in the message of the salvation brought to us through Jesus Christ, 6–8.
- ◆ Trust that God has prepared surpassingly good things for those of us when Christ returns, 9.
- ◆ Continue to ask for God's Spirit to enlighten us about the good things that God has done for us and will do for us, 12. *See Ephesians 1:17–23.*
- ◆ Do not expect that people who do not have the spirit of God, that is, those who are not regenerate, will understand the message of the salvation through faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified for us; pray for them to receive the spirit of God, 12–14.

# 1 Corinthians 3

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ Apollos, 5–6, 22; *see Acts 18:24–28*.
- ♦ Comparing different ministers of the gospel and claiming allegiance to one of them in contrast to another, 4–5; *see 1 Corinthians 1:11–12*.
- ♦ “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” 19; *see Job 5:13*.
- ♦ “The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile,” 20; *see Psalm 94:11*.

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament); Son (Jesus, Christ, usually called “Lord” in the New Testament); and the Holy Spirit, 1, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 23.
- ♦ Within the Trinity, there is an eternal equality of being, power, and glory, but a functional ordering, so that Christ is said to be “God’s” in some way that we don’t understand, 23. *See 1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:23–28*.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He alone can cause gospel ministry to bear fruit, 7.
- ♦ He dispatches workers to establish and edify churches, and he is therefore the Lord of his workers, 9.
- ♦ He has the power to punish sin, 17.
- ♦ He is infinitely wise, 19.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing even the content and character of human thought, 20.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He sends evangelists and teachers to bring the saving knowledge of Christ to people, gather them into congregations, and build them up in the truth, 5, 9. *See Ephesians 4:11*.



- ♦ He causes people to believe the gospel and to grow in their knowledge, love, and service of God, 7.
- ♦ He gives grace to his messengers so that they may lay a solid foundation of truth for a new congregation and build upon that foundation, 10. *See 1 Corinthians 12:5–11; Romans 1:5; and Ephesians 4:7.*
- ♦ He justly rewards all Christian workers for what they have done, 14–17.
- ♦ He graciously deigns to live among his people, those who trust in Christ, 16–17.
- ♦ He gives “all things” that are good to his people, 21–22. *See Romans 8:32.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 11.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the Messiah, God’s chosen and Spirit–anointed Savior of his people from their sins, 11.

### His work

- ♦ He so joins his believing people to himself through faith and the Holy Spirit that they are said to be “in Christ,” that is, in an unspeakably intimate union with him, 1. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2, 9, 30; and Ephesians 1:1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13; 2:5–6, 10.*
- ♦ Through his death, resurrection, and ascension, he has become the “foundation” of his church; that is, the church is built upon the gospel of his saving work for us, 11. *See Ephesians 2:20 (where Christ is the “cornerstone” of the edifice); Colossians 2:7; and 1 Peter 2:4–6.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Spirit of God, 16.

### His work

- ♦ He graciously dwells among believers, as in a temple, 16–17. *See 1 Corinthians 6:19, where he is said also to live within individual believers.*
- ♦ He is holy, 17.

# The Church

## Its nature and membership

- ◆ Members of the church, that is, believers in Christ, are “brothers and sisters” in Christ, 1.
- ◆ They are spiritual people, as distinct from “natural,” or “soulish” people; that is, they have received the Spirit of God, while others have not, 1. *See 1 Corinthians 2:14–15; and Romans 8:8–11, 15.*
- ◆ Some Christians are “babes” in the bad sense, not just new in the faith, but childishly holding onto worldly attitudes, 2; in particular, they cannot accept the message of the cross of Christ as central to Christian belief, thought, and practice, 1. *See 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:2.* Instead, they over-value wisdom, power, eloquence, rather than suffering with Christ, 2. Almost all of 2 Corinthians addresses this fundamental error of the Corinthians Christians. *See, for example, 2 Corinthians 12:5–10.*
- ◆ Some believers are “carnal,” or “fleshly,” in the sense that, though they have the Spirit, they think and act like “men,” that is, mere men, those who have not received the Spirit of God, 1, 3.
- ◆ There are not, however, two classes of Christians, “spiritual” and “carnal,” nor is being “carnal” acceptable; there are only two kinds of people, spiritual and natural, or soulish.
- ◆ “Carnal” Christians act like unregenerate people in one special way: they accept the world’s standards about leadership and eloquence. They identify with certain outstanding leaders in distinction to, and opposition to, others, who identify with other leaders. This whole way of thinking is not “spiritual,” that is, it does not reflect the activity of the Spirit, the “mind” or “spirit” (the Greek word in 2:16) of Christ, 4.
- ◆ As a result, they manifest unspiritual attitudes and actions, such as envy, jealousy, that leads to strife, leading to divisions, 3.
- ◆ The church is composed of those who truly believe in Jesus Christ alone as Savior, 5.
- ◆ The church is God’s “field” in which the Word is sown and watered, and which produces fruit, 6–8.
- ◆ The church is God’s “edifice,” large building, temple, in which, by the Spirit, he dwells, 9–13, 16–17. *See Ephesians 2:19–22; and 1 Peter 2:4–9.*

*Note: Nowhere in the New Testament is the “church” equated with a physical building. In fact, all churches met in homes. There is no biblical warrant for building-based Christianity. The people of God are the building, the temple, the church.*

### Its leaders

- ♦ Evangelists and teachers are God's servants, each with his particular role and function, 5–6. *See 1 Corinthians 12:28–20; and Ephesians 4:11.*
- ♦ All their productive activity is due to God's grace working through them, not to their own wisdom or eloquence, 6–8, 10.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Envy, 3
- ♦ Strife, 3
- ♦ Immature allegiance to different church leaders and teachers, 4

### Its consequences

- ♦ Church divisions, 3
- ♦ Building on the foundation of the gospel with any teaching that does not focus on the saving work of Christ on the cross and resurrection, 12
- ♦ Causing harm to the church through false teaching, 17
- ♦ Thinking that we are wise according to worldly standards, and thus wise before God, 18–19
- ♦ All sorts of deceit, 19
- ♦ Filling our minds with worldly thoughts, which are futile; that is, they won't bring us happiness that comes from knowing God, 20
- ♦ Boasting in oneself, including one's supposed knowledge, 21; *see 1 Corinthians 1:29–31.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being "in Christ," that is, joined to him in an intimate spiritual union, 1; *see 1 Corinthians 1:2, 9, 30; and Ephesians 1:1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13; 2:5–6, 10.*
- ♦ Being a part of God's building, the church, the Body of Christ, the true temple of God, composed of all believers, 9, 16
- ♦ Having the Spirit of God in us, 16
- ♦ Being considered holy before God, along with other believers, 17; *see 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11.*

- ♦ Possessing “all things,” that is, all the spiritual riches God has given us in Christ, including the ministry of outstanding teachers; meaningful and even spiritually victorious life in this world; God’s presence and blessing in the present; eternal life with God and all believers in the next life; Christ as our Savior and Lord, with all his benefits, 21–23

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ What Christian evangelists and teachers have done will become clear, that is, whether they have stuck to the foundational truths about Jesus Christ and especially his saving work on the cross, in their teaching, 13.
- ♦ If they have been faithful, they will receive some sort of reward in heaven, 14.
- ♦ Whether they have been faithful to the gospel will decide whether, or how much, of their preaching and teaching ministry will endure God’s fire of judgment and purification; some of their “work” will be burned, that is, destroyed and brought to nothing, 15.
- ♦ If a preacher or teacher has not communicated the pure gospel, he will be “ruined,” that is, he will suffer some kind of loss, though he will himself be saved from eternal hell, 15, 17.

*Note: This passage provides no support for the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, according to which all Christians except for “saints” go to a place of purifying punishment for their sins on earth, until they are “ready” to enter Paradise. For one thing, in the New Testament, all true believers are called “saints,” as is seen in 1:2; 6:11; Ephesians 1:1, and always in the New Testament. For another, there is only one judgment, and that comes to all at death. See Hebrews 9:27. This means that the entire structure of Dante’s Divine Comedy is unbiblical, though parts of it are true and beautiful.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Adjust our teaching to the spiritual condition of our hearers, 1–2. *See Hebrews 5:12–6:2.*
- ♦ Do not attach ourselves to different Christian teachers as their disciples, to the disregard or disdain of other teachers, 4–8, 21.

- ♦ Do not form denominational parties based on the teachings of one person, 4.
- ♦ Be careful how we preach and teach Christian doctrine, holding firmly to the foundational truths of Christ and him crucified, with the implications thereof, 11. *See 1 Corinthians 2:2.*
- ♦ Remember that the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and treat it as infinitely valuable, 16–17.
- ♦ Seek to discern the presence of God in other believers, and act as if God were present in each Christian gathering, for he is, 16.
- ♦ Avoid thinking that we are wise if we have some worldly knowledge or eloquence, 18.
- ♦ Thank God for giving us “all things,” that is, all good things, all spiritual blessings, in Christ, 22. *See Romans 8:32 and Ephesians 1:3.*

# 1 Corinthians 4

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its content: New Testament revelation was the unfolding of the “mysteries of God,” that is, previously hidden truths now made clear through the gospel; the central truth was the work of Christ and the resulting incorporation of the Gentiles into the people of God, 1. *See Ephesians 3:1–12.*

### Its messengers

- ♦ New Testament revelation came through apostles (Matthew, John, Paul, Peter) and prophets (Mark, Luke, James, Jude), 9.
- ♦ It was explained and applied by teachers like Apollos, 6.
- ♦ They considered themselves servants of God and stewards of God’s revealed truth, 1.
- ♦ The apostles, and especially Paul, suffered greatly and were often despised, 9–12.
- ♦ They cared deeply for God’s people, 14, 17. *See James 1:19; 1 Peter 2:11; 4:12; 2 Peter 3:14; 1 John 4:7; and Jude 1:3.*

Its power: This gospel message has the power to transform people and make them into children of God, 15, 20. *See John 1:12–13; Romans 1:16–17; James 1:21; and 1 Peter 1:23–25.*

Its literary form: Biblical revelation employs many different literary genres and figures of speech, including sarcasm, which states something that is not true as if it were true, to shame the reader or hearer, 10.

Its validity and relevance: Unless the content and context of a passage indicate clearly and unambiguously otherwise, Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians remains binding for all churches in all times, 17. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2; 14:33.*

### God

### His greatness

- ♦ His wisdom surpasses ours, so that he must reveal his will and his ways to us through his chosen messengers, 1.

- ♦ He is eternal and omnipotent, forming a plan of salvation from before the foundation of the world and then revealing it to his people in the first century A.D., 1. *See Ephesians 3:1–12.*
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing the hearts of men, 5.
- ♦ He is the universal King and Sovereign of the entire universe, 20.
- ♦ He has the power to transform people through the gospel, 19–20.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He had a plan to bring people of all nations into his kingdom and family, called the “mystery,” and revealed that plan to his chosen messengers, especially Paul, 1.
- ♦ He is just and will reward each person according to his works, 5. *See Psalm 62:12 and Romans 2:5–6.*
- ♦ He put his apostles on stage, as it were, to demonstrate his love and power through their sufferings and weaknesses, 9–13.

## Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Lord and has servants, especially chosen men to communicate his word to his people, 1.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah of God, sent to save his people from their sins, 1. *See Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18.*
- ♦ He is the coming Judge, who will judge his servants according to his perfect knowledge, 4–5.
- ♦ He is Jesus of Nazareth, the fully human son of Mary, whose name means, “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation,” 15. *See Matthew 1:21.*

#### His work

- ♦ He allows his servants, especially pioneer evangelists, but also pastors and ordinary Christians, to endure suffering of all sorts, for his good purposes, 10–13.
- ♦ He has entered into the closest possible union with his people, those who trust in him and have been given his Holy Spirit, so that they are said to be “in” him, 15, 17. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2, 9, 30; Ephesians 1:1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13; 2:5–6, 10.*
- ♦ He uses his servants to bring people into his family by the new birth, as the gospel is preached and believed, 15. *See John 1:12–13; 3:3, 5; and 1 Peter 1:23.*

- ♦ He rules his people, including his chosen servants, so that his will is done in their lives in his time and manner, 19.

## Spiritual Beings

### Angels

- ♦ In addition to God, the one uncreated Spirit, there are created spiritual beings, including angels.
- Angels see what is happening on this earth, 9.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Judging others before the Day of Judgment, when Christ will reveal and evaluate all people, 5
- ♦ Judging others, including Christians, “beyond what is written,” that is, by standards that do not come from Scripture (such as eloquence, appearance, social status, etc.); this also applies to evaluating whether we will associate with them or allow our children to marry them, 6
- ♦ Being proud of oneself in comparison with others, 6–7, 18–19
- ♦ Falsely imagining that our spiritual condition is better than it really is, 8, 10

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being included in the new family of God, in which we are all brothers and sisters, with spiritual fathers and mothers, 6, 14–15, 17
- ♦ Experiencing the transforming power of God, 19–20

## The Church

Its members: The church consists of all who trust in Christ and have been born again through the gospel, 14–15.



### Its structure and leaders

- ♦ In the beginning, Christ gave apostles and prophets with unique, binding, and universal authority to the church, to lay a foundation of doctrine, 9, 17, 21. *See Ephesians 2:19–20; 4:11.*
- ♦ As Jesus had predicted, the apostles suffered greatly, 10–13. *See 1 Corinthians 9:6; Matthew 10:11–14, 17; 2 Corinthians 11:7–10, 24–27; 12:14; Acts 14:19; 23:2; and Philippians 4:12.*
- ♦ Their sufferings include cursing (see Acts 16:20–21; 17:5–8; 18:12–13) and persecution (see Acts 13:50–51; 14:5–6, 19; 16:23–24; 17:5–9, 13–14; 18:12–16).
- ♦ In addition to these, there are other ministers of the gospel, like Timothy, 17. *See Acts 16:1–3 and Ephesians 4:11.*

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ He will reveal all hidden thoughts and actions of all men, 5. *See 1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 139:23–24; Proverbs 16:2; Luke 16:15; and Hebrews 4:12–13.*
- ♦ He will reward each one according to his deeds, 5. *See 1 Corinthians 3:14 (applied to preachers of the gospel); and 2 Corinthians 5:10.*
- ♦ God the Father will also commend those who have been faithful, 5.  
*Note: Christ will return only once, not twice or three times, as some teach.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ See evangelists and pastors as God's stewards, managers of his revelation and shepherds of his flock, and not as saviors, 1.
- ♦ Seek to be faithful in the tasks God has assigned to us, 2.
- ♦ Commit our reputation and final moral evaluation to God, 3.
- ♦ Evaluate ourselves but realize that our self-evaluation will be incomplete and probably also inaccurate, and that God alone can judge justly, 4.
- ♦ Avoid "judging" the moral and relative ministerial worth of ourselves and others; wait until the Lord returns to do his work of judgment, 5.
- ♦ Look for God's praise alone, not that of other people, 5. *See John 5:44.*

- ♦ Evaluate others, especially ministers of the gospel, only according to Scripture, not according to human standards, 6.
- ♦ Eschew all pride, 6.
- Realize that all our moral qualities and abilities to serve, and all our success in ministry, come from God, not ourselves, 7.
- ♦ Ask God to preserve us from conceit and self-satisfaction, 8.
- ♦ Pray for evangelists, teachers, and other believers who are suffering for the gospel, 11–13. *See Ephesians 6:18–20.*
- ♦ Return evil with good, as Jesus commanded and the apostles exemplified, 12–13. *See Matthew 5:44–48; Romans 12:17–21; and 1 Peter 2:20–24.*
- ♦ Honor those through whom we were given new life through the gospel, 14–16.
- ♦ Set an example to those with whom we share the gospel, so that we can say, “Imitate me,” 16. *See 1 Corinthians 11:1 and 1 Peter 2:21.*
- ♦ When necessary, gently rebuke those who are under our pastoral care, 18–21.

# 1 Corinthians 5

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ “Puffed up,” 2; *see 1 Corinthians 4:18; 13:4.*
- ♦ Mourning for sin, 2; *see Matthew 5:4 and 2 Corinthians 7:7–10.*
- ♦ “The Day of the Lord,” 5; *see 1 Corinthians 1:8; Ezekiel 30:3; Amos 5:18, 20; Zechariah 14:1; and Malachi 4:5.*
- ♦ “A little leaven leavens the whole lump,” 6; *see Galatians 5:9; for a positive use of the image of leaven, see Matthew 13:33.*
- ♦ “Purge out the old leaven” in order to keep the feast, 7; *see Exodus 12:15–20; 13:3–10; 23:15; and Deuteronomy 16:3–8.*
- ♦ “Christ our Passover,” 7; *see Exodus 12:1–13.*
- ♦ “Put away from yourselves the evil person, 13; *see Deuteronomy 22:21, 24, for sexual sins; see also Deuteronomy 13:5; 17:77; 19:19; 21:21; 24:7.*

### Its historical setting

- ♦ “Not even named among the Gentiles,” 1; sexual relations with one’s stepmother or stepfather were abhorred by both Greeks and Romans, even though this sin was common, because widowed or divorced men usually married a woman much younger than their previous wife and thus were closer in age to their oldest son.
- ♦ Sexual immorality was rampant among young Greek men, and also, though less so, Romans, 10; they both often had sexual relations with female household slaves.
- ♦ “In my letter,” 9; Paul had written a previous letter, which has been lost.

Its messengers: New Testament apostles had unique authority not only to teach the truth but also to discipline those who disobeyed God’s Word, 3–5. *See 1 Corinthians 4:19, 21.*

Its occasional difficulty: Some passages of the Bible are difficult to understand, and godly interpreters differ.

- ♦ “Deliver such a one to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved, 5.

*Note: This may mean that he is expelled from the church, given over to the realm where Satan rules, that is, the world (see 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19), so that his “flesh,” that is, his sinful tendencies, may be mortified, he may truly repent and return to the community, and thus be spiritually saved. Or it may be a curse that is meant to lead to his physical death, or a pronouncement that he will die, though he will be saved spiritually later. See Leviticus 20:11; Job 2:4; and Acts 5:1–11.*

## God

His greatness: As Creator and universal Sovereign, he has the authority to judge all people, 13. *See Genesis 18:25 and Psalm 96:13.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He chose Israel to be his covenant people and delivered them from Egypt at the Exodus, celebrated by the Passover feast, 7. *See Exodus 12–15.*
- ♦ He “sacrificed” his Son Jesus as our Passover lamb, who took our place in suffering the judgment we deserve, 7. *See John 1:29; 19:14; and 1 Peter 2:21–24; 3:18.*
- ♦ He is just and must judge sin, 9–12.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, and our absolute sovereign, 4. *See 1 Corinthians 8:6.*
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, who came to “save his people from their sins,” 4. *See Matthew 1:21.*

His work: He offered himself as a sacrifice to bear our penalty and secure our liberation from slavery to Satan, sin, and death, 7. *See Ephesians 5:2.*

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

- ♦ There is an evil being, apparently a fallen angel, who holds temporary and limited authority over the unbelieving world, and who seeks the physical and spiritual destruction of God’s people, 5. *See 1 Peter 5:8–9; and 1 John 5:19.*

## Mankind

Our nature: We are composed of a body and a spirit; sometimes the Bible also uses the word “soul” to refer to the immaterial part of each person, 4. *See Matthew 10:28, among many other passages.*

*Note: The popular teaching that we are composed of body, soul, and spirit, with soul and spirit to be rigidly distinguished from each other, depends upon only one verse in the Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and does not accord with the overall teaching of the Scriptures.*

## The People of God

### The church

- ◆ Its members
  - Sadly, the visible church in every age is composed of people who commit egregious sins, 1.
  - Nevertheless, it is meant to be a body of people whose lives are marked by an absence of gross and visible sins, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11.
- ◆ Its purity
  - Leaders and members of the church must refuse to have fellowship with professing Christians whose lives are marked by open and notorious offenses against God’s law, or who cause divisions, 9. *See Romans 16:17.*
  - They must discipline such people by excommunication, so that, perhaps, sinners might repent and return, 5. *See 2 Corinthians 2:3–11.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ◆ Sexual immorality (*porneia*), which includes any form of sexual intimacy with anyone other than a spouse in a life-long marriage between one man and one woman, including incest, but also pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, remarriage after divorce (though Christians differ on what this means), and homosexual activity, 1, 9–11. *See Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:8; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20; Matthew 5:31–32; Mark 10:11–12; and Romans 1:26–29.*
- ◆ Boasting of any kind, 6; *see 1 Corinthians 3:21.*
- ◆ Malice, that is, ill-will, 8
- ◆ Wickedness, 8

- ♦ Covetousness, 10–11
- ♦ Extortion, swindling, fraud, 10–11
- ♦ Idolatry of any kind, 10, 11
- ♦ Reviling, that is slandering or speaking evil of another, 11
- ♦ Drunkenness or other forms of substance abuse, 11

## Salvation

Its conveyance: Salvation comes to us through the work of Jesus Christ, who died and rose for us, 7.

### Its benefits

- ♦ Deliverance from the penalty and the power of sin, pictured by the Passover, 7
- ♦ Communion with God and other believers in Christ, pictured by the Passover meal and the Lord’s Supper, which point towards the great feast when Christ returns, 8; *see 1 Corinthians 10:16 and Revelation 19:9.*

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ He will bring ultimate salvation to his repentant and believing people, 5.
- ♦ This will be on “the Day” of our Lord Jesus, 4. *See 1 Corinthians 3:13.*  
*Note: There is only one such “Day,” not several, as some teach.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Avoid all forms of sexual sin.
- ♦ Practice church discipline corporately, and individually refuse to have fellowship with open sinners who call themselves Christians.
- ♦ Ask God to preserve us from all the sins Paul mentions here, as well as sinful attitudes that produce these outward actions.
- ♦ Thank God for giving us Jesus as our Passover Lamb.
- ♦ Ask God to give us sincerity and truth of heart and life, 8.

# 1 Corinthians 6:1–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its historical setting

- ♦ Minority groups were expected to settle their disputes among themselves.
- ♦ Legal cases against a brother were considered especially shameful by pagans.
- ♦ Especially among Greeks, but then also among Roman males, homosexuality was condoned and rampant.

### God

His Triune nature: God is an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are equal in power, glory, and deity, 11.

His greatness: He is the universal Sovereign, the King, who rules over his kingdom, which is eternal, 9–10. *See Psalm 103:19; 145:1, 11, 13; and Daniel 4:17, 25.*

#### His goodness

- ♦ He has prepared a kingdom for his people to inherit, 9–10.
- ♦ He has provided comprehensive salvation for his people, 11.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, fully equal with God the Father in deity, 11.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 11.

His work: He provided redemption and deliverance from sin by his work on the cross and at the resurrection, and he now saves all who call upon his name, 11. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is the Holy Spirit and is thus able to sanctify the people of God, 11.
- ♦ He is the Spirit of God, 11.

### His work

- ♦ As the Holy Spirit of God, he “washes,” that is, makes ritually clean in God’s eyes, the people of God, 11. *See John 3:5, 7; Titus 3:5, and comments below.*
- ♦ He also “sanctifies” those who trust in Christ, that is, sets them apart by his inward work of consecration, so that they are considered holy in God’s eyes, 11.

## Spiritual Beings

Angels: Angels are spiritual beings greater than humans in power and intelligence, but lower than redeemed humans, who will judge them, 3. *See 2 Peter 2:4.*

## Mankind

Our nature: There are only two kinds of people in the world, the “unrighteous,” and the “saints”; the former are those who have not repented of their sins and trusted in Christ, 1, 9–10, and the latter are those who, through genuine repentance and trust in Christ, have been set apart by the Holy Spirit as the people of God, 1–2, 6, 11. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2.*

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ All believers in Christ are saints, not just a few especially holy people recognized by an ecclesiastical authority, 1, 11.
- ♦ They are also brothers and sisters in Christ, 5–6, 8.
- ♦ They are righteous, both in their new status of being justified and in their newly transformed lives, in contrast to unbelievers, who are called unrighteous, 1, 9, 11.
- ♦ These followers of Christ are called, collectively, the church, 4.  
*Note: The church is neither a building nor a denomination.*



## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ All forms of sexual immorality, 9; *see Leviticus 18:1–23; 20:10–21.*
- ♦ Homosexual activity of all sorts, 9; *see Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; and Romans 1:26–28.*
- ♦ Idolatry, 9; *see 1 Corinthians 5:11; Ephesians 5:5; and 1 John 5:21.*
- ♦ Theft and stealing, 10
- ♦ Covetousness, 10
- ♦ Drunkenness, 10
- ♦ Reviling, that is, speaking mocking and slanderous words to or about another, 10
- ♦ Extortion and fraud, 10; *see 1 Corinthians 5:10–11.*  
*Note: For the Old Testament background, see Exodus 20:1–17.*

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes entirely from the Triune God, 11. *See 1 Corinthians 1:30.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ Washing, that is, ritual cleansing, as pictured physically in the Old Testament and figurately in the work of Christ and his Holy Spirit, 11; *see Psalm 51:7; John 3: 5–6; 13:7–11; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5–6; Hebrews 9:13–14; 1 John 7; and Revelation 1:5.*  
*Note: This washing is figurative, not literal. It is not the same as water baptism, despite a long tradition affirming this connection. Jesus already made that clear in John 13, and the best interpretation of John 3:5 now is that “water” is the same as “Spirit,” and refers to the “washing” of the Holy Spirit, cleansing us of the status of moral defilement before God. The figure of “washing” by the blood of Christ, which is exactly parallel, is obviously not meant to be taken literally, either. Hebrews 10:22 refers to the water of baptism, of course.*
- ♦ Sanctification, that is, being set apart and consecrated by the Holy Spirit, making us God’s possession and giving us the status of being holy in his sight, 11; *see 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; Ephesians 5:26; and Hebrews 2:11 (said here to be done by Christ).*
- ♦ Justification, that is, the judicial act of God whereby, on the basis of the righteousness of Christ, God accounts his people as righteous, just, or justified in his sight, 11; *see Romans 3:21–26; 5:1; 8:30; and Galatians 3:8–14.*

*Note: The position of the so-called New Perspective on Paul, that justification does not speak of how we are saved, but of who are to be considered the people of God, lacks biblical warrant and is to be rejected.*

- ◆ Inheriting the kingdom of God, 10; see *Matthew 5:3, 10; 25:34; and Ephesians 5:5*.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When he establishes his kingdom

- ◆ His people will judge the world, 2.
- ◆ His people will also judge wicked angels, 3. See *2 Peter 2:4, 9; and Jude 6*.
- ◆ The unrepentant wicked will be eternally excluded from God's kingdom, 9–10.
- ◆ God's people will inherit this eternal kingdom, 9–10 (implied).

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do not go to law over property disputes with fellow Christians but submit our disputes to godly people in the church, 1–7.
- ◆ Be willing to suffer personal loss rather than to cause a fellow Christian to suffer loss, 7.
- ◆ Thank God for delivering us from our bondage to sin, 11.

# 1 Corinthians 6:12–20

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its literary forms: Biblical writers sometimes quote the words of those with whom they disagree, as Paul does in verses 12 and 13.

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of the Father, usually called “God” in the New Testament (13, 14, 19–20), the Son, often called “Lord” or “Christ” in the New Testament (13–15, 17), and the Holy Spirit (19).
- ♦ These three Persons are equal in power, glory, and deity, though distinct in some ways hard for us to understand.
- ♦ These distinctions are not only relational and functional, but also, in some mysterious way, ontological or essential, without being in any way three distinct “gods.” There is only one God.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to destroy bodies and other material things, 13.
- ♦ He has the power to raise Jesus, and the followers of Jesus, from the dead, 14.
- ♦ He owns and possesses authority over our bodies and our spirits (assuming that the last part of this verse is part of the original text), 20.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He desires to have an intimate relationship with us as bodily creatures, 13.
- ♦ He will raise us from the dead and give us new bodies, 14. *See 1 Corinthians 15:22, 42–49; and Philippians 3:20.*
- ♦ He deigns to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit, 19.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, 13, 14, etc.

*Note: “Lord” in the New Testament when used with Jesus refers to the Old Testament name Yahweh, which was translated as “Kurios” = “Lord” in the Greek version.*

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah, anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 15. *See Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18.*

His work: He redeemed us from the penalty and power of our sins through his death on the cross and the shedding of his precious blood, 20. *See Ephesians 1:7 and Titus 14.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is holy, 19.
- ♦ He is a person; thus, the pronoun “whom” is used of him, 19.
- ♦ He is from God, as a gift to us, 19.

His work: He comes as a gift from God the Father to dwell in the hearts of his people, as in a temple, 19. *See 1 Corinthians 3:16–17.*

## Mankind

### Our nature

- ♦ We are composed of a material part, the body, and an immaterial part, the spirit; often, the soul is called the immaterial part of our nature, 13, 15–18, 20.
- ♦ The body is an essential part of our being, both now and forever; thus, the bodies of believers will be raised up by God for everlasting life with him, 14. *See Chapter 15.*
- ♦ The bodies of believers are now somehow linked spiritually with the resurrected body of Christ, so that they are “members” of his resurrected body, 15.
- ♦ Our bodies are so linked to our spirit/soul that the act of sexual intercourse creates a mysterious “one flesh” union between a man and a woman (or even between members of the same sex, in homosexual relationships), 15–16.
- ♦ Marriage, therefore, when consummated by sexual intercourse, creates a “one flesh” union between man and wife, 15–16. *See Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1–6; and Ephesians 5:31.*
- ♦ Bodies can be destroyed by death, 13.
- ♦ Our body is meant to be consecrated to the Lord Jesus for his unique possession and use, 13.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Any kind of sexual relations with someone who is not our spouse in a lifelong marriage between one man and one woman; prostitution is one form of sexual immorality, 15–18.
- ♦ Sexual immorality offends against the very nature of our humanity as embodied creatures, for it turns us away from consecration to God and our union with Christ; it also often brings physical consequences, such as sexually transmitted diseases, 18. *See Proverbs 5:1–14; and Romans 1:24.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ The promise of being raised from the dead, just as Christ was, 14
- ♦ Such an intimate spiritual union with Christ that our bodies are members of his risen body, 15, 17
- ♦ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 19; *see 1 Corinthians 12:13; and Romans 8:9, 11.*
- ♦ Redemption from the penalty of sin through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, 20; *see Romans 3:24–25; Ephesians 1:7; and 1 Peter 1:18–19.*

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, we will be raised from the dead and given new and glorified bodies, 14. *See 1 Corinthians 15:35–56; and Philipians 3:20–21.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Do not do things that may be lawful but may not be spiritually helpful, 1.
- ♦ Do not allow ourselves to be mastered by any physical drives or passions, 12.
- ♦ Present and preserve our bodies for the use of the Lord Jesus, 13.
- ♦ Avoid all sexual immorality, even flee from it, 13–18. *See Genesis 39:7–12.*
- ♦ Seek to glorify God with our bodies in every way, including the use of food and sex, 12–13, 18–20.

# 1 Corinthians 7:1–40

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source and authority

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through God's chosen messengers, including Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles and prophets; Paul, as an apostle, had the authority to issue binding commands, 6.
- ♦ Not all that Paul wrote was a binding command; this counsel was a godly concession, 6–7.  
*Note: When he wanted to make this distinction, he did so clearly; otherwise, we are to take his commands as from God.*
- ♦ Sometimes Paul repeated a command from the Lord Jesus, 10. *See Mark 10:6–10.*
- ♦ When Jesus had not given a clear teaching or command, Paul sometimes issued a command on his own authority as an apostle, 12.  
*Note: In such circumstances, these commands had, as we have seen, binding authority on the church. See 1 Corinthians 14:37.*
- ♦ Sometimes, it seems that Paul may be quoting the words of someone else, 1.  
*See 1 Corinthians 6:12a.*  
*Note: We cannot be sure of this, however.*
- ♦ Sometimes, when Jesus had not spoken on a particular subject, Paul gives his recommendation, as a trustworthy servant of Christ and one who has received the Spirit of God, 25–35, 40.  
*Note: In such cases, we would be wise to follow Paul's godly counsel, since it is for our good, 35, 40.*

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called God in the New Testament), Son (usually called Lord in the New Testament), and Holy Spirit, 7, 10, 12, 17, 22, 40.

### His greatness

- ♦ He has the authority to give different spiritual and physical abilities to each person, as well as to assign us to our particular “station” or situation in life, 7, 17, 24.
- ♦ He has the authority to call us to live in peace with others, 15, 17.
- ♦ He has the authority to issue binding commands for our life, including our sex life, 10.

### His goodness

- ♦ He has instituted marriage for our good, as this entire chapter shows. *See Genesis 2:18–25.*
- ♦ He gives the ability to remain single and celibate or married and faithful, 7.
- ♦ He chose Abraham and his descendants to be his special people and gave them circumcision as the sign of his covenant relationship with himself, 18–19. *See Genesis 17:1–27.*
- ♦ He effectually calls his people to know him through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, 17–24. *See 1 Corinthians 1:26; Acts 2:39; Romans 8:28–29; and 1 Thessalonians 2:12.*
- ♦ He “remains,” that is, abides with, has a close personal relationship with, those who trust in Christ, 24.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 10, 12.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah, anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 22. *See Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18.*
- ♦ As Lord, he is the master of his people, with full authority over them and all aspects of their life, including sex and marriage, 22.

### His work

- ♦ While on earth, he issued definitive teachings and uttered binding commands on many subjects, including marriage, 10. *See Matthew 5:1–7:28.*
- ♦ On the cross, he offered himself as a propitiatory sacrifice, a ransom, to deliver us from the penalty of our sins, 23. *See 1 Corinthians 6:20; 15:3; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:24–25.*
- ♦ He now calls people to himself by the work of the Holy Spirit, 17–24.
- ♦ After he rose from the dead, he called Paul to be an apostle, 25.

- ♦ He gives mercy to sinners whom he intends to save, 25.

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Spirit of God, 40. *See Genesis 1:2 and Romans 8:9, 11, 14.*

### His work

- ♦ He dwells within the hearts of believers in Christ, 40. *See 1 Thessalonians 4:8.*
- ♦ In particular, he indwelt the apostles, including Paul, and instructed them in the truths of God, 40. *See John 16:13.*

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

- ♦ Satan, the Adversary, tempts God's people to disobey his revealed will, 5. *See Genesis 3:1–6, 13; Matthew 4:1–11; and 1 Thessalonians 3:5.*
- ♦ In doing so, he usually uses the weak and fallen nature of our bodily existence, including our lack of self-control, which means that we are culpable when we give in to temptation, 5.

## Mankind

### Sex and marriage

- ♦ Marriage was instituted by God and is good, 1–5. *See Genesis 2:18–25; Timothy 4:3; and Hebrews 13:4.*
- ♦ Sex within marriage – that is, a lifelong union of one man and one woman – is good, and should be enjoyed regularly, 2–5.
- ♦ Men and women have a natural desire for sexual intimacy; this desire should be met, within the bounds of God's revealed will, 2–5, 9.
- ♦ Unlike animals, human beings have the power of control over their bodily drives and passions, though they often do not exercise this power, 5, 9, 37.
- ♦ Under ordinary conditions, marriage results in the birth and nurture of children, 1. *See Genesis 1:28; 1 Timothy 5:10; and Titus 2:4.*
- ♦ Marriage, though good and holy, does naturally cause us to seek to please our spouse, which brings added complications, what Paul calls “trouble,” 33–34.
- ♦ Marriage is intended by God to be a lifelong union, 39.



## The People of God

Their identity: In the New Testament, the people of God are members of the same spiritual family, and thus brothers and sisters in Christ, 12, 15, 29.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Sexual immorality, which is any sexual relations with anyone other than a spouse in a lifelong marriage of one man and one woman, 2
- ♦ Refusing sexual to have sexual relations with one's spouse, 3–5
- ♦ Allowing oneself to burn with passion and to express this towards a person of the opposite sex who is not our spouse, 9
- ♦ Leaving husband or wife, by desertion or divorce, 10, 39
- ♦ Remarriage to another after divorce, 11, 39; *see Matthew 5:31–32; 19:9; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 16:18; and Romans 7:1–3.*

*Note: Many Protestants believe that divorce is permissible for adultery or desertion, but "sexual immorality" in the two Matthew passages means something other than adultery, because Matthew consistently distinguishes between fornication and adultery. The most likely meaning of "sexual immorality" in the Matthew passages is sexual relations with someone other than one's fiancé, as Joseph thought Mary had done.*

*Note: Many Protestants make a major point out of the different words used for "under bondage" and "bound" in this passage (15, 27, 39), but that difference proves that Paul is speaking of legal obligation to remain married in 39, and an obligation to insist on remaining married to an unbelieving spouse who insists on leaving. In the latter case, Paul explicitly says in 10–11 that we should remain "single" if a separation occurs, and gives the reason, that we might "save" our unbelieving husband or wife by not remarrying about separation or divorce. See the discussion of this question in my book, The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: A Handbook to Marriage.*

- ♦ Marrying a non-believer, 39

## Salvation

It includes: Being effectually called by God through the gospel, 18–24; *see Romans 8:30.*

## The Last Things

### The end of the age

- ♦ We are living in a time of “distress,” which could also be translated “crisis,” or even “calamity.” This trouble includes both the divisions within the church, causing some to get sick and even to die (30), and the troubles which come to Christians living in a fallen and sometimes hostile world. *See John 16:33.*
- ♦ This present age is passing away, 29. *See 1 John 2:17.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Avoid erotic and arousing physical contact with anyone except our spouse, 1.
  - ♦ Ordinarily, to avoid sexual temptation, it is good for people to marry, 2.
  - ♦ Married couples should seek to serve each other’s sexual drives and desires, and should not refuse sexual relations with their spouse, 3–5.
  - ♦ Married couples should, perhaps, sometimes refrain from sexual relations in order to fast and pray, 5.
  - ♦ Unmarried Christians, including those who are engaged or widowed, should consider remaining single, 8, 25–35, 37, 40.
  - ♦ Those who cannot control their sexual drives should seek to marry, 9, 36.
  - ♦ A Christian who is married should not separate from or divorce his or her spouse, 10, 27.
  - ♦ If they do separate, they must remain “unmarried,” that is, not married to anyone else, 11.
  - ♦ If separated, they should seek to be reconciled, 11.
  - ♦ Even those who are married to unbelievers (presumably speaking of those who believed in Christ after they got married) should continue to live with their spouse, 12–13.
  - ♦ If the unbelieving partner insists on leaving, the believer is not obligated to try to force him or her to stay, 15.
  - ♦ In such cases, the Christian who remains “unmarried” to anyone else should seek the salvation of the unbelieving spouse, 16.
  - ♦ Christians should try to remain in the condition in which they were “called” to faith in Christ – born again and converted to Christ, 17–24.
- Note: “Calling” here almost certainly does not mean what we call “vocation,” though the latter word comes from the Latin word meaning “call.”*

- ♦ Christian men should be more concerned about keeping God's commandments than whether they are circumcised, 19.

*Note: One exception may be that slaves may take the opportunity to become free if it is given to them, 21. The meaning of the clause translated "use it" is uncertain.*

- ♦ Christians should not see this world, or their situation in it, as ultimate; they should "use" this world and the things and situations in it, though not "abusing" or becoming obsessed with them. This principle applies to our marital status, emotional state, our possessions, and economic activity, 29–31. This means that we should not put our hopes in the things or events of this world, nor should we allow ourselves to be crushed if things do not go well for us.
- ♦ It is somehow "better" for engaged couples to remain unmarried and not to engage in sexual relations, 32–35.
- ♦ But those who cannot control their sexual passions toward the person to whom they are engaged should not hesitate to marry; to marry is not at all sinful, 36, 38.

*Note: "Virgin" in 36–37 probably refers to one's fiancée, and the verb translated "give in marriage" in 38 may also mean simply, "marry." This means that Paul is referring not to fathers and daughters but to engaged couples.*

# 1 Corinthians 8

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ◆ Knowledge as a gift from God, 1; *see 1 Corinthians 1:5; 12:8; 13:2.*  
*Note: “Knowledge” in 1 Corinthians always refers to knowledge of divine truth as revealed in the Scriptures. It does not refer to knowledge of the condition of someone’s health or situation in life, as is now commonly supposed. That sort of knowledge belongs rather to the prophetic gift. See 1 Corinthians 14:24–25.*
- ◆ Idols, 4; *see 1 Corinthians 12:2; Acts 7:41; and Revelation 9:20.* An idol is “a cult image that represents an alleged transcendent being . . . a ‘fabricated deity,’ a product of human imagination that has not reality” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible).
- ◆ “An idol is nothing”; “so-called gods,” 4, 5; *see Exodus 20:4; Leviticus 19:4; Psalm 115:4; and Isaiah 41:21–29; 44:9–17.*

### Its historical setting

- ◆ Christians in Corinth lived in a city noted for its many temples and idols, to which sacrifices of food were offered and then eaten by the worshipers, 1, 4–5, 7–13.
- ◆ Some believers were, apparently, also eating food offered to idols, and others were tempted to compromise also, 7–13.

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son (often called “Lord” in the New Testament), and Holy Spirit, 6. *See 1 Corinthians 1:3.*

### His greatness

- ◆ God is unique; there is no other true god, 4, 6. *See Deuteronomy 6:4, where the point is not that God is unitary, a simple monad, as anti-Trinitarians claim, but that he is the only real God in the world.*
- ◆ He is omniscient; he “knows,” that is, recognizes and relates lovingly to, all those who love him, 3. *See Romans 11:33–34.*

- ♦ He is the Creator of all things, the maker of the universe from nothing, 6. *See Acts 4:24 and Hebrews 2:10.*
- ♦ He is the source of all life, 6. *See Psalm 36:9.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He “knows,” that is, he enters into a saving relationship with all those who trust and love him, 3. *See Jeremiah 1:5; Romans 8:29; and Galatians 4:9.*
- ♦ He allows us to know him as Father, 6. *See Matthew 6:9 and Romans 8:14–17.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, equal with the Father, 6.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 6. *See Matthew 1:20–21.*
- ♦ He is Christ, the Messiah, the anointed Savior sent by God, 6.

### His work

- ♦ He was God’s agent in creation, 6. *See John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; and Hebrews 1:2.*
- ♦ He was the author of life at creation, 6. *See John 1:4.*
- ♦ He is the source of new life for believers now, 6. *See John 11:25–26; 14:6, 19; Romans 5:11; Colossians 3:4; and 1 John 5:11–12.*
- ♦ He died to save us from our sins, 11.

## The People of God

Their identity: The people of God in the New Testament are

- ♦ Members of the family of God, and thus are spiritually brothers and sisters, 11
- ♦ Members of the mystical body of Christ, 12; *see 1 Corinthians 12:12–26; Romans 12:4–5; and Ephesians 1:22–23; 2:14–16; 4:4.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Valuing spiritual knowledge more than love, 1
- ♦ Allowing oneself to be proud of one’s knowledge of spiritual things, 1
- ♦ Imagining that we know more about God and his ways than we really do, 2
- ♦ Any form of idolatry, including joining in cultic meals in a temple, 4–7

- ♦ Doing anything against our conscience, 7, 10–12; *see Romans 14:23.*
- ♦ Doing anything publicly that might be right for us to do, but that other believers think is wrong for them to do, and in this way tempting them to violate their conscience by imitating us, 7–13

*Note: The “weak” conscience has been interpreted in two ways: (1) it is one that does not understand that idols are nothing, and that, therefore, we may eat food that has been first offered to idols before being sold in the market; (2) it is the conscience that is still under the sway of previous participation in idolatry and is thus tempted to return to cultic meals in temples.*

*Note: These apostolic instructions are very pertinent to those who live in societies where idolatry is widely practiced, like China and Taiwan.*

*Note: “Perish” in verse 11 means either (1) “suffer spiritual harm,” by doing what one considers wrong to do, and thus “defiling” one’s conscience by stumbling into sin, or (2) “lose one’s salvation” as a result of returning to the practice of idolatry. Since the word “perish” is always used of eternal or ultimate ruin in the New Testament, the latter meaning is more likely, as Gordon Fee argues in his commentary.*

## Salvation

Its benefits: Being “known,” that is, chosen, loved, by God, and having an intimate relationship with him, 3

Its marks: The marks of being saved include loving God, 3.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Avoid all the sins mentioned above.
- ♦ Seek to love God with all our hearts.
- ♦ Love our fellow believers as Christ loved us, and therefore do all we can to build them up in Christ, even if it means sacrificing our own interests.

# 1 Corinthians 9

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ “Have I not seen the Lord?” 1; *see Acts 9:1–9; and 1 Corinthians 15:8.*
- ♦ “Are you not my work in the Lord?” 1; *see Acts 18:1–17.*
- ♦ The wife of Cephas (Peter), 3; *see Matthew 8:14.*
- ♦ Barnabas, 6; *see Acts 4:36–37; 9:27; 11:22–26; 12:25–14:28.*
- ♦ “You shall not muzzle an ox . . .,” 9; *see Deuteronomy 25:4.*
- ♦ Sowing spiritual things, 11; *see Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23.*
- ♦ Those who serve in the temple eat things from the temple, that is, food that had been offered to God as a sacrifice, 13; *see Leviticus 6:16, 26; 7:6, 31.*
- ♦ “The Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel,” 14; *see Matthew 10:10.*
- ♦ “I have made myself a servant,” 19; *see Matthew 20:26.*
- ♦ Running the race of the Christian life, 24; *see 2 Timothy 4:7.*
- ♦ Receiving the victor’s crown [wreath], 25; *see 2 Timothy 4:8 and James 1:12.*

Its historical setting: The Isthmian Games, second only to the Olympics in honor, were held in Corinth every two years. At these games, there were races and boxing matches.

Its content: God’s written revelation, including both Old and New Testaments, is centered upon “the gospel” of Jesus Christ, 14, 16, 18, 23.

### Its messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through God’s chosen messengers, the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, 1. *See 1 Corinthians 15:1–11.*
- ♦ This kind of apostleship was given to those who (1) had seen the risen Lord Jesus; *see 1 Corinthians 15:8, 15,* and (2) had been given a special commission to preach the gospel with the full authority of Christ himself. *See 1 Corinthians 7:12; 14:37; and Galatians 1:1, 11–16.*
- ♦ These apostles had the authority to found churches, as Paul had founded the church in Corinth and to exercise continuing authority over them, as Paul

exemplifies in the two letters to the church at Corinth and in other letters, 1. *See Romans 15:17–22.*

- ♦ In this sense, apostleship was a one-time, foundational gift and office and could not be repeated or transferred to others. *See Ephesians 2:20; 4:11.*
- ♦ Their status and authority were in some ways authenticated by the miracles that God worked through them. *See 2 Corinthians 12:12.*
- ♦ These foundational apostles included the Twelve chosen by Jesus; Matthias, who was chosen to replace the traitor Judas, Matthew 1:26; and a few others. *See 1 Corinthians 15:7.*
- ♦ In another sense, apostles were also those who founded churches, as Paul founded the church at Corinth, 1. *See 2 Corinthians 8:23.* In that sense, modern church-planting pastors and missionaries can be said to be exercising an apostolic office, though not with the authority of the foundational apostles.
- ♦ In any case, the claims of the Roman Catholic Pope and others like the Mormon leaders have no right to call themselves “apostles,” nor to claim the authority to promulgate doctrine.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to raise Jesus and all his followers from the dead, 1. *See Chapter 15.*
- ♦ He has the authority to command all people to obey his revealed will, which in the Old Testament was the law given through Moses, 21.

### His goodness

- ♦ He cares about the welfare of all his creatures, both man and beast, 9–10.
- ♦ He instituted the sacrificial system, with priests, sacrifices, and a tabernacle (later the temple), so that his people could draw near to him despite their sins, 13.
- ♦ He sent apostles to proclaim the gospel and raises up other gifted men to preach and teach in the church, 14.
- ♦ He revealed his will in the law of Moses, 20–21.
- ♦ He will reward those who have faithfully served him, 24–27.
- ♦ He is holy and will requite disobedience at the Last Judgment, and even before, 27.



## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah, anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 1, 12, 18, 21. *See 1 Corinthians 8:13, 15–16, 18–21, 23, 26–27, 29; and Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18.*
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 1, 14.
- ♦ As Lord, he has the authority to command obedience from his people, based on his revealed will in the new law of Christ, 21. *See Romans 7:4.*

His work: After he completed his redeeming work on the Cross, he rose again and showed himself alive to his chosen disciples, 1.

## Mankind

### Our nature

- ♦ Ordinarily, we are intended to get married, 5.
- ♦ We work with the expectation of reward, 7–14.
- ♦ We tend to compete with each other, 24–25.
- ♦ We seek recognition for our competitive effort, 25.

## The People of God

### Their leaders

- ♦ Those who found churches through preaching and those who minister the Word of God are among the leaders of the church, 2, 14.
- ♦ The church is formed and created by the gospel; the church does not create the gospel, 21, 14, 18.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ He will reward those who have faithfully served him, 25. *See Matthew 5:12; 6:4; 25:31–46.*
- ♦ This reward will be everlasting, which means that resurrected believers will have eternal life in an eternal kingdom, 25.

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Support evangelists and pastors financially, 14.
- ♦ Give up our rights when necessary, in order to share the gospel and make our witness more persuasive, 15–23.
- ♦ Discipline our bodies and bring them under our control, lest we be led astray into sin by our passions, 26–27.

# 1 Corinthians 10:1–11:1

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ “Our fathers were under the cloud,” 1; *see Exodus 13:21–22.*
- ♦ “All passed through the sea,” 1; *see Exodus 14:21–22, 29.*
- ♦ “All ate the same spiritual food,” 3; *see Exodus 16:4, 15, 35.*
- ♦ “All drank the same spiritual drink,” 4; *see Exodus 17:5–7.*
- ♦ “With most of them God was not well pleased,” 5; *see Psalm 95:10.*
- ♦ “Their bodies were scattered in the wilderness,” 5; *see Numbers 14:29, 37; 26:65.*
- ♦ “We should not lust after evil things, as they lusted,” 6; *see Numbers; 11:4, 34.*
- ♦ “Do not become idolaters as were some of them,” 7; *see 14, 5:11; and Exodus 32:1–8.*
- ♦ “The people sat down to drink and rose up to play,” 7; *see Exodus 32:6.*
- ♦ “Not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did,” 8; *see Numbers 25:1–9.*
- ♦ “Twenty-three thousand fell,” 8; *see Numbers 25:9 and Psalm 106:28.*  
*Note: There is a discrepancy in the numbers of those who died between the narratives in Numbers and Psalm 106. Perhaps Paul means to include other deaths associated with this or a latter plague. See Exodus 32:28, 35.*
- ♦ “Some of them also tempted [Christ],” 9; *see Exodus 17:2, 7.*
- ♦ “Were destroyed by serpents,” 9; *see Numbers 21:6–9.*  
*Note: Death by serpents’ bites is not mentioned in the Exodus account.*
- ♦ “Some of them also complained,” 10; *see Exodus 16:2.*
- ♦ “And were destroyed by the destroyer,” 10; *see Exodus 12:23.*
- ♦ “All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition,” 11; *see 6; Romans 15:4.*
- ♦ “The end of the ages has come,” 11; *see Philippians 4:5 and Hebrews 1:2.*
- ♦ “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall,” 12; *see Romans 11:20.*
- ♦ God “will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,” 13; *see Jude 24.*
- ♦ “Flee from idolatry,” 14; *see 1 John 5:21.*
- ♦ “The cup of blessing,” 16; *see Matthew 26:26–28.*

- ♦ “The bread which we break,” 16; *see Acts 2:42.*
- ♦ “We, though many, are one,” 17; *see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; and Ephesians 2:15–16; 4:4.*
- ♦ “Israel after the flesh,” 18; *see Romans 4:1.*
- ♦ “Is an idol anything?” 19; *see 1 Corinthians 8:4.*
- ♦ “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons,” 21; *see 2 Corinthians 6:15–16.*
- ♦ “Provoke the Lord to jealousy,” 22; *see Deuteronomy 32:21.*
- ♦ “All things are lawful to me, but not all things are helpful,” 23; *see 1 Corinthians 6:12.*
- ♦ “Let no one seek his own, but the other’s well-being,” 24; *see Philippians 2:4.*  
*Note: In Philippians 2:4, the words “not only” and “but also” are not in the original Greek.*
- ♦ “Eat whatever is sold in the meat market,” 25; *see 1 Timothy 4:4.*
- ♦ “The earth is the Lord’s and all its fullness,” 26; *see Psalm 24:1.*

#### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation is focused on Christ. *See Luke 24:45–47.*
  - “That rock was Christ,” 4
  - “Tempt Christ,” 9

## God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to work wonders for his people, such as parting the Red Sea for their escape from Egypt, providing manna for them in the wilderness, and bringing water from a rock, 1–4.
- ♦ He holds the power of life and death, and can punish unrepentant sinners with physical death, 5, 8–10.
- ♦ He governs all things, even our temptations, and can provide a way of escape for us from them, 13.
- ♦ As Creator and universal King, he owns the earth and all in it, 28.
- ♦ He is unique, powerful, and loving, and deserves our total allegiance and service, 31.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He worked deliverance for his captive people and then provided for them in the wilderness, 1–4.
- ♦ He is a holy God and cannot tolerate sin, but must punish it, 5.

- ♦ He is faithful to his people and will make sure that they will not be tempted beyond their ability to endure and withstand, 13.
- ♦ He instituted a system of sacrifices so that his people could draw near to him without being consumed by his wrath, 18.
- ♦ As the Husband of his people, he is jealous for their undivided love and loyalty, 22. *See Exodus 20:3.*

## Christ

His prefiguration: He was prefigured by the rock that Moses struck in the desert, “That rock was Christ,” 4; *see Exodus 17:5–7.*

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed Messiah, the Savior sent by God to deliver us from our sins, 4, 9, 16. *See Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18.*
- ♦ He is equal with God the Father and is himself, in his being, God, 9. *See Exodus 17:2, 7.*
- ♦ He is Lord, 21–22.

*Note: “Lord” in the New Testament when used with Jesus refers to the Old Testament name Yahweh, which was translated as “Kurios” = “Lord” in the Greek version.*

### His work

- ♦ He provides spiritual drink for his people, that is, the constant supply of the Holy Spirit, 4. *See John 4:14; 7; 37–38.*
- ♦ He offered his body to be crucified, and his blood to be shed, as a propitiation for our sins, 16. *See Matthew 26:26–28; 20:28; and Ephesians 5:2, 25.*
- ♦ He now dwells among his people in an intimate spiritual union and communion, expressed visibly and tangibly in the Lord’s Supper, 16–21. *See 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His prefiguration

- ♦ The Holy Spirit was prefigured in the water that flowed from the rock that Moses struck, 4. *See 1 Corinthians 12:13 and references above.*
- ♦ The baptism with the Holy Spirit is prefigured in the “baptism” of the people “into Moses,” 2; *see 1 Corinthians 12:13.*

His work: The Holy Spirit is the agent by whom we have fellowship with Christ in the Lord's Supper, 2; *see 1 Corinthians 12:13.*

## Spiritual Beings

Evil spirits: Evil spirits are the demons "behind" and "within" the idols that pagans worship, 20–21. *See the Septuagint translation of Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 96:5; 106:37; and Isaiah 65:3, 11.*

## Mankind

### Our nature

- ♦ We all "worship" something, whether the true God or idols of some sort, material or mental, 7, 14–21. *See Romans 1:22–23.*
- ♦ We all have a conscience, a sense of right and wrong, though our standards may differ, 28–29.

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ Its origin and ownership: The church belongs to God, for it owes its origin and existence to him, 32. *See 1 Corinthians 1:30.*
- ♦ Its members
  - In the Old Testament, the people of God were the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, 1–4. *See Genesis 12:1–3; 15:5; 17:1–19; 18:9–15; 22:17–18; and Exodus 3:15.*
  - In the New Testament, all those who truly believe in and follow Jesus Christ belong to the people of God; thus, the Old Testament people of God are called "our fathers," 1. *See Acts 2:5, where "devout men" refers to God-fearing Gentiles, 38–39; Romans 3:20–4:25; 9:6–13, 22–33; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 3:22–4:7; Ephesians 2:22–22; and Revelation 7:9–17.*
- ♦ Baptism and the Lord's Supper

- Many call these two rites “ordinances,” since they were ordained and commanded by Jesus. Others (notably Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, Lutherans) call them “sacraments” since they signify a solemn covenant.
  
- *Baptism*
  - Baptism signifies entrance into an intimate relationship with someone, as Israel was “baptized” into Moses at the Red Sea, and we are baptized into Christ, and thus into his Body, the church, through the Holy Spirit and the rite of baptism, 2. *See 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Romans 6:3.*
  - Baptism for Christians is of two kinds: Baptism with the Holy Spirit and baptism with water.
  - Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the sovereign work of God upon and in the believer; the Spirit comes when and as he wills. *See 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 3:3–6; and Acts 1:8; 2:1–4; 10:44–48; 11:15–18; 19:1–6.*
  - A careful comparison of the narratives in Acts 2, 10, and 11 shows that “baptism with the Spirit” refers to the same experience as receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (10:45; 11:17); having the Spirit be poured out upon one (10:45); receiving the Holy Spirit (10:47); having the Holy Spirit fall upon one (11:15); truly believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (11:17); and receiving “repentance unto life” (11:18).
  - The apostle Peter says that what happened to Cornelius and his friends was the same thing that happened to the apostles when they “believed” (11:17) on the day of Pentecost.
  - This is the same event that Jesus calls being “born again.” *See John 3:3–6.*
  - Baptism with water can be by immersion.
  - But “baptize” and “baptism” do not always mean “immerse fully in a body of water,” as Mark 7:4, with its reference to “couches” indicates and as the description of the baptism of the Spirit as a “pouring out upon” someone also shows. Ezekiel 36:25–27 speaks of God cleansing his people by “sprinkling” water upon them and associates this with the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  - Thus, sprinkling, immersion, and effusion are all permissible modes of baptism, though Romans 6 seems to favor immersion.

- Many ecclesial communities (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist) baptize infants, citing the analogy with circumcision; others, influenced by the early Anabaptists, baptize only believers.
- In the New Testament, **every** mention of baptism refers, explicitly or implicitly to believers. *See Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:16; Acts 38–39, 41 (where “receiving” the word obviously refers to receiving with faith); Acts 8:30–38; 10:43–48 (where the members of Cornelius’ “household” are clearly those who heard the word, believed it, received the Holy Spirit, and received “repentance unto life”); Acts 16:30–34 (where the members of the jailor’s household heard the command to “believe” and where it says that both the jailor and all his household believed); and Colossians 2:11–12 (where Paul connects baptism with spiritual “circumcision” and “faith in the working of God, who raised [Jesus] from the dead”).*
- *The Lord’s Supper*
  - The Lord’s Supper is called by some Holy Communion, from verse 16; others call it the Eucharist, since Jesus gave thanks for the bread (and the cup), 11:24–25. *See also Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:23; and Luke 22:20.*
  - The Lord’s Supper was instituted as part of, or after, a Passover meal. Just as the Passover re-enacted the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, so the Lord’s Supper recalls the deliverance Christ brought to his people by the crucifixion and resurrection. *See Matthew 26:17–18.*
  - The “cup of blessing,” or thanksgiving, might have been the third or fourth cup of the traditional Passover meal.
  - “Which we bless” refers to the blessing of the bread and the wine at Jewish meals, 16.
  - The sharing of the cup of wine and the loaf of bread was a fellowship, participation – communion – in the saving effects of the death of Christ, just as the Passover meal represented a sharing in the deliverance from Egypt, and just as feasts in pagan temples represented a sharing in the worshiping of the deity of that temple, 16–17, 21.
  - The bread was not the literal body of Jesus, just as the people were not literally “baptized” by water into Moses, 2; the “Rock” was not literally



Christ, 3; the cup of blessing was not literally the communion of the blood of Christ, 16; the bread was not literally the communion of the body of Christ, 16; the Corinthian Christians were not literally one physical body, 17; the cup of demons was not literally a cup owned by a particular demon, 21; the Christians at Corinth did not literally “partake,” or share in eating, a physical table, 21. This passage is filled with metaphorical language, as is 11:17–34. To pick one or two words and take them literally, while not doing the same with the other figures of speech, is to be hopelessly inconsistent.

- “Partakers of the altar,” 18: All Israel partook of the Passover meal, although only priests actually ate what was sacrificed on the altar.

## Sin

### It includes

- ◆ Desiring evil things, that is things that are forbidden to us by God, 6; *see Ephesians 4:19; James 1:14–15; and 2 Peter 1:4.*
- ◆ Idolatry of any kind, including partaking of sacrificial meals in pagan temples, 7, 14
- ◆ Sexual immorality, that is, sexual relations with anyone other than one’s spouse in a lifelong marriage of one man and one woman, 8
- ◆ Tempting God or Christ by not believing that we will be taken care of, 9
- ◆ Complaining or grumbling, 10
- ◆ Spiritual and moral complacency and pride, 12
- ◆ Indulging one’s own desires at the expense of the moral and spiritual welfare of others, 23, 24, 29; *see Philippians 2:3–4.*

### Its consequences

- ◆ God’s displeasure, 5
- ◆ A premature death, 8–10; *see 1 Corinthians 11:30.*
- ◆ God’s anger and jealous wrath, 22

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ◆ Knowledge of God's ways and will as revealed and written in the Old Testament, 6, 11; the Old Testament does not just belong to the Jews but is "our" book also.
- ◆ God's presence and power in the face of temptation, 13
- ◆ Membership in the family of God, those who are "beloved" in Christ and are brothers and sisters in him, 1, 14
- ◆ Communion with Christ and with each other in the Lord's Supper, 16–21
- ◆ The benefits of his offering of his broken body and his shed blood, poured out for our salvation from sin, 16, 21; *see 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; Matthew 26:26–28.*
- ◆ Membership in the worldwide Body of Christ, the company of all those who trust in him for salvation and have received the Holy Spirit, 17; *see 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Romans 12:4–5; and Ephesians 1:23; 4:4; 5:28–32.*

## The Last Things

### The last days

- ◆ Though there will be a Day of judgment when Christ returns (3:13), and there will come a day that is "the end," when Christ delivers his kingdom to God the Father (15:24), since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, believers have been living in a period called "the ends of the ages," that is, a time when the old age has been supplanted by the new age of the reign of the risen Christ over this world, 11. *See Philippians 4:5; Hebrews 1:2; and 1 Peter 4:7.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the Old Testament regularly, to learn lessons from the history of Israel, 1–11. *See Romans 15:4 and Hebrews 11:1–40.*
- ◆ Read the Old Testament Christologically, seeing how it everywhere speaks of Christ and points to him, 4. *See Luke 24:27.*
- ◆ Ask God to keep us from the sins mentioned in 6–10, especially "complaining," 10. *See Philippians 2:14.*
- ◆ Beware of spiritual complacency, 12.

- ♦ Believe that all the temptations we face are common to other believers, 13. *See 1 Peter 5:9.*
- ♦ Trust God to give us a way out of every temptation, 30.
- ♦ Be especially cautious about participating in the idolatries of those around us, either material or mental, 14.
- ♦ Be alert to what our unbelieving friends think might be sinful for Christians to do and abstain from these, even if we think they are allowed by God, 28–29.
- ♦ Do all things to the glory of God, 31. *See Colossians 3:17.*
- ♦ If possible, seek to please others, not seeking our own profit, 30–31. Imitate the apostle Paul in his Christ-like life of self-denial and service, 11:1. *See 1 Corinthians 4:16 and Ephesians 5:1.*

# 1 Corinthians 11:2–16

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its content

- ♦ What Paul wrote and spoke were “instructions” that carried apostolic authority, 17.
- ♦ These traditions could also be called “customs,” which came from the apostles and were followed by all the churches, 16.

*Note: These were not merely social or cultural customs, but practices instituted by the apostles, 16.*

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through messengers chosen by God; in the New Testament, these were the apostles and prophets whom God inspired to communicate his Word in writing. Paul was one of these apostles, 2.
- ♦ Paul communicated “traditions” to his hearers and readers; these were things that either he had received from other apostles, or that were revealed directly to him by the risen Lord Jesus, 2, 33.
- ♦ Some of these instructions were also in accord with current customs, 13.
- ♦ Biblical revelation also affirms what the created order, or “nature,” teaches us; this is usually called general, or natural, revelation, 14. *See Romans 1:19–32, especially 26–27, where “natural” means that which is obvious to all who observe God’s creation.*

*Note: General or natural revelation is not the same as “natural theology,” which seeks to build a knowledge of God upon what we can observe from the created order, either apart from special revelation in the Bible or as a source of knowledge equal in authority to the Scriptures. This includes the so-called “two books” theory that virtually posits two equally authoritative sources of knowledge about God and the world: human observation (often emphasizing the supposed assured findings of “science”) and the biblical record. In the Scriptures, there is only one authoritative “Book,” the Scriptures. See especially 2 Timothy 3:14–17.*

# God

## His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (often called “God” in the New Testament), Son (called “Christ” or “Lord”), and Holy Spirit, 3.
- ♦ Within this Trinity, all three Persons are equal in essence or being, but there is an order of relationship, in which God the Father is the “head” of God the Son, 3; that is, there is an eternal *functional* – not essential or ontological – subordination of the Son to the Father. *See 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28; and John 14:28.*

## His greatness

- ♦ He is supreme over all mankind, 3.
- ♦ He created mankind in his own image, showing his power and wisdom, 7, 9. *See Genesis 1:27.*
- ♦ He is glorious, that is, transcendent, “weighty,” immense, and beautiful, 7.
- ♦ He is the source of all things, 12. *See Romans 11:36.*

## His goodness

- ♦ He invites, hears, and answers prayer, 4, 13. *See Psalm 34:4, 15, 17.*
- ♦ He gives the gift of prophetic utterance to Christians, 4. *See 1 Corinthians 14:1–5.*  
*Note: This prophetic utterance (1) can be given to any believer (see 1 Corinthians 14:31); (2) is meant to edify others; (3) is not necessarily authoritative, as are the written words of the foundational prophets and apostles (see 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:31; and Ephesians 2:29).*
- ♦ He created us in his own image, meaning that – at the very least – we are capable of communication with him, 7, 9.
- ♦ He provided the woman Eve for the lonely man Adam, 9. *See Genesis 2:18.*

# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed Messiah of God, sent to save us from our sins, 3.
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, equal with God the Father, 11.  
*Note: “Lord” in the New Testament when used with Jesus refers to the Old Testament name Yahweh, which was translated as “Kurios” = “Lord” in the Greek version.*

- ♦ He is, in some way that we do not understand, subordinate to God the Father, who is his “head,” 3.

*Note: “Head” does not mainly mean “source,” as some say, but refers to authority and rank, though not to intrinsic worth. That is why the Father and the Son can be equal while the Father is the head of the Son, and man and woman can be equal as created in God’s image, while the man is in authority over the woman, 3. See Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:22–33.*

His work: Currently, he governs, guides, protects, and nourishes the church, his body, composed of all who trust in him, 3. *See Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:29.*

## Spiritual Beings

### Angels

- ♦ Angels are created spiritual beings who somehow see all things, including manner of dress, 10.

*Note: We do not know how this verse should be interpreted.*

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ We are created as male and female, man and woman, 3–15. *See Genesis 1:27.*  
*Note: There are only two sexes, or genders; these are innate and cannot be changed.*
- ♦ We are created in the image of God, which means that we are rational beings who can communicate with each other and with God, 7.
- ♦ Within our equality as created in the image of God, there is an order of relationship, in which the man is the head, or leader, 7.
- ♦ Males are, in some sense, the image of God, 7.
- ♦ Women, though also created in the image of God, are the “glory” of the human race; that is, at the very least, a reference to their greater beauty and elegance, including the beauty of their longer hair, 7, 14–15.  
*Note: The creation of the woman was the crowning act of God’s creation. See Genesis 2:18–24.*
- ♦ The woman came from the man, who is thus, in some sense, prior to her, 8.
- ♦ The woman was created for the sake of the man, to be his companion and helper, 9. *See Genesis 2:18.*

- ◆ Despite this different order of relationship and purpose, men and women are not independent of each other; each needs the other, 11–12.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read, remember, and keep the instructions written down by the apostles, including Paul, 2.
- ◆ Teach the truth that men and women stand in an order of relationship that is created by God, in which the man is the “head” of his wife in particular, and that men are the “head” of women in general.
- ◆ Teach the truth that a wife is meant to be “for” her husband, in that she is a helper to him.
- ◆ Encourage women to grow their hair longer than men, 15.  
*Note: the meaning of “covering” is not clear. Some think it was a view or head covering, which it was. Others say that a woman’s long hair is now her “covering,” 15.*
- ◆ The question of whether women should wear a head covering during worship depends on other considerations: Is 11:2–16 about a meeting in which believers are gathered as a church, or does it refer to a home setting? Since Paul does not mention “coming together” until 11:17–18, verses 1–16 probably refer to a family situation. In that case (1) Paul teaches that women should wear a head covering when they pray or prophesy; (2) If 11:4–5 does not refer to women speaking in a church gathering, there is no contradiction between these instructions and his command that women should keep silent in “the churches,” that is, in a worship meeting of all believers in a house church big enough for several families to meet together.
- ◆ “Prophesying” does not have to take place in a gathered meeting of the church, as the example of Huldah the prophetess indicates. *See 2 Kings 22:14.*

# 1 Corinthians 11:17–34

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ I do not praise you, 17, 22
- ♦ Come together, 17, 18, 20; *see 1 Corinthians 14:26.*
- ♦ Divisions, 18; *see 1 Corinthians 1:10–13; 3:3.*
- ♦ The Lord’s Supper, 20; *see Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; and Luke 22:17–20.*
- ♦ “I received,” 23; *see 1 Corinthians 15:3.*
- ♦ The betrayal of the Lord Jesus, 23; *see Matthew 26:14–16, 25, 47–50; and parallels.*  
*Note: “Betrayed” can also be translated “handed over,” and that can refer to Jesus’ being handed over to the Jewish authorities for trial, and also Jesus’ being handed over by God as a propitiation for our sins; see Romans 4:25; 8:32.*
- ♦ New covenant, 25; *see Jeremiah 31:32–34; 2 Corinthians 3:6; and Hebrews 8:8; 9:15; 12:24.* For the sealing of the Old (Mosaic) covenant with a meal and the sprinkling of blood, see Exodus 24:6–8.
- ♦ “Cup of the Lord,” 27; *see 1 Corinthians 10:21.*
- ♦ “Let a man examine himself,” 28; *see 2 Corinthians 13:5.*
- ♦ “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep [in death],” 30; *see Acts 5:1–11.*
- ♦ “For if we judged ourselves we would not be judged,” 31; *see 1 John 1:9.*
- ♦ “We are chastened [disciplined] by the Lord,” 32; *see Proverbs 3:11–12; Hebrews 12:3–11; and Revelation 3:18.*



## God

### His goodness

- ♦ In his kindness, he has called out a people for himself, the church, the assembly of those who call on the name of Jesus Christ, 22. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2, 26–28; Titus 2:14; and 1 Peter 2:9–10.*
- ♦ In his faithfulness, he has inaugurated a new covenant through Jesus Christ, just as he had promised, 25. *See references above.*

## Christ

His person: He is the Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, equal with God the Father in dignity and deity, 23, 26, 27, 29, 32. *See Philippians 2:11.*

### His work

- ♦ He offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins, to redeem us from sin's power, penalty, and – finally – presence, 24–26. *See Ephesians 5:2, 25.*
- ♦ In his crucifixion, his body was “broken” by torture, and his blood was shed, 24, 25, 27. *See John 19:33 and 1 Peter 1:18–19.*
- ♦ He instituted the Lord's Supper as a memorial to his death and its saving benefits for those who trust in him, namely, inclusion in the New Covenant, 25. *Note: The Lord's Supper took place in the evening; it was part of a meal; it was eaten in a house meeting of believers, as almost all early church gatherings were.*

*Note: The Lord's Supper would have been celebrated whenever the Christians gathered together, which would have been every Saturday night (the Lord's Day being reckoned to start in the evening).*

*Note: The Lord's Supper as observed today in most churches around the world has hardly anything to do with what Paul describes here, except for the reading of 11:23–26.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Causing divisions and factions in the church, 18–19
- ♦ Indulging our own appetites without regard for the condition of believers who have less than we do, 21–22, 33

*Note: The sin of the Corinthian Christians who were wealthier than others seems to have been to eat all the food they had brought to the potluck meal, rather than waiting until all had arrived and then sharing their abundance with those who had less.*

### Its consequences

- ♦ Temporal judgment by God, leading to physical weakness and illness and even premature death, 30

*Note: Not all sickness and death results from specific sins, but much of it does. On the connection between godly living and physical health, see G. Wright Doyle, The Lord's Healing Words.*

- ♦ Final and eternal condemnation by God on the last day, 32

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Membership in the church of God, 22
- ♦ Salvation from wrath through the broken body and shed blood of Jesus on the Cross for our redemption, 24–25; *see 1 Corinthians 1:23–24; 5:7; 15:3; and Romans 3:24–25; 5:1–10.*
- ♦ Inclusion in the New Covenant and all its benefits, 25

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ The church meets together regularly; in the early days, they met on Saturday night, 17–18.
- ♦ The church often has been riven by divisions, 18–19.
- ♦ Through these divisions, even through heresies, the true people and the truth of the gospel eventually are recognized, 19.
- ♦ The church is marked partly by its frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, 20–26.
- ♦ The church has always suffered from the sins of Christians who are not yet mature in love, 21, 19–20.
- ♦ The church is God's; it comes from him and belongs to him, 22.
- ♦ The people of God are constituted by the sacrifice of Christ, which they constantly remember, 23–26.
- ♦ The people of God, because of their sins, are often disciplined by Christ, 30–31.

## The Last Supper

- ♦ The bread and the wine are just that – bread and wine; they do not become the literal body and blood of Jesus after they have been “consecrated” by a priest or minister.
  - When Christ said, “This is My body, which is broken for you,” he had not yet offered his body on the cross.
  - “Body,” means, therefore, symbol or representation of his body.
- ♦ When he said, “This is the new covenant in my blood,” he had not yet shed his blood on the cross; the contents of the cup, therefore, could not have literally been his shed blood, nor do they become such when a priest or minister “consecrates” the cup.
  - The cup was not literally the new covenant, but a representation or symbol of the new covenant that would be inaugurated when Christ shed his blood.
  - “Cup” is used as a symbol, or metaphor, or figure of speech, meaning the contents of the cup, namely wine.
- ♦ The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, in which the bread and wine are said to be changed miraculously into the literal body and blood of Jesus, is without biblical foundation.
- ♦ Eating and drinking “unworthily” refers to eating and drinking to the loss of other believers, as described in this part of chapter 11.
  - Being “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” therefore, means being guilty of sinning against the people for whom Christ offered his body and shed his blood, as symbolized by the bread and the wine.

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ♦ The last things include the second, and last, coming of Jesus Christ our Lord, 26.

*Note: There is only one “coming” of Christ for which we wait, not two or three, as dispensationalists and premillennialists hold.*
- ♦ When Christ comes, he will judge the world, 31.
- ♦ When Christ comes, he will condemn “the world,” that is, the people who have not trusted in him, 32.

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Read often the instructions that Paul gave to the church in Corinth, as well as to other churches, to know how we should believe and behave as Christians, 17.
- ♦ Ask God to deliver us from factions and divisions within the church.
- ♦ Gather at least weekly for meals that include the celebration of the Lord's Supper. *See Acts 2:42, 46.*
- ♦ Meet in homes, as the early Christians did.
- ♦ Meet on Saturday or Sunday night for a meal, the Lord's Supper, and other activities of worship as described in chapters 11:17–14:40.  
*Note: There is nothing sinful about gathering on Sunday morning, since Sunday is the Lord's Day, to commemorate his resurrection, but this is not what early Christians did. Their "Lord's Day" started on Saturday night. The disciples were together on Sunday evening when Christ appeared to them, so meeting then would also be appropriate.*
- ♦ Examine ourselves to see whether we have sinned against the body of Christ, that is, the church, before we partake of the Lord's Supper.

# 1 Corinthians 12

## Truth

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### Revelation

General revelation: God has so created this world that aspects of it can be used to understand and illustrate truths found in his special revelation; in this case, the human body illustrates the unity and diversity of the Body of Christ, the church, 12–27.

#### Special (Biblical) revelation

- ♦ God's verbal revelation to New Testament apostles and prophets is unique, unrepeatable, foundational, and fully authoritative, 28–29. *See Ephesians 2:19–20.*
- ♦ The apostles include the Twelve and a few others, notably Paul. *See 1 Corinthians 1:1.*
- ♦ The prophets spoken of in 12:28–29 are probably non-apostolic, but divinely inspired, writers of the New Testament books Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews (if it was not written by Paul), James, and Jude.
- ♦ Utterances of those to whom God gives secondary prophetic gifts are to be respected, but also tested, for they are not authoritative. *See 1 Corinthians 14:29–32.*

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of co-equal Persons, Father (often called God in the New Testament), 3, 6, 18, 24, 28; Son (Jesus Christ, often called Lord in the New Testament), 5, and Holy Spirit, 3–4, 7–9, 11, 13.  
*Note: "God" in 18, 24, 28, may refer to the entire Trinity; or it may refer to Christ in v. 18 and 28.*

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is able to empower his people to work various sorts of miracles, including healing and the ability to speak in a previously unknown tongue, 9–10, 28, 30.
- ♦ He has created a "new thing," the Body of Christ, composed of all sorts of people from all sorts of cultures, but united by their common faith in Jesus

Christ and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each one, 13, 18, 24. *See Ephesians 2:10, 14-18.*

- ♦ He has, in his supreme authority, appointed certain people to fulfill certain roles and functions within the Body of Christ, 28.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He has delivered his people from bondage to demons, idols, and false “gods” of all kinds, 2. *See 1 Thessalonians 1:9.*
- ♦ He has placed us into the Body of Christ, the church, and given us gifts and abilities that, when we work together, build us all up into full maturity in Christ, 4-11. *See Ephesians 4:7-16.*
- ♦ He has overcome our natural differences and divisions to create a supernatural unity of being and experience in Christ, 12.
- ♦ He has even dignified those whom we consider “useless” or even “dishonorable” by giving each of us worth, equal membership in the Body of Christ and a unique role to play within the church, 15-26.

## Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 3.
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, 3, 5.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine-human Messiah, anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 12, 27.
- ♦ He is so intimately united with believers as individuals and as a corporate entity that the church is called his body, 12. *See Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4, 12-16; 5:22-33.*

His work: He enables different members of the church to engage in different activities that edify his body, 5. *See Ephesians 4:7-16.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Spirit of God, and therefore fully equal with God the Father, 3.

#### His work

- ♦ He enables people to say, “Jesus is Lord,” 3. *See John 15:26; 16:8-14.*  
*Note: This could mean either that (1) he moves even non-believers to confess that Jesus is Lord; see Philippians 2:10-11. It is a fact that many who are not born again call Jesus*

*“Lord,” including Hindus, nominal Christians, and those who simply refer to him by this title, like many Chinese; or that (2) only a person born again by the Spirit can say “Jesus is Lord” in the full sense of that term. In the context of Corinth, a Roman colony, and of the Roman Empire as a whole, as well as throughout the ages, Christians have often died for their confession that only Jesus Christ is the Lord of the universe and of all mankind.*

- ♦ He distributes special abilities, and manifest his power, among members of the Christian assembly, 4, 7–11.
- ♦ These distributions of the Spirit come by his sovereign will, not by the decisions of men, 11.

*Note: This would imply that we cannot “claim” a spiritual gift, such as speaking in tongues, or try to “prime the pump” of the Spirit by beginning to utter nonsense syllables, in order to gain the gift of speaking with tongues.*

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ God made us as embodied creatures, 18, 24.
- ♦ As created by God, the body is a complex unity, with harmony of proportion and of action, 18, 24.

### Our fallen state

- ♦ Before we are born again, we are all led around by idols – material and mental – that cannot speak a true word, 2.
- ♦ Since the Fall of Adam and Eve, we have been ashamed of certain parts of our body, and seek to cover them up, thus, inadvertently, giving them greater “honor” that the parts we don’t mind being seen by others, 24.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Any kind of idolatry, 2
- ♦ Cursing Jesus Christ our Lord, 3
- ♦ Imagining that, since we are not like another person in the church, we don’t belong to the church, or have nothing to contribute to its life and growth, 15–17
- ♦ Imagining, or saying, that we don’t need another Christian with a different spiritual gift from the one we have, 21
- ♦ Causing divisions in the church – a major theme of 1 Corinthians, 25

- ♦ Seeking lesser gifts, notably the gift of tongues, 20–21; *see 1 Corinthians 14:1–25*.

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Freedom from bondage to idols, whether mental or material, 2
- ♦ Receiving faith, through the Spirit, to acknowledge and worship Jesus as Lord, 3
- ♦ Receiving one or more spiritual gifts, 4–11, 28–31
- ♦ The many benefits of the proper operation of spiritual gifts in the church, including wisdom, knowledge of God’s word and will, healing, etc., 4–11
- ♦ Membership in the Body of Christ, 12–27
- ♦ Union with Christ in fellowship with other believers, 12
- ♦ Baptism with (or, by) the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, 13; this is the same thing as receiving the Spirit, being born again by the Spirit, having the Spirit poured out upon us, receiving repentance unto life, truly believing in Jesus, being saved; *see John 3:3, 5; Acts 11:5, 8; 2:38–41; 10–11; Romans 8:15; Galatians 3:2; 4:6; and Ephesians 1:13*.

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ It is a family of brothers and sisters in Christ, with God as Father, 1.
- ♦ Its members have been liberated from bondage to idols, 2.
- ♦ They all confess Jesus Christ as Lord and recognize no other supreme sovereign, 3.
- ♦ They have been given the Holy Spirit of God, 3, 13.
- ♦ They are united as one Body of Christ, 12–27.
- ♦ They come from all sorts of different backgrounds, 13.
- ♦ They naturally care for each other, 25.
- ♦ They are so closely related that when one person suffers, all suffer with him, 26.
- ♦ They are ruled by the teaching of the original prophets and apostles, 28.
- ♦ They are guided by gifted teachers of the Word of God, 28.

### The church’s varied giftings

- ♦ The Triune God gives various spiritual gifts to various people, 4–6.



- ♦ Each person has at least one manifestation of the Spirit, that is, one spiritual gift, 7–11.
- ♦ These gifts include
  - Word of wisdom: Some word of wisdom given by God to speak to another Christian or to the church, 8.
  - Word of knowledge: An understanding of Scripture to share with other believers, 8.  
*Note: “Knowledge” in 1 Corinthians always refers to the knowledge of God and of his revealed Word, not to some special information about someone in the congregation, as is commonly assumed today in charismatic and Pentecostal circles. The latter is more appropriately called prophesy, as in 14:24–25, and in the experiences of some Old Testament prophets and New Testament prophets and apostles; see Acts 5:1–11.*
  - Faith may refer to a special sort of faith in God for particular needs.
  - Gifts of healing including medical skills as well as the ability to bring healing to people through prayer.
  - Miracles may refer to various types of divine intervention in situations that seem otherwise hopeless.
  - Prophecy is the gift to speak words of edification, exhortation, and comfort; *see 1 Corinthians 14:3*; it may also refer to predicting the future, like Philip’s daughters and Agabus. *See Acts 21:8–11.*  
*Note: Prophecy could take place in a private setting, as in Acts 21; this is the proper place for women to prophesy.*
  - Discerning of spirits probably refers to the ability to discern, among different prophecies, which one is from God. *See 1 Corinthians 14:32 and 1 John 4:1.*  
*Note: Some people restrict this gift to the ability to discern whether an evil spirit has possessed or taken hold of someone and the ability to cast out the demon. That is more probably the birthright of all believers. See Mark 16:17.*
  - Speaking with tongues, the least of all the gifts, could refer to the ability to speak a human language that is unknown to the speaker, as in Acts 2; or to speaking in some non-human language, the language of angels. *See 1 Corinthians 13:1.*
  - The interpretation of tongues is the gift of interpreting the meaning of what was said by someone speaking in a tongue unknown to the rest of the congregation.  
*Note: Paul specifically says that not all speak with tongues, 30. To say that this gift should be found in all those who have received the Spirit is an egregious error.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for delivering us from the power of idols, demons, and Satan, 2. *See Colossians 1:13.*
- ♦ Refrain from all idolatry, 2.
- ♦ Recognize and celebrate the various workings and giftings of God among his people.
- ♦ Accept our gift as from God and not envy others with different gifts, 11.
- ♦ Thank God for giving us his Spirit and baptizing us into the Body of Christ, 13.
- ♦ Realize that, just because we don't have a particular spiritual gift, we shouldn't think or say that we aren't a member of the Body of Christ, 15–18.  
*Note: This seems to be a special temptation for those who over-value gifts like preaching, healing, or tongues.*
- ♦ Realize that we need all other members of the Body of Christ, 21.
- ♦ Give honor to those who have less public or “flashy” gifts, 22–25.
- ♦ Realize that if another member of the Body suffers or is honored, we also suffer and are honored; rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, 26. *See Romans 12:15.*
- ♦ Believe and obey the teachings of the original apostles and foundational prophets, honor teachers of the Word, and exercise our individual gifts, even as we affirm the worth of those with different gifts, 28–30.
- ♦ Eagerly desire the gift of prophesying, 31. *See 1 Corinthians 14:1.*
- ♦ Realize that there is a more excellent way than concentrating upon spiritual gifts, namely, a life of love, 31. *See 1 Corinthians 13:1–13.*

# 1 Corinthians 13

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Special (Biblical) revelation

- ♦ Biblical revelation includes “mysteries” and “knowledge,” the former relating to the mystery of God’s plan to graft Gentiles into the people of God, so making one people out of two (*see Ephesians 3:1–7*), and the latter to the knowledge of God and his ways as given in the Old and (now) New Testament, 2. *See 1 Corinthians 1:5; 2:2; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 3:19; Philippians 3:8; Colossians 2:3; and 2 Peter 3:18.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation, though entirely true, and adequate for us to know and serve God, is not exhaustive of all that there is to know about God; our knowledge of it is incomplete, though adequate for us to know and serve God, 9.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipotent, able to move mountains in response to the prayers of his believing people, 2.
- ♦ He is eternal, predating and outlasting all earthly experience of him, 8, 12.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He has given a certain amount of wisdom and knowledge to his people, 2.
- ♦ He is supremely good, in that he is entirely loving, being in himself the source of all the characteristics of love mentioned in 4–7. *See Exodus 3:6–7; Romans 5:8; and 1 John 4:8.*

### Christ

His person and his work: In himself, and in his life on earth, he possesses and embodies all the characteristics of love mentioned in 4–7. *See, for example, Galatians 2:20.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ According to one very strong tradition in Western theology, originating with Augustine and passed on by Peter Lombard and Jonathan Edwards, the Holy Spirit is the personal bond of love between God the Father and God the Son.
- ♦ At the very least, we can say that the Holy Spirit's character is reflected in his work, which includes producing the fruit of the Spirit in believers, the first aspect of this fruit being love. *See Galatians 5:22 and Colossians 1:8.*

### His work

- ♦ The Holy Spirit communicates the love of God to those who believe in Jesus Christ. *See Romans 5:8.*
- ♦ As noted above, the Holy Spirit engenders love in the hearts of believers. *See Galatians 5:22.*

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ Created in the image of God, we are able to receive revelation from him, along with gifts of understanding and expression of truth, 1–2.
- ♦ We have a body, which is material, and a soul (or spirit), which is the “I” spoken of here by Paul; this “I” can will to dispose of the body, even to death, 3.
- ♦ As created in his image by the God whose inner being is love, we are made to receive and to give love.
- ♦ Normal human beings grow from infancy through childhood to adulthood, with each stage having its appropriate ways of speaking, comprehension, and knowing, 11.

### Our fallen state

- ♦ In this life, there will always be some poor people and some who have more, 3. *See 1 Corinthians 11:22 and John 12:8.*
- ♦ In our fallen state, it is possible for us to have knowledge and eloquence, and even to perform acts of charity, but to lack love, 1–3.
- ♦ As mortal creatures, we are temporary, evanescent, and transient, and will someday, along with all our knowledge and actions, pass away, 8, 10.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Any attitude, or action done without sincere love for God and others, 1–3; *see Matthew 22:37–40; Romans 13:8–10; 1 Peter 4:8; and 1 John 4:7–8.*
- ♦ Envy, 4
- ♦ Self-promotion, 4
- ♦ Arrogance, pride, self-importance, 5
- ♦ Rude or ill-mannered behavior, 5
- ♦ Self-seeking, selfishness, 5
- ♦ Irrascibility, quickness to take offense, prickliness, being easily provoked to anger or irritation, 5
- ♦ Keeping a record of other's wrongs, faults, and failings, 5
- ♦ Inwardly rejoicing in any form of sin or violation of God's commands, 6
- ♦ Failure to grow into maturity, 11

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Receiving one or more spiritual gifts, 1–2; *see 1 Corinthians 12:4–11.*
- ♦ Receiving God's love and thus being able to reflect God's love to others by the power of the Holy Spirit, 4–8; *see Romans 5:5; Ephesians 5:1–2; and 1 John 3:14.*
- ♦ Being given faith and hope by God, 13; *see Ephesians 2:8 and Colossians 1:3–5.*

## The People of God

The church: The church, collectively and individually, is – or ought to be – characterized by faith, hope, and love, 13.

The church's varied giftings: Different members of the church are given different spiritual gifts, 1–2. *See 1 Corinthians 12:4–11.*

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, we shall see God face to face, 12. *See Psalm 17:15; Matthew 5:8; 1 John 3:2; and Revelation 22:4.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Make the acquisition and practice of love our highest priority in life, 1–3. *See 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1.*
- ♦ Seek to have the various features of love worked into our hearts and out into our lives, 3–8.
- ♦ Avoid the sins mentioned in 4–7.

*Note: The usual interpretation of verse 7 is incorrect, as Jonathan Edwards showed in his classic work, Charity and Its Fruits. Paul is not telling us how to relate to other people here, but he is describing a love that endures all things for the sake of God and his kingdom, believes all God's promises, hopes in the grace to be brought to us when Christ returns (1 Peter 1:13) and not in this world (1 Corinthians 15:19), and persists as a feature of the Christian life under all circumstances, even to the end of life.*

- ♦ Eagerly look forward to the time when we shall see God face to face and attain to full Christlikeness of character, 12.

# 1 Corinthians 14

## Truth

---

### Revelation

General revelation: God's will and his ways can be partly understood through the things that he has made, such as musical instruments and human language, 7-11.

#### Special (Biblical) revelation

- ♦ Biblical revelation includes the words of the Old Testament prophets, 21, quoting Isaiah 28:11-12.
- ♦ Biblical revelation consists of the very words of God himself, 21.  
*Note: In theological parlance, this refers to the verbal, plenary, inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, by which every word of the Bible in the original text was a word of God himself.*
- ♦ Thus, biblical revelation is called "the word of God," 36.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipresent and thus able to hear the prayers of his people, 2, 28, and able to dwell among his people by the Holy Spirit, 25.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing the meaning even of prayers offered in tongues not known to the speaker or his hearers, 2, and seeing into the hearts of people, 25.
- ♦ He is transcendent and worthy of our worship, 25.
- ♦ He is a God of order, as seen in his creation, his laws to Israel, and his instructions for gatherings of God's people, 33, 40.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He gives various gifts of speech to his people, 1-40; *see 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 28; 13:1-2.*
- ♦ He graciously revealed his word – the revelation of his will and ways – to his people in the Old Testament and through the New Testament apostles and foundational prophets, 36.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: The Holy Spirit distributes various gifts among believers in Christ, including gifts of speech, 1–30. *See 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7–11.*

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ The faculty of language is a distinctive mark of human beings, 1–30.
- ♦ We have a mind, with which we think, and a spirit, with which we communicate with God by the power of the Holy Spirit, although mind and spirit should not ordinarily be separated, 14–16.
- ♦ Speaking with understanding is more important than speaking in an unknown language, 1–2, 19.

Our fallen state: Ever since the division of tongues at the Tower of Babel because of human rebellion, we have been divided by different languages, 9–11. *See Genesis 11:1–9.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Speaking in the presence of others with no regard to whether what we say will be useful and helpful to them, 9, 11–12, 16, 26
- ♦ Over-valuing the gift of speaking in an unknown tongue, 6–19
- ♦ Speaking, or encouraging others to speak, in a disorderly and confusing way in a gathering of Christians, 26–30, 40

*Note: This would seem to rule out the practice of all speaking or praying at once.*

- ♦ Women speaking or praying in a Christian gathering, 34–40  
*Note: This prohibition does not conflict with Paul's instructions in 11:2–16 for women to pray or prophesy with their heads covered. He seems to be referring to praying or prophesying at home, as the Old Testament prophetess did. See 2 Kings 22:14–20 and 2 Chronicles 34:22–28.*

*Note: some interpreters, basing their view on the reference to wives in verse 35, restrict the meaning of "women" in 34 to wives only.*



## Salvation

Its benefits: One of salvation's greatest benefits is inclusion in the church of God, the Body of Christ, where all have a part to play and where all may worship the same God in unity of spirit.

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ The church consists of individual believers in Christ who together make up one Body of Christ, meeting in separate congregations in different cities and towns.
- ♦ "Church" in the New Testament refers to (1) the worldwide universal Body of Christ conceived of as one entity; (2) a particular group of believers in a particular locale, 33; *see 1 Corinthians 1:2*; (3) a gathering of a particular local church, 12, 19, 23, 28, 34, 35.

*Note: "Church" never, in the New Testament, refers to a national, international, or even regional organization, such as the Roman Catholic "Church" or the Anglican "Church" or the Presbyterian "Church"; these are all improper and misleading uses of this word.*

*Note: "Church" never refers to a building dedicated to Christian meetings.*

*Note: For more than one hundred years, the early Christians met in homes; this is the only biblically warranted setting for regular church meetings, though sometimes Christians may gather in other places for instruction, as at Ephesus; *see Acts 19:9*.*

### The church's varied giftings

- ♦ Prophecy
  - Prophecy is the ability to speak words of edification, exhortation, and comfort, 3.
  - Prophecy, being intelligible, edifies others, 5, 6, 26.
  - Sometimes, prophecy also declares the hidden secrets of the heart, 24–25.
- ♦ Tongues
  - The gift of tongues is the ability to speak in an unlearned language, whether human or angelic, 2.
  - Most likely, the language is a human one unknown to the speaker but understood by others, as at Pentecost. *See Acts 2:1–14*.
  - The speaker doesn't understand what he's saying, 2.
  - He speaks to God, 2.

- Speaking in tongues edifies the speaker only, unless there is an interpreter, 13.
- It would seem that the gift of tongues also includes singing in an unlearned language, 15.
- Speaking in tongues is the least valuable of the gifts of the Spirit, since it only edifies the individual believer, 1–2, 29.
- Speaking in tongues is not an ecstatic utterance beyond the control of the speaker; otherwise, Paul would not give instructions on how to use the gift in the assembly of believers, 26–28.
- Speaking in tongues, with an interpretation, must not be forbidden in Christian gatherings, 39.

*Note: Some theologians, especially those of the Reformed persuasion, believe that miraculous gifts such as tongues, interpretation of tongues, predictive prophecy, healing, and exorcism ceased after the closing of the canon in the fourth century. They also point out that many claims to the exercise of these gifts are fraudulent. To this I reply: 1. Yes, there is no new authoritative revelation after the apostolic period and other than the Scriptures as they are illuminated to us by the Spirit. 2. Yes, these gifts have all too often been abused, and many claims of healing and predictive prophecy have been false. 3. On the other hand, (a) basing the “cessationist” interpretation on 1 Corinthians 13:8–10 does not work, for the “perfect” is not the closing of the canon, but the perfect revelation of God when Christ returns, as verse 9 and 12 demonstrate; (b) this view is based on limited personal experience, not on Scripture; (c) millions of Christians around the world experience these gifts today. When properly used, with Paul’s instructions obeyed, these gifts can be a source of great blessing to the church. I have personally witnessed and experienced this, as have others whom I know whose theology, including Reformed theology, is fully orthodox.*

Meetings of the church: There are instructions for when Christians gather together for worship, teaching, and the Lord’s Supper.

- ♦ Each [man] may contribute a psalm, teaching, message in tongues with interpretation, revelation of God’s will for that group at that time, 26.

*Note: “Revelation” here does not refer to authoritative revelation, which is restricted to what God gave the Old Testament prophets, and the foundational New Testament apostles and prophets, 36–38; see Ephesians 2:20.*

*Note: These instructions clearly imply a relatively small number of people at a church meeting, probably in a home. They also seriously challenge almost all contemporary practices.*

- ♦ All must be done in order, that is, one person after another, and not more than two or three in a meeting, 27–33.
- ♦ Every message in tongues must have an interpretation, 28.
- ♦ Utterances of prophecy must be judged by others with the gift of understanding God’s will and ways, 32.
- ♦ Women are to keep silent, except when joining in congregational singing, 34–38.
- ♦ These instructions apply to all churches, everywhere and at all times, not just to Corinth, 33, 37; *see 1 Corinthians 1:2*.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Pursue love more than anything else, 1.
- ♦ Ask God for the ability to prophesy, that is, to speak words of edification, exhortation, and comfort to others, 1, 3, 12, 39.
- ♦ If we have the gift of speaking in an unlearned language, ask God for the gift of interpreting what we say in Christian gatherings, 13.
- ♦ Ask for ethical innocence but maturity of understanding Christian truth, 20.
- ♦ Follow Paul’s commands about the way Christian meetings should be conducted, 26–35.
- ♦ Acknowledge Paul’s authority in all things, 37–38.

# 1 Corinthians 15:1–28

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Special (Biblical) revelation

- ◆ Its origin and transmission
  - Biblical revelation came first directly from God; in the New Testament, from Jesus to the original twelve apostles, and then to Paul on the Damascus Road and later, 3. *See Acts 9:3–7; and Galatians 1:11–12.*
  - Then, Paul and the other apostles preached and taught God’s revealed truth to others, 1. *See Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 1:12; and Revelation 1:1–3.*
  - New Testament revelation also builds upon and explains the Old Testament, 4, 21.

#### Its historical setting

- ◆ The entire Bible, except the doctrinal statements about the eternity of God and of his counsel and predictions about the eternal state, is set within its historical context and narrates events that took place within history, 3–8.
- ◆ Thus, most of the Bible consists of narrative, including many passages in the letters of Paul and others, 1–11.

#### Its content

- ◆ The entire Bible, including the Old Testament, speaks of Christ, 3–4. *See Luke 24: 45–47; and John 5:39.*
- ◆ This revelation centers on what Paul calls “the gospel,” that is, the salvation brought to us through Christ, 13–14.
- ◆ The gospel centers on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, 2–4. *See Matthew 1:21.*

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ◆ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament, Son (called “Lord” and Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit, 15, 24, 27–28.

- ♦ Within the Trinity of equal Persons, there is an order or hierarchy with the Father holding primacy of function, not being, and the Son subordinate to him, functionally, not essentially, 27–28.
- ♦ He somehow fills the entire universe, though he is transcendent, 28. *See Jeremiah 23:24.*

### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power over life and death, being omnipotent, 4, 15.
- ♦ He rules over the universe as King, 24, 27.
- ♦ He is eternal, living before and after this created order, 19, 24.
- ♦ He is transcendent over all, 27.
- ♦ He is, in ways that we don't understand, "all in all," that is, entirely supreme in every way, and present in every "place" and time, 28.
- ♦ He grants saving grace to great sinners like us, 9–10.
- ♦ He gives daily grace to serve him, 10. *See 2 Corinthians 12:9.*
- ♦ He vindicated his Son, Jesus, and made possible our vindication (justification), when he raised Jesus from the dead, 15–28. *See Romans 4:25.*
- ♦ He punished Adam for his sin, thus demonstrating his justice, 22. *See Genesis 3:19 and Romans 5:12–19.*
- ♦ He has revealed himself as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus as our Father as we are in him, 24. *See Romans 8:15–16; and Ephesians 3:14.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to die for our sins, 3.
- ♦ He graciously revealed his will and his ways, including his promises to save mankind, in the Old Testament, 3, 4.
- ♦ He graciously saves people who are his enemies and transforms them into friends who serve him, 10.
- ♦ He vindicated his Son, Jesus, and provided for the forgiveness of our sins by raising Christ from the dead, 15–17, 20.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed Messiah, whom God sent to save us from our sins, 3, 12–20, 22–23.
- ♦ He is the eternal Son of God the Father, 28.
- ♦ He is the second Adam, in whom we are saved, 22. *See 45–49.*

### His work

- ♦ He came down to earth and assumed a mortal body, 3.
- ♦ He died for our sins as a substitutionary sacrifice in our place, 3. *See 1 Corinthians 1:23 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.*
- ♦ He was buried, 4.
- ♦ He rose from the dead on the third day, 4, 12–20.
- ♦ He appeared to his disciples, 5–7.
- ♦ He appeared to Saul the persecutor of the church, 9.
- ♦ He transformed Paul by his grace into his apostle 10.
- ♦ He made resurrection possible for his followers, 20–22.
- ♦ He reigns now over the universe, having been appointed by God the Father, 24–28. *See Ephesians 1:22–23.*
- ♦ He will come again, 23.

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ Our human nature includes a body that can die and rise again, 12–23.
- ♦ Our human nature also includes something other than the body, something that can “perish” in its sins; this must be the soul, or the non-material part of our human identity, 18.

### Our fallen state

- ♦ We are sinners, all of us, 3, 17.
- ♦ We are subject to death because of our essential unity with Adam, the first man and the first (with Eve) who sinned, 22. *See Romans 5:12.*
- ♦ This death is also called “sleep,” indicating the continuing existence of the part of the person that is not merely physical, 18.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Bearing false testimony of any sort, 15
- ♦ Setting our hope upon this world instead of the coming world, 19; *see Colossians 3:1–3; 1 Peter 1:13; and 1 John 2:15.*

Its consequences: The primary consequence of sin is physical and spiritual death, 21–22. *See Genesis 2:17 and Romans 6:23.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Participation in the benefits of the atoning death of Christ for us, 1, 3
- ♦ Freedom from the consequences of sin, including eternal death, 17–18, 21
- ♦ Resurrection from the dead, 21–26, 29–57; *John 5:28–29; 6:39, 40, 54.*

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ The church is founded on the teaching of the apostles, including Paul, 1–2.  
*Note: The Bible produced the church, not the other way around, as Rome claims.*
- ♦ The church stands or falls on its fidelity to, or falling way from, the pure and simple gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, 1–2.
- ♦ The church is governed and guided by Scripture, 3, 4.
- ♦ The church is not only founded by preaching (not the celebration of the ordinances such as baptism and the Lord's Supper), but also continues to grow by preaching, as well as by the ordinances, 1–14.
- ♦ The ultimate ruler of the church is Jesus Christ, 25.  
*Note: No human being or church organization has the authority to rule over the church, not even the Pope or bishops or a group of elders.*

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ He will raise his people from the dead, 20–23. *See also verses 35–58.*
- ♦ Through this resurrection, Christ will gain ultimate victory over the last enemy, death, 26.
- ♦ Then he will deliver his kingdom over to the Father, who will rule forever, 24, 28.
- ♦ At that time, the Son will somehow subject himself to the Father, functionally and relationally, not essentially, 28.

*Note: This verse is one among many that teach the eternal functional subordination of the Son to the Father.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Preach the gospel of Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord.
- ♦ Stand firm in this core message, and not deviate from it to other so-called “gospels.”

*Note: These alternative “gospels” are many, including the “prosperity gospel,” “Liberation Theology,” and the new “gospel” based on honor and shame, and not on the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus to save us from our sins.*

- ♦ Thank God for his forgiveness of our great sins constantly, 9.
- ♦ Ascribe not only our salvation, but all our good works, to God’s grace alone, 10.
- ♦ Work as hard as we can, relying on God’s grace, 10.
- ♦ Beware of placing our hopes on anything in this age – marriage, family, health, wealth, political freedom, success, etc., 19.
- ♦ Set our hope fully on the grace to be brought to us when Christ returns, 19–28.



# 1 Corinthians 15:29–58

## Truth

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### Revelation

General revelation: God has so constituted the world that natural things often point to things of God, 35–44.

Its cumulative fullness: The Bible is a complex whole, with later passages referring to or building upon earlier ones.

- ♦ “Fought with wild beasts,” 32; probably refers to a life-threatening situation in Ephesus; *see Acts 19:23–31; and Romans 16:3–4.*
- ♦ “Let us eat and drink,” 32; *see Isaiah 22:13; 56:12.*
- ♦ Different “glories” of the celestial bodies, 41; *see Genesis 1:14–18.*
- ♦ “The first man Adam became a living being,” 45; *see Genesis 2:7.*
- ♦ Adam as “first man,” and therefore our representative, 45; *see Genesis 2:7; and Romans 5:12, 14.*
- ♦ Adam was made of dust, 47–48; *see Genesis 2:7.*
- ♦ “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 50; *see John 3:3, 5.*
- ♦ “The trumpet will sound,” 52; *see Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16.*
- ♦ “Death is swallowed up in victory,” 54; *see Isaiah 25:8.*
- ♦ “O Death, where is your sting?” 55; *see Hosea 13:14.*
- ♦ “The strength of sin is the law,” 56; *see Romans 7:25.*
- ♦ God gives us the victory, 57; *see Romans 8:37; 1 John 5:4; and Revelation 12:11.*
- ♦ “The work of the Lord,” 58; *see 1 Corinthians 16:10.*
- ♦ “Your labor is not in vain,” 58; *see 1 Corinthians 3:8; Psalm 62:12; Romans 2:6; Ephesians 6:8; and Colossians 3:24.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He created all things according to his will; things with “bodies” were made according to his design, 36–44.
- ♦ He even created the heavenly bodies, 40–41.
- ♦ He thus showed that he is omnipotent.

- ♦ He is transcendent, living in heaven with other “heavenly” beings, such as angels and his Son, 47–49.
- ♦ He is King over the entire universe, his kingdom, 50.  
*Note: “The kingdom of God” is used in the New Testament to refer also to the realm in which God enables his elect people to live for all eternity, 50.*
- ♦ He has the power to raise people from the dead bodily, 35–54.
- ♦ He is incorruptible, susceptible to no change or diminution or degeneration, 50–53.
- ♦ He has eternal life in himself and grants life to his people; he has the power of life and death, 54–56.
- ♦ He has the power even over Hades = hell, 55.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He allows his people to know him, 34.
- ♦ He will save his people from death, 51–57.
- ♦ He revealed his will = his law, to his people in the Old Testament, 56.
- ♦ He gives his people, those who trust in Jesus Christ, victory over sin and death and hell, 57.
- ♦ He rewards the good works of his people, 58.

## Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Savior, the God–man whom God sent into the world, 31.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary; his name means “Yahweh” saves, 31.
- ♦ He is our Lord, equal with God the Father, 31.
- ♦ He is the last, or second, Adam, who by his obedience to the Father saves us from the results of the sin of Adam (and Eve), 45, 47.
- ♦ He is the life–giving spirit, who, by his resurrection, gives us new life, both spiritual and physical, 45.
- ♦ He is the Lord from heaven, 47.
- ♦ He is thus the heavenly Man, unlike Adam, who was only of the earth, 47–49.

### His work

- ♦ He gives his people new resurrected bodies through his new power as a life-giving spirit, 45.
- ♦ He gives power to his people to gain the victory over sin, Satan, death, and hell, 58.
- ♦ He is so united with his people now that they are “in” him, 58.
- ♦ He empowers his people to do good works, 58.

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Spirit of Christ, 45.

His work: He gives new life, both spiritual and physical, to the faithful followers of Christ, 45. *See Romans 9–11.*

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ We are social creatures, and our companions influence our morals, 33.
- ♦ We are embodied creatures, 39, 42.
- ♦ Our bodies are subject to decay, 42, 50, 53–54.
- ♦ Our bodies are weak and frail, 43.
- ♦ We have a natural body, the one with which we were born, that differs from the spiritual body that we will receive when we are raised from the dead, 44.
- ♦ We are all connected to Adam, our first father, who represented us when he sinned, 45, 49.
- ♦ Our bodies are made of the elements of the material world, “dust,” 47–49.
- ♦ Our bodies are subject to death; they are inherently mortal, 54–56.
- ♦ Our work now, as distinct from Adam’s in the Garden before the Fall, is “labor, toil,” and wearisome, 58. *See Genesis 3:17–19.*
- ♦ What we do with our body in this life matters for all eternity, 58.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Giving in to our bodily desires rather than seeking first God's kingdom, 32
- ♦ Giving in to the deceptions of worldly people, 33
- ♦ Willfully refusing to know and acknowledge God, 34
- ♦ Asking questions about God's power to work wonders beyond our imagining, 35–36

Its consequences: The consequences of sin include physical death, 29, 32, 56.

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Resurrection from the dead, 1, 35–52
- ♦ Receiving a spiritual body like the body of the risen Christ, 42–49
- ♦ Being delivered from the bondage to physical corruption, dishonor, and weakness that we now experience, 42, 50–54
- ♦ Being delivered from eternal death in hell, 54–55
- ♦ Being delivered from the curse that falls on all who break the moral law of God, 56
- ♦ Entrance into a life of victory over sin, death, God's wrath upon the disobedient, and hell, 54–57
- ♦ Being put into an intimate relationship with Christ; being "in the Lord," 58
- ♦ Being assured that all the good we do in this life will result in appropriate rewards in the next life, 58

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ The church consists of all who truly believe in Christ for salvation and have given evidence of their faith by water baptism, 29.
- ♦ These believers are brothers and sisters in Christ through adoption, 58.

## The church's ordinances

- ♦ Baptism is the sign of becoming a follower of Christ and a member of the visible church, 29. See *1 Corinthians 1:13–17; Matthew 28:19; and Acts 2:38.*

*Note: “Praying to receive Christ” as a sign of becoming a Christian has no biblical warrant.*

*Note: The meaning of the phrase, “baptized for the dead” is very obscure. Several possibilities have been suggested, including: “1. Living believers were being baptized for believers who died before they were baptized; 2. Christians were being baptized in anticipation of the resurrection of the dead; 3. New converts were being baptized to fill the ranks of Christians who had died.” (NIV Study Bible); 4. “Living believers who give outward testimony to their faith in baptism by water because they were first drawn to Christ by the exemplary lives, faithful influence, and witness of believers who had subsequently died.” (MacArthur Study Bible). It refers to Christians (who were spiritually ‘dead’ before their conversion) [who] undergo baptism, which connects the ‘dead’ sinner with the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ.*

- ♦ “Baptized for the dead” does *not* mean that “a dead person can be saved by another person being baptized on his behalf.” (MacArthur Study Bible) In the early church, baptism was always conditioned on the faith of the person being baptized.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ A trumpet will sound, and he will come suddenly, 52. See *Isaiah 27:13; Joel 2:1; Zephaniah 1:16; Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; and Revelation 8:2–11:10.*

*Note: There is no biblical basis for the idea that Christ will return two, or even three, times, as many teach. His return will be visible, audible, and cosmically transforming, not hidden.*

- ♦ Our dead bodies will be transformed into spiritual bodies, 52. See *Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Read the whole Bible, including the Old Testament, in order to understand all of God's will and his ways for us, as well as the central message of his salvation of sinners through the person and work of Jesus Christ, 3–4.
- ♦ Rely on God's grace to enable us to glorify himself through our works, including the work of sharing the gospel, 10.
- ♦ Set our hopes not on this world but on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 19, 50–55.
- ♦ Avoid professing Christians whose words and life deny the gospel, including the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus and of all his faithful followers, 33. *See 2 John 7–11.*
- ♦ Keep spiritually alert at all times, seeking to be righteous in God's eyes, 34. *See Romans 13:11–14; Ephesians 5:6–14; and 1 Thessalonians 5:6–10.*
- ♦ Cease from sinning and avoid sin at all costs, 34.
- ♦ Be steady and firm in our faith, 58.
- ♦ Abound in the work of the Lord, that is, in good works and in proclaiming the gospel, 58.

# 1 Corinthians 16

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Later passages of the Bible build upon, and often refer to, earlier ones.

- ♦ The collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, 1–4; *see 2 Corinthians 8–9; Romans 15:26; and Galatians 2:10.*  
*Note: They may have been impoverished because of famine; see Acts 11:28.*
- ♦ First day of the week, that is, Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead, 2; *see Matthew 28:1–10; Mark 16:9–18; Luke 24:1–27; John 20:1–23; and Acts 20:7.*  
*Note: Christians met in the evening on this day; there is no biblical warrant for meeting on Sunday morning.*  
  
*Note: This day is also called “the Lord’s day”; see Revelation 1:10.*
- ♦ Paul’s plans, 5–12; *see 2 Corinthians 1:15–16; 2:13; 7:5–6.*  
*Note: Paul did not travel according to this plan; see references to 2 Corinthians, above.*
- ♦ Pentecost, 8; *the “Feast of Weeks,” Leviticus 23:15–22; and Acts 2:1–19.*
- ♦ “A great . . . door” for ministry, 9; *see Acts 19:10; 14:27.*
- ♦ “Many adversaries,” 9; *perhaps refers to Acts 19:23–40.*
- ♦ Paul’s plans for Timothy, 10; *see 1 Corinthians 4:17 and Acts 19:22.*
- ♦ Timothy’s timidity, 10; *see 1 Timothy 4:12 and 2 Timothy 1:7.*
- ♦ Apollos, 12; *see 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4–9, 22; 4:6; and Acts 18:24–19:1.*
- ♦ “Be brave,” literally, “act like men,” 13; *see Deuteronomy 31:6–7, 23; Joshua 1:6–7, 9; 10:25; 1 Chronicles 28:20; and Psalm 27:14.*
- ♦ Household of Stephanas, 15–17; *see 1 Corinthians 1:16.*
- ♦ “What was lacking . . . they have supplied,” 17; *see Philippians 2:30; 4:10.*
- ♦ “The churches of Asia,” that is, of the Roman province of Asia, modern Turkey, 19; *see Revelation 2:1–3:27.*
- ♦ Aquila and Priscilla, 19; *see Acts 18:2–3, 18, 24–27.*
- ♦ “Greet one another with a holy kiss,” 20; *see Romans 16:16 and 2 Corinthians 13:12.*  
  
*Note: This was a greeting for family members. There was no such practice in Greco-Romans religious gatherings.*

- ♦ “With my own hand,” that is, Paul’s signature, 21; *see Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17; and Philemon 19.*
- ♦ “O Lord, come!” 22; *see Revelation 22:20.*  
*Note: This is the translation of the Aramaic words “Maran atha,” or “Marana tha,” or “Maranatha.”*
- ♦ “Let him be accursed,” 22; *see Galatians 1:8–9; and Revelation 22:20.*
- ♦ “Grace . . . be with you,” 23; *see Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:24; and other letters.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, with absolute sovereignty over our lives, including our plans, 7, 10, 19, 22–23.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 23–24.
- ♦ He is Christ, God’s anointed Messiah, whom he sent to save us from our sins, 22–24.
- ♦ He deserves our undivided love, 22.

### His work

- ♦ He governs the course of our life, 7.
- ♦ He gives “work,” that is, mostly efforts to spread the gospel and edify the church, to his people, including those with special positions of leadership and service, 10, 16. *See 1 Corinthians 15:58.*
- ♦ He has entered into such an intimate relationship with his people that they are “in” him; all their lives, including their life together as his followers are “in” him, 19. *See Ephesians 1:3–14.*
- ♦ He is the one in and through whom grace – God’s – unmerited favor, presence, and enabling – come to us, 23.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Failing to give to the needs of other believers in trouble, 2
- ♦ Despising Christian ministers, 11
- ♦ Not loving the Lord Jesus Christ, 22



Its consequences: The consequences of sin include being cursed by God rather than blessed, 22.

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being “in” the Lord Jesus Christ, and in his church, 19
- ♦ Receiving God’s grace in Christ, 23

## The People of God

### The church

- ♦ Members of the church are “saints,” that is, those who have been set apart – sanctified – by the Holy Spirit, 1; *see 1 Corinthians 6:11.*  
*Note: There is no warrant for the practice of calling certain outstanding Christians “saints” and giving them special honor, as the Roman Catholics and Orthodox do.*
- ♦ All believers are brothers and sisters in Christ, with God as their Father, 12, 15.

### The church’s life

- ♦ Early Christians may have met on Sunday evening or Saturday evening, since the Jews reckoned the beginning of a day from the previous evening, 2.
- ♦ The church is led, and served, by ministers of the gospel like the foundational apostles such as Paul and those appointed by them, like Timothy, 10, 12, and Stephanas, a leader in the church at Corinth, 17.
- ♦ From the beginning, Christians have shared their material goods with other believers in greater need, 1–2.  
*Note: Paul’s instructions specifically rule out the practice of taking up a public collection in a church meeting, for he tells them (1) to set aside money at home and (2) not to take up a collection at a meeting when he came, 1–2. There is no biblical warrant for the practice of taking up a collection during a worship service.*
- ♦ There have always been adversaries and opponents of true Christian life and teaching, 9.
- ♦ Christians have always provided funds for Christian workers, including itinerant evangelists like Paul, 17.

- ♦ Christians met in homes to worship for at least the first one to two hundred years; after that, they met in homes that had been altered for the purpose of meetings, until Constantine legalized Christianity, 19.

*Note: There is no biblical warrant for meeting in a building that is not a home. The first Christians in Jerusalem did also gather in the Temple for a while, until they were persecuted, but after the Temple was destroyed, they only met in homes.*

- ♦ The early Christians, like Greek and Roman family members, greeted one another with a light kiss on the lips to express family affection; now, in a different cultural setting, Christians use other gestures of similar import to express their love for each other in Christ, 20.
- ♦ The early Christians eagerly awaited the return of Jesus Christ; this is an essential mark of any true church, 22.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Practice regular saving and giving for the needs of poor believers and for the work of Christian ministers.
- ♦ Practice the utmost integrity and transparency in church finances, 3. *See 2 Corinthians 8:17-24; and Acts 9:2.*
- ♦ Persevere in the proclamation of the gospel even when there is much opposition, 8.
- ♦ Receive, honor, and help accredited Christian ministers, 10.
- ♦ In particular, encourage younger, and perhaps timid, preachers, 10-11.
- ♦ Provide itinerant Christian workers with adequate funds, 11, 17.
- ♦ Respect, and submit to, the godly conscience of those who do not sense God's leading to do what we want them to do, 12, 15.
- ♦ Exercise alertness against spiritual enemies, especially Satan, who often works through false teachers, 13. *See 1 Peter 5:8.*
- ♦ Stand firm in the faith we have received in the Scriptures, and in our own trust and commitment to Christ, 13. *See 1 Corinthians 15:1; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 1:27; 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:8; and 2 Thessalonians 2:15.*
- ♦ Be courageous in the face of trials, hardships, and opposition, 13.
- ♦ Access God's strength in our time of weakness and need, 13. *See Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 1:11; and 2 Timothy 2:1.*
- ♦ Maintain, or develop, fraternal relations and communication with Christians from around the world, 19-20. *See Romans 16:3-16.*

- ♦ Ask God to give us a fervent love for Jesus, 22.
- ♦ Refuse to acknowledge professing Christians who do not by their words and deeds evince a sincere love of Christ, 22.
- ♦ Eagerly await, and pray for, the return of Christ, 22.
- ♦ Bless others verbally with a prayer that they may experience the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ♦ Nourish and express a sincere and holy affection for other believers, even those whose conduct, like that of the Corinthians Christians, is not always consistent with their faith (but who repent when rebuked), 24.

# 2 CORINTHIANS

# 2 Corinthians 1:1–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation comes to us from God through the preaching and writing of his chosen messengers, including the Apostle Paul, 1. *See Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1; and often in Paul's letters.*

### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation centers upon the grace and consequent peace that come to us from God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son, 2. *See Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; and often in Paul's letters.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation also includes historical narrative, some of it formal, as in the Gospels and Acts, and some incidental, as in Paul's comments about his own personal experiences, 8–10. *See Galatians 1:12–2:21.*

### Its historical nature

- ♦ Accordingly, biblical revelation is rooted in history – the history of God's creation of the world and his dealings with the nations, of his dealings with his people Israel, of his saving work in Jesus Christ, and of the history of the early Christians, especially the apostles, 8. *See 2 Corinthians 1:5–2:1–17; 7:8–16; 11:22–28; 12:1–13.*

*Note: 2 Corinthians contains much more personal history than most of Paul's other letters; this letter is truly an "occasional" epistle, composed in and for a particular situation.*

Its universal relevance: Even though Paul and other biblical authors wrote from and to their own times, most of their teaching applies to Christians of all times and places, that is, "all the saints" in other churches than the one in Corinth, 1:1. *See 1 Corinthians 11:16; 14:33.*

# God

## His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equal persons: Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament), 1–4, 9; Son (Jesus Christ, often called “Lord” in the New Testament), 1–3, 5); and Holy Spirit. *See 2 Corinthians 13:14.*
- ♦ Within that Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional (not essential or ontological) subordination, implied in the terms “Father” and “Son,” 2–3; and more clearly in some passages, such as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 3.

## His greatness

- ♦ He has a will that is sovereign, 1. *See Ephesians 1:11.*
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing our situation, and omnipresent, able to minister comfort to us at any time or place, 4.
- ♦ He is omnipotent, as seen in his raising Jesus from the dead, 9. *See Ephesians 1:19–20.*

## His goodness

- ♦ He graciously revealed his will and his ways to us through chosen messengers, including Paul, 1.
- ♦ He has chosen people to be his people, now called the church, 1.
- ♦ He is gracious to us, 2. *See 2 Corinthians 13:14; Romans 5:20; and Ephesians 1:7.*
- ♦ He gives us peace with himself and with one another in Christ, 2. *See Romans 5:1; and Ephesians 1:2; 2:13–18.*
- ♦ He allows us to know him and address him as “Father,” 2–3. *See Romans 8:15–16; and 1 Peter 1:17.*
- ♦ He is full of mercy toward us in Christ, 3. *See Ephesians 2:4.*
- ♦ He comforts us in all our afflictions [troubles], 3–7.
- ♦ He raised Jesus from the dead for our salvation, 9. *See Romans 4:25; Ephesians 1:19–20; and 1 Peter 1:21.*
- ♦ He often delivers his people from overwhelming troubles, 10. *See Psalm 34:4, 17, 19.*

# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 1–3.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the Spirit-anointed Messiah sent by God to save us, 1–3, 5.
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, fully divine as well as fully human, 2–3.

## His work

- ♦ He gathered and trained a few men to be his authorized representatives as foundational teachers of the church; these include the original Twelve (minus Judas, but with Matthias added to replace him) and Paul, who met the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, 1; 6:1–10; 10:7–18; 11:1–12:13; 13:1–10. *See Acts 9:1–19.*
- ♦ He now joins the Father in sending to us grace and peace, communicated through the apostles, 2. *See 1 Peter 1:1.*
- ♦ He graciously allows us to claim him as “our” Lord, our saving Master, and not just Lord of all the earth, 3.
- ♦ He suffered for us, 5. *See 1 Peter 3:18; Matthew 26–27; Mark 14–15; Luke 22:47–23:49; and John 18–19.*
- ♦ He now suffers with his followers in some mysterious way, so that when we are persecuted for his sake, he too suffers, 5, 8–10. *See Colossians 1:24; and Acts 9:4.*
- ♦ He brings comfort and consolation from God the Father to his suffering people, 5.

# Salvation

## Its benefits

- ♦ Membership in the church of God in Christ, 1
- ♦ Grace and peace from God; that is, reconciliation with him through his grace and the resulting peace with him and with other believers, 2; *see Ephesians 1:2–14; 2:1–10.*
- ♦ Knowing God as our heavenly Father, 2, 3
- ♦ Having Jesus as our beneficent Lord, rather than some other master, 2

- ♦ God's mercy and his comforts to us in trouble, 3-7
- ♦ The results of the sufferings of Christ on our behalf, 5; *see Ephesians 1:7 (where "blood" stands for all his sufferings for us); 2:13-18; 4:32-5:1; 5:24-27; 1 Peter 3:18; and Hebrews 2:10, 14-15, 17; 5:8-9; 9:23; 10:10,14.*
- ♦ The privilege of sharing in the sufferings of Christ and thus knowing him better and glorifying God in our body, 7; *see Philippians 1:20-21, 29-30; 3:8-11; and 1 Peter 2:21.*
- ♦ The privilege of prayer to God, 11

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ♦ The church is founded on the teaching of the apostles, 1.
- ♦ It belongs to God, 1.
- ♦ It is composed of "saints," that is, all those who have been set apart by the Holy Spirit for God's possession and use, and are thus considered positionally holy and sanctified, 1:1. *See 1 Peter 1:2.*
- ♦ It is a spiritual family of brothers and sisters in Christ, 8.
- ♦ It is a fellowship of pray-ers, 11.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, God will raise the faithful followers of Christ from the dead and give them a glorified body, to live with him forever, 9. *See 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Romans 8:11,17, 22-25, 30; and 1 Corinthians 15:35-57.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for giving us his revelation through Paul, 1.
- ♦ Thank him for putting us into the worldwide body of Christ, 1-2.
- ♦ Trust and praise God as our merciful Father who comforts us in our troubles, 3-5.



- ♦ Realize that we live for others; that is, that all our experiences, whether easy or hard, can be used by God to benefit others as we share with them the comfort God has given us, 4.
- ♦ Look to God alone for comfort in trouble, for he alone really understands and only he can deliver us, 3–10.
- ♦ Expect to suffer in this world, 5–7.
- ♦ Believe that God can bring us out of seemingly desperate straits, 9–11.
- ♦ Tell other Christians how to pray for us, 8–11.
- ♦ Pray for Christians who are now being persecuted for their faith, 11. *See Ephesians 6:18–20; and Hebrews 13:3.*
- ♦ Give thanks when God answers our prayers for others, 11.

# 2 Corinthians 1:12–24

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its content and nature

- ♦ Biblical revelation is embedded in history, including the history of the authors; for Paul, his “history” was part of what God used to reveal himself to us, 15–24.
- ♦ The core content of biblical revelation is Jesus Christ, the son of God, 19.
- ♦ Biblical revelation includes the written record, or recalling, of what Jesus and the apostles and the prophets preached orally, 19.
- ♦ Biblical revelation is internally consistent, not contradictory or “dialectical,” 19–20.

*Note: This contradicts the approach of Karl Barth and some other theologians, who insist that God’s revelation consists of paradoxes and even contradictions.*

- ♦ Biblical revelation is cumulative and progressive, culminating in the final revelation of God in and through Jesus Christ and the apostles who interpreted him, 19–20.
- ♦ Biblical revelation includes promises, both in the Old Testament and in the New, 20.
- ♦ Biblical revelation includes a body of truths called “the faith,” 24. *See Jude 3.*

#### Its messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through God’s chosen servants, like Paul, who was in Corinth and was assisted by his companions Silvanus and Timothy, 19. *See 1 Peter 5:12.*
- ♦ These messengers were anointed by the Spirit for salvation, and also for their work of writing God’s Word, 21–22. *See 1 John 2:20, 27; and Ephesians 1:1:14; 4:30.*

Its clarity and understandability (perspicuity): Biblical revelation, though containing some passages difficult to understand, is nevertheless clear enough for us to understand enough to believe and obey, 13.

Its purpose: God intends for his revelation to be received by faith, 24.

## God

### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equal persons: Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament), 12, 18–21, 23; Son (Jesus Christ, often called “Lord” in the New Testament), 14, 19, 21); and Holy Spirit, 21 (implied), 22.
- ♦ Within that Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional (not essential or ontological) subordination, implied in the terms “Father” and “Son,” 19; and in his sending the Holy Spirit to his people, 21, 22.

### His greatness

- ♦ He knows and can govern the future, and thus make promises that will surely be fulfilled, 1, 20, and can guarantee our future by giving us the Holy Spirit, 22.
- ♦ He sees all things, even the inner thoughts of man, 23.
- ♦ He is able to “establish,” that is, strengthen and make secure, his people, even though we are naturally weak, 21.

### His goodness

- ♦ He gives grace to his messengers and servants to live as followers of Christ, 12.
- ♦ He is faithful to all his promises, 18, 20.
- ♦ He establishes his people, giving them security, in Christ, 21.
- ♦ He anoints his chosen people with the Holy Spirit, 21.
- ♦ He gives the Holy Spirit as a seal of his ownership to those whom he has chosen to be saved, 22.
- ♦ He allows himself to be called as a witness to our inner thoughts as we present these to others, 23.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, fully God, 14. *See 2 Corinthians 1:2; 13:14.*
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 14, 19. *See 2 Corinthians 1:2.*

- ♦ He is the Son of God, fully divine and sharing the same nature as God, 19. *See 2 Corinthians 1:3; Mark 1:1; and Romans 1:3, 4.*
- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed Messiah sent to save his people from their sins, 19, 21. *See 2 Corinthians 1:1, 5; and Luke 3:22.*

His work: He fulfilled, and will fulfill, all the Old Testament types and promises of God, 20. *See Romans 15:8, 9; Luke 24:25–27, 45–46; and John 1:45; 5:39.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is the gift of God to his people, 21–22. *See Acts 11:17; 15:8.*
- ♦ He is the anointing given to us by God, 21. *See 1 John 2:20, 27.*
- ♦ He is the seal of God in us, the guarantee that we will inherit all that God has promised his people, 22. *See Ephesians 1:14.*

### His work

- ♦ He gives us power, as he did Jesus, to live for him, 2. *See Romans 8:13; and Acts 1:8.*
- ♦ He dwells within those who truly trust and follow Christ, 22. *See Romans 8:9, 11; and John 14:16–17.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Conducting ourselves in the world with fleshly (worldly, human) “wisdom” instead of simplicity and godly sincerity, 12; *see Proverbs 3:5–8.*
- ♦ Planning trips or any other activity lightly, without waiting upon the Lord for wisdom or considering various options or the cost of doing something, 17
- ♦ Saying one thing and doing another; or, saying two different things about the same matter, 17
- ♦ Abusing spiritual authority over those under our care, 24; *see Matthew 21:25–26; and 1 Peter 5:2–3.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ A transformed character that enables us to live with integrity in this world by the grace of God, 12; *see Philipians 2:15.*
- ♦ More than superficial and merely cognitive understanding of the apostolic writings, 13–14; *see Ephesians 3:3–4.*
- ♦ Enjoyment of all the promises of God to us in Christ, 20
- ♦ Being firmly established in Christ by God himself, so that we will not fail to gain our final salvation, 21–22; *see Colossians 2:6–7; and 1 Peter 5:10.*
- ♦ The saving anointing of the Holy Spirit, marking us as belonging to God in Christ, 21; *see 1 John 2:20, 27.*
- ♦ Being sealed by the Holy Spirit, marking us as God's possession and assuring us of final salvation, 22; *see Ephesians 1:13–14.*
- ♦ Membership in the community of those who belong to Christ in the apostolic faith, 21–22
- ♦ Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit at regeneration, 22; *see Acts 11:17; 15:8.*

Its recipients: Those who truly believe in Christ, 24

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ♦ The church is founded upon the apostolic faith as it is written in the New Testament, including Paul's letters, 13–14, 24.
- ♦ The church is an international body, a community of local churches in fellowship, communication, and collaboration with each other in God's work, 15–16.
- ♦ The church is started by evangelistic and edifying preaching, 19.
- ♦ The church is held in the protective care of God, 21.
- ♦ The church is composed of believers who have received the Holy Spirit, 22.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will hold a last judgment, in which our conduct will be evaluated, and he will confirm the good works we have done by his grace; believers will then “boast” in their common life in Christ, 14.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Formulate and carry out plans with motives that we are not ashamed to present to God, 12, 23.
- ◆ Rejoice in our fellowship with other believers and, by faith, with the apostles, of whom we can “boast” as “ours,” 14. *See 1 Corinthians 3:21–23.*
- ◆ Be slow to judge the motives of others, including our spiritual leaders, who may be doing things for reasons we do not understand until they explain them to us, 17–18, 23–24; and often in this letter.
- ◆ Be ready to help missionaries and others who carry blessings from one church to another, 16.
- ◆ Make plans only after waiting upon the Lord and doing our best to ascertain his will, 12, 17.
- ◆ Conduct ministry, including itinerant ministry, in teams whenever possible, 19. *See 2 Corinthians 1:1.*
- ◆ Read the entire Bible, including the Old Testament, in the light of the fulfillment of God’s promises in Jesus Christ, 20.
- ◆ Thank God constantly for giving us his Holy Spirit, 22.
- ◆ Do everything for the sake of others, to build their faith in a way that increases their holy joy in the Lord, 24.
- ◆ Constantly exercise faith in Jesus, not in our own ability to “stand” before God or as witnesses of Christ, 24. *See 1 Corinthians 15:1; 16:13; and Ephesians 6:11, 13.*

# 2 Corinthians 2

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God, 17.

Its messengers: Biblical revelation came through God's chosen messengers, including the apostle Paul, 1-2, 9, 12.

Its forms: Biblical revelation came in different forms to the original recipients, including written letters, 3, 4, 9; and oral preaching and teaching, 12, 17.

#### Its content and nature

- ♦ Biblical revelation contains all sorts of subjects, including rebuke and instructions about church discipline, 5.
- ♦ The main content of biblical revelation was the gospel of Christ, 12.
- ♦ Biblical revelation contains information about Christ (and his saving work), knowledge that is meant to be more than – though not less than – cognitive content, but also a “sense,” here, “fragrance,” of Christ as well, 14-16.
- ♦ Biblical revelation is the word of God given through men, 17.

#### Its historical setting

- ♦ Biblical revelation arose out of, and spoke into, a particular historical situation, 1-7.

*Note: Paul seems to have written four letters to the church at Corinth. One that told them not to associate with open sinners (1 Corinthians 5:9-11); 1 Corinthians; a “severe” letter that caused some sorrow, 3-9, 7:8, 12; and 2 Corinthians.*

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament, 14-15, 17); Son (called Christ or Jesus Christ or Lord in the New Testament, 10, 12, 14-15, 17), and Holy Spirit.

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules victoriously over all his enemies and leads his people in a triumphal procession through this world, 14.
- ♦ He is omnipresent, “sensing” everywhere the beautiful character of his people, 14, and “seeing” even the motives of people, 17.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is loving to his people, and communicates his love through them to each other, 8.
- ♦ He offers forgiveness to repentant sinners, 10.
- ♦ He sent Christ to save us, and gave his people, especially his chosen messengers, a “gospel” – good news – of salvation through faith in Christ, 12.
- ♦ He leads his redeemed and therefore “captive” people in a triumphal procession that diffuses the fragrance of his life to others, 14.
- ♦ He allows us to be known through this gospel, and to make him known to others, 14.
- ♦ He is intrinsically lovely in every respect and has created fragrant plants and flowers, used here as a metaphor of all that is beautiful and pleasant in his people as they follow Christ and share the goodness of his gospel to others, 14–16.
- ♦ He saves people from his wrath through the person and work of Jesus Christ, 15. *See Romans 1:16; 5:8–10; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 15:1–4; and Titus 3:4–7.*
- ♦ He gives his own kind of life – eternal life – to those who trust in Christ, 16.

## Christ

His person: He is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed Savior of his people, 14–15, 17.

### His work

- ♦ He now indwells his people individually and corporately, so he is always “present” to us, and we to him, 10, 17.



- ♦ He opens doors for the preaching of the gospel, that is, he gives us opportunities, 12. *See 1 Corinthians 16:9.*
- ♦ He lived a life of beauty and surrendered himself to death as an atoning sacrifice, an offering that is a fragrant sacrifice to God and to all who receive it by faith, 14–16. *See Ephesians 5:2.*
- ♦ He triumphed over all evil powers by satisfying God's wrath and righteous requirements toward us and then by rising from the dead, 14. *See Colossians 2:14–15; and Ephesians 1:20–22.*

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

- ♦ Satan is an active, malevolent spiritual being who constantly seeks to destroy us in every way, particularly through causing believers to doubt the forgiveness of God because of the lack of forgiveness shown to them by other Christians, 11. *See 1 Peter 8–9.*
- ♦ He exercises his power mostly through deception, sometimes called “devices,” 11. *See 2 Corinthians 10:4–5; 11:3; and Ephesians 6:11.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Causing believers to have unnecessary sorrow by falling into sin or by failing to exercise discipline and then restoration in the church, 5–7
- ♦ Peddling” the word of God, that is, preaching it only for one's advantage; or “adulterating” God's word by mixing it with human elements that are not true, 17; *see 2 Peter 2:3.*

Its consequences: Eternal death, 15–16

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Belonging to the church, the fellowship of those who trust and follow Christ, and who thus love each other, and bring joy to each other by this love, 1–8; *see Ephesians 4:15–16; and Philippians 2:1–2.*
- ♦ Forgiveness of sins for all who repent, 6–10; *see Ephesians 1:7; 4:32.*
- ♦ Liberation from bondage to Satan and his deceptions, 10–11
- ♦ Being used by God to spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ to those around us, 15–16
- ♦ Being saved from eternal death and given eternal life, 15–16

## The Church

### Its membership and nature

- ♦ The church is a fellowship, a family, an organic union of believers who can cause each other to be sorrowful or joyful, 1–5.
- ♦ The bond that ties everyone together is love, 4, 8. *See Colossians 3:14.*
- ♦ In this fellowship, both truth and love must prevail, that is, we must rebuke sin and forgive repentant sinners, 6–7.
- ♦ The church lives under the authority of the apostles, including Paul, as exercised now through their writings, 9. *See 2 Corinthians 10:8–11; 13:1–3, 10.*
- ♦ The church is a spiritual family of brothers and sisters in Christ, 13. *See James 1:2, 19.*

## The Last Things

### Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will judge the world, and

- ♦ Some – those who have refused to repent of their sins and trust in Christ – will suffer eternal death, 16; *see Matthew 25:41–46.*
- ♦ Others – those who have repented of their sins and trusted in him – will enter into eternal life, 16; *see Matthew 25: 34, 46.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Expect both joy and sorrow from our relationships within the church, 1–5.
- ♦ Do our best not to cause other believers unnecessary sorrow through hasty or inappropriate confrontation, 1–3.
- ♦ Rebuke others for their sins only with great anguish and affliction of heart within ourselves, not hastily or without deep sorrow over their sin, 4.
- ♦ Treat others' sins with gentleness, 5. *See Galatians 6:1.*
- ♦ Discipline those within the church whose conduct openly violates the laws of Christ, 6. *See 1 Corinthians 9–13; and Matthew 18:15–20.*
- ♦ Forgive those who, when rebuked and disciplined, repent of their sins, 7.
- ♦ Constantly reaffirm our love for each other, and especially for those who have offended us and have asked for forgiveness, 8.
- ♦ Obey the writings of Paul and the other apostles, 9.
- ♦ Accept the results of the discipline imposed upon repentant believers by other churches, 10.
- ♦ Beware lest Satan use excessive guilt and shame to lead to unnecessary despair in other believers, 11.
- ♦ Submit to the triumphant leadership and disposition of our lives by the Lord Jesus, 14.
- ♦ Ask Christ to diffuse the fragrance of his life in and through us to others, 15–16.
- ♦ Recognize our own insufficiency, and ask Christ to work in and through us, 16. *See 2 Corinthians 12:9.*
- ♦ Share the word of God in all sincerity and purity of motive, as to Christ, and not for our own gain, 17.

# 2 Corinthians 3

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God, who, through the work of the Holy Spirit, equipped his special messengers, including Paul, to communicate his truth orally and in writing, 5–6, 8.

Its divine glory: Both the words of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament possess a unique glory and transcendent beauty, since they come from a glorious God, 7–11.

#### Its messengers

- ♦ God's revelation of himself includes the transformed character of those who trust in Christ, 2–3.
- ♦ Biblical revelation was given through God's chosen messengers, including Moses, 7, 13, 15, and Paul, 1–6, 8.

#### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation includes the objective record of the words written on stone by God and given to Moses – the Ten Commandments, 3, 7. *See Exodus 24:12; 34:1, 29.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation is Christocentric, revealing to us the glory of Christ, 18.

Its historical nature: Biblical revelation contains historical narratives, some long and some short; these are part of the inspired Word of God, 7–14. *See Exodus 34.*

Its progressive nature: Biblical revelation was progressive, moving through the stages of God's plan of salvation, including the "Old Covenant" with Israel through Moses and now the "New Covenant" with God's people through Christ, 6, 14.

Its illumination: Though biblical revelation is objectively true and can be understood to some degree by anyone, full understanding can only come from the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of hearers and readers, 14–17.

### Its intended effects

- ♦ The Old Covenant was meant to minister spiritual death to its recipients, in that the law of God shows us our sin and our liability to God's wrath, that is, spiritual death, 7. *See Romans 7:10.*

*Note: This is what is meant by "the letter kills," 6: The "letter" of the written code of the Old Covenant convicted of sin and condemned to death, but the Holy Spirit gives life to those who trust in the gospel of the New Covenant. This is not a contrast between written revelation and internal spiritual illumination, or between a "literal" interpretation and a "spiritual" interpretation, but between the Old and New Covenants, 6-18.*

## God

### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equal persons: The Father (usually called "God" in the New Testament), 3-5, the Son (Jesus Christ, often called "Lord" in the New Testament), 3-4, 14, 16-18; and the Holy Spirit, 3, 6 (if "Spirit" here refers to the Holy Spirit), 17-18. *See especially 2 Corinthians 3:3; 13:14.*
- ♦ Within that Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional (not essential or ontological) subordination, implied in the terms "Father" and "Son," 3-4, 18.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is the (only and eternally) living God, possessing life in himself, 3. *See John 5:16; and 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16.*
- ♦ He is able to change human hearts, 3, 18.
- ♦ He is living, that is, eternally alive, immortal, possessing life in himself, 3. *See John 5:26.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He makes his servants "sufficient," that is, adequate, to complete the mission he has given them, 4-5.
- ♦ As he had promised, he made a new covenant with his people to replace the old, Mosaic covenant, 6.
- ♦ He is glorious, that is, beautiful and resplendent, not only aesthetically but also morally, in his grace and mercy and transforming power, 7-11, 18.

- ♦ He graciously communicates, and bestows, imputed righteousness upon his believing people, 9.
- ♦ He now graciously enables people to “see” his glory through his revelation in Christ, 16, 18. *See Exodus 33:20; and John 1:14, 18.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the Spirit-anointed Messiah sent to save us from our sins, 4, 14.
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, fully God and fully man, 17–18.
- ♦ He is a spiritual being, bringing a spiritual renewal, unlike Moses, 17.

*Note: The phrase, “the Lord is the Spirit,” is interpreted in different ways: a. As the Second Person of the Trinity, he is in total spiritual union with the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, so that his action in transforming his people is also the work of the Holy Spirit; b. He is identical to the Holy Spirit; they are one, not just in their common divine essence, but in identity; they are one Person (so, apparently, in the Recovery Bible); c. he is the life-giving spiritual being, the last Adam, whose actions in our salvation are spiritual (see John 6:63; also the commentary on this epistle by Philip Edgcumbe Hughes); d. the Holy Spirit is the Lord, that is, he is fully God; A., c., and d. are possible, but not b. Elsewhere, and even in this passage, the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, are clearly distinguished from one another as to their identity; see this verse, “the Spirit of the Lord,” and the same phrase in verse 18; see also 2 Corinthians 13:14.*

- ♦ He is the true image, likeness, replication, and reflection of the nature of God, 18. *See Philippians 2:5; and Hebrews 1:3.*
- ♦ He is the life-giving spiritual being who embodies the image of God marred by Adam’s fall, and who now progressively transforms his believing people into the moral image of Christ, who is the image of God, 18.

### His work

- ♦ He reveals himself as an “epistle,” or letter, written by the Holy Spirit in the transformed hearts and lives of his people, 1–3.
- ♦ He allows those who are “in” him by faith to know God, 14, 17.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is the Spirit of the living God, one with God in being, power, glory, and all other divine attributes, 3.
- ♦ He is the Spirit of the Lord, that is, of Christ, 18. *See Romans 8:9.*

### His work

- ♦ He writes the moral law of God on the hearts of those who trust in Christ, and thus gives them the desire and the increasing ability to obey God's commands, 3. *See Romans 8:3–14; Psalm 40:8; Jeremiah 31:33; 32:40; and Ezekiel 36:26–27.*
- ♦ He removes the “veil” that keeps people, especially Jews, from seeing Christ in the Old Testament, 14–16.
- ♦ He gives true inner freedom to those who turn to God in Christ, 17. *See Romans 8:2.*
- ♦ He enables his people to “see” God's glory in the “face” of Christ Jesus, and thus to be transformed inwardly from one degree of glory (sanctification) to another, 18. *See Ephesians 1:17–20; 3:16–21.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Having the moral law of God “written” or carved” on our hearts, that is, in the center of our being, so that we both want to do God's will and have motive power to do it more and more, 3
- ♦ Being partakers of the New Covenant in Christ, 6; *see Matthew 26:28; and Hebrews 8:7–13.*
- ♦ Having the Holy Spirit live in our hearts, 6; *see references cited above.*
- ♦ Having imputed righteousness given to us, rather than the condemnation that we deserve, 9; *see 2 Corinthians 5:21; and Romans 3:21–26.*
- ♦ Having our spiritual eyes enlightened so that we can discern the gospel of Christ throughout the Old Testament, 14–18

- ◆ Being able to “see” the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ as he is revealed in Scripture, including the Old Testament, 18

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ◆ The church is composed of those whose lives have been transformed by the gospel and the Holy Spirit, 3–4.
- ◆ The church is the body of believers living under the apostolic message of the new covenant, 6–18.
- ◆ The church is composed of those who have turned to the Lord in faith, 16.

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return: When Christ returns

- Those lives who have been gradually transformed by the indwelling Spirit of Christ will be fully “glorified” in both body and soul, reflecting the image of God as revealed in Christ, 18; *see Romans 5:3; 8:17–25, 30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–49; Philipians 3:20–21; Colossians 3:4; and 1 John 3:2.*
- Those who have failed to repent of their sins and trust in Christ will be condemned to everlasting separation from God, 9; *see Romans 2:5–9; 1 Thessalonians 2:8; and Revelation 21:8; 22:14–15.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Evaluate ministers of the gospel by the effect that their life and teaching have on those who receive their message, 1–3.
- ◆ Rely on God alone to make us sufficient to communicate the gospel to others with transforming power, 5–6.
- ◆ Ask God to send his Spirit to make his word effective in the lives of our hearers, 6.
- ◆ Thank God for the benefits of salvation listed above, 9.



- ♦ Look for Christ in every passage of the Old Testament, 14–18. *See Luke 24:44–47; and John 1:45; 5:39.*
- ♦ Gaze constantly and intently on the “face” of Jesus as revealed in Scripture, asking him to transform us by his Spirit into the moral likeness of Christ, 18.

# 2 Corinthians 4

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God through the apostles and is thus the word of God, 2.

#### Its fundamental nature

- ♦ Biblical revelation is the word of God, 2.
- ♦ It is truth, 2.
- ♦ It is a priceless treasure, 7.

#### Its source and messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through the apostles, including Paul, 1–2.
- ♦ They are “earthen vessels,” clay pots, that is, frail human beings, 7.
- ♦ The apostles and prophets suffered all sorts of hardships as they proclaimed the truth, 8–11.

#### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation is “gospel, the good news of God’s salvation to us through Christ”; this is particularly true of the New Testament message, 3.
- ♦ It is the “gospel of the glory of Christ,” 4.
- ♦ “Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves [that is, the apostles] as servants for Jesus’ sake,” 5.
- ♦ It is the revelation of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, 6.
- ♦ Grace, 15

#### Its progressive nature

- ♦ The New Testament revelation was veiled to those who did not believe, and is still veiled to unbelievers, 3.
- ♦ New Testament revelation builds upon and completes Old Testament revelation, 13.

Its intended effects: Biblical revelation is intended to produce praise and thanksgiving in its recipients, 15.

## God

### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of three equal Persons: Father (usually called God in the New Testament), 2, 4, 6–7; Son (usually called Lord, or Christ, or Jesus Christ), 4–6, 11, 14; and Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional (not ontological or essential) subordination, whereby Christ is the image of God the Father; 4; his glory is reflected in Christ, 6; the Father raised up Jesus from the dead, 14; all is for the glory of God, 15.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is omniscient and omnipresent, 2.
- ♦ He is sovereign in granting illumination of his truth to those whom he wills, 3.
- ♦ He is glorious, supremely beautiful, resplendent, radiant, majestic, transcendent, “weighty” (the root meaning of the Hebrew word for “glory”), 4, 6, 15, 17, and deserving of all honor and praise, 15.
- ♦ He is omnipotent, creating the world from nothing, 6; empowering his ministers, 7; raising Jesus from the dead, 14.
- ♦ He is Light, 6, and the giver of light, 18.
- ♦ He is the possessor of life in himself, 10, 12, 14.
- ♦ He is eternal, 17–18.
- ♦ He is unseen to us now, being spiritual, 18. *See 1 Timothy 6:16.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He grants his people the privilege of ministry within the church, 1. *See Ephesians 4:12.*
- ♦ He gives grace, either the grace of salvation or the grace to be able to fulfill one’s ministry, 1.
- ♦ He kindly manifested his word to his messengers and through them to his people, 2.
- ♦ He has revealed his good news of salvation through Christ to his people, 4.
- ♦ He is light, spiritual and moral, 4.

- ♦ He gives saving revelation – light to his people, 6.
- ♦ He allows himself to be known to us through Christ, 6.

*Note: Our God is NOT unknowable! He has revealed himself to us in Christ.*

- ♦ He gives power to his servants to fulfill the ministry he has given them, 7.
- ♦ He does not utterly forsake his servants, though he does allow them to suffer terribly, 8–12.
- ♦ He allows his life, both physical and spiritual, to be experienced by, and manifested through, his faithful servants, 10–11.
- ♦ He gives life to his people through the ministry of his “dying” servants, 12.
- ♦ He raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise his people from the dead, 14.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah, sent to save us from our sins, 4–6.
- ♦ He is the light of the world, 4, 6.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 5, 10, 11, 14.
- ♦ He is the image of the invisible God, the exact replication of his being, 4, 6. *See 3:18; John 14:9; Colossians 1:15; and Hebrews 1:3.*
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, fully divine and fully equal with God the Father in deity, power, glory, and all other divine attributes, 5, 10.

### His work

- ♦ He gave the ministry of reconciliation to the apostles, 1.
- ♦ He revealed God to us while on earth, 6.
- ♦ He gives us now the light of the knowledge of God, 6.
- ♦ He died for us on the cross, 10.
- ♦ He rose again and has everlasting life as a glorified man, 10–11.
- ♦ He imparts spiritual life and even some measure of physical vitality to his followers, 10.
- ♦ He rose from the dead, 14.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: The inward renewing work of the Holy Spirit is alluded to in 4:16. *See 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Titus 3:5.*

## Spiritual Beings

Satan: Satan is a spiritual being who is the “god of this world,” in the sense that he has temporary and limited control over the events of the world and over the people who do not trust and follow the true God, 4. *See Matthew 4:8–9; John 12:31; Colossians 1:13; and 1 John 5:19.*

## Mankind

### Our current state

- ♦ We have a conscience, 2. *See 2 Corinthians 5:11; Romans 2:15; and 2 Timothy 1:3.*
- ♦ We also have a mind, the center of thinking and of moral considerations, 4. *See Romans 1:21, 28; 12:2; and Ephesians 4:23.*
- ♦ We also have a heart, which includes thought but also emotions, feelings, commitments, desires, moral inclinations, and choices, 6, 16. *See Genesis 6:5; Psalm 16:7; 101:4, 5; 111:1; Proverbs 27:19; Isaiah 63:15; Jeremiah 17:9; 24:7; Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31; Matthew 5:8; 6:21; 15:19; 22:37; and Colossians 3:15.*
- ♦ We are weak and frail in this mortal body, 7, 10, which is like a clay pot. *See Isaiah 29:16; 30:14; 45:9; Jeremiah 18:6; and Philippians 3:21.*
- ♦ We have an “inner” self and an “outer” self, 16. *See 2 Corinthians 7, 10; and Matthew 10:28.*

*Note: This is not Greek dualism between body and soul, but a distinction between the temporary and the eternal, that which is weak and mortal and that which will endure the fires of death and even now experiences spiritual rejuvenation.*

- ♦ We are mortal, gradually dying each day, 11, 16. *See Romans 8:21; and 1 Corinthians 15:53.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Doing shameful things in “hiding,” lest others see them, or even God, 2. *See Ephesians 5:8–12.*
- ♦ Handling, that is, interpreting, preaching, and teaching, God’s Word deceitfully, that is, in a manner intended to mislead others and especially to gain power, prestige, or possessions for ourselves, 2. *See 1 Thessalonians 2:5–6.*
- ♦ Not believing in the gospel of Jesus, 4. *See 2 Thessalonians 1:8.*

Its consequences: Perishing, that is, being eternally separated from God and his life, 3; *see Romans 1:18, 32; 2:5–9, 12; and 2 Thessalonians 1:6–9.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Receiving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in our hearts, 6
- ♦ Participation in the death of Jesus, that we may experience the life of Jesus also, 10; *see Philippians 3:10.*
- ♦ The assurance of future resurrection, 14
- ♦ God’s grace, that is, his unconditional love and powerful work in us, 15
- ♦ Renewal of the inner man, 16; *see 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:2; and Ephesians 4:23.*

Its recipients: Those who truly believe the gospel and trust in Christ, 4 (by implication), 13, 18

## The Church

Its identity and membership: The church is built upon the faithful ministry of the New Testament apostles and prophets, who laid an unrepeatable authoritative foundation of truth, 1–2. *See Ephesians 2:19–20; and Matthew 16:1.*

Its leaders: The church is led by pastors and teachers, who, like Paul, are to be meek servants of the members, 5. *See Matthew 20:25–28; 1 Corinthians 9:19; and 1 Peter 5:1–3.*

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns

- ♦ Those who have not repented and trusted in Christ will “perish,” that is, enter into eternal death and separation from God, 3. *See Matthew 25:46; John 3:16, 5:29; 8:21, 24; Romans 2:5–9; and 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9.*
- ♦ Christ will raise us up with Christ unto eternal life in a glorified body, 14, 17. *See 2 Corinthians 5:1–2; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; 35–56; and Philippians 29–21.*

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Not lose heart in the midst of difficulties, 1, 16.
- ♦ Be open and transparent in all our dealings, especially in Christian ministry, 2.
- ♦ Avoid using the gospel to gain power over others, 5.
- ♦ Focus on Christ and seek to serve others rather than rule over them, 5. *See 1 Peter 5:2–3.*
- ♦ Accept our physical and mortal weaknesses, looking to God's power to use us despite them, 7, 16.
- ♦ Expect fierce persecution and great troubles for following Christ and preaching his gospel (even as “laymen”), 8–12. *See John 16:33; and Luke 9:23–24.*
- ♦ Constantly trust that God will give us renewed strength and energy to serve him until we die, 8–10.
- ♦ Expect the risen life, that is, moral and physical power, of Jesus to work in us despite our sufferings and weakness, 10–11.
- ♦ Expect that our sufferings on behalf of the gospel and of Christ will lead to spiritual benefit for others, 12, 14.
- ♦ Look to the coming resurrection of our bodies, 14.
- ♦ Thank God that though our outward self is becoming weaker daily, our inward and spiritual self is being renewed by the Spirit of God day by day, 16.

- ♦ Believe that the temporary and relatively “light” suffering of this life will somehow produce a much greater and eternal weight of glory, 17.
- ♦ Fix our spiritual eyes on the things that are unseen, namely, our coming glory with Christ in the new heaven and new earth, 18. *See Romans 8:18–30; Philippians 3:20–21; Colossians 3:1–4; 1 Peter 1:6–7; 4:12–13; and 1 John 1–3.*



# 2 Corinthians 5

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: The message was given to his chosen messengers by God, 18, 20. *See 1 Corinthians 15:1-3.*

Its messengers: The apostles were ambassadors for Christ, heralds of the truth about him, especially about the reconciliation offered in him, 20.

Its content: “The word of reconciliation,” that is, the message of reconciliation with God through Christ, 18–19.

Its historical nature: The message deals with facts of history, along with inspired interpretation,

#### Its intended effects

- ♦ Sure and certain knowledge of the truth; “we know,” 1
- ♦ Knowledge of the fully warranted fear of God, 11

## God

### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: the Father (usually called God in the New Testament), 1, 5, 11, 13, 18–21; the Son (called Lord, Christ, Jesus, or a combination of these titles and names in the New Testament), 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16–18, 20; and Holy Spirit, 5.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a functional and relational (not ontological or essential) subordination: the Father gives the Spirit, 5; the Father is the “source” of all things; he reconciled the world to himself through the person and work of Christ, 18; he indwelt, or worked in and through, Christ, in the incarnation and saving ministry of the Son, 19; he made his Son to be “sin” for us, 21.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is eternal, 1–2.
- ♦ He is omnipotent, able to give us new and glorified bodies, 1.
- ♦ He is transcendent, dwelling in heaven, 1–2.
- ♦ He has life in himself and can bestow it on us, 4.
- ♦ He is omnipresent, so that all we do is done, as it were, in his presence, 9.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing all things, including the hearts of men, 10–11.

### His goodness

- ♦ He has prepared an eternal body for those who trust and follow Christ, 5.
- ♦ He has given his Spirit to believers as a guarantee of future glory, 5.
- ♦ He has reconciled believers in Christ to himself through the person and work of Christ, 18–19.
- ♦ He gave the ministry of preaching the message of reconciliation to his servants, 18, 20.
- ♦ He does not impute sin to those who trust in Christ, 19.
- ♦ He even pleads with us to be reconciled to himself, 20.
- ♦ He made his own sinless Son to be “sin” – that is, to be considered sinful and to be a sin-offering – for us, 21.
- ♦ He is righteous, 21.
- ♦ He bestows imputed righteousness on those who trust in Christ, 21.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, fully God, 6, 8, 11.
- ♦ He is Christ, God’s anointed Messiah, sent to save us from our sins and to conquer sin, Satan, all enemies of God, and death, 10, 14, 16–20.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 18.

### His work

- ♦ He sits now on his heavenly throne with God the Father as Judge of the world, 10.
- ♦ He died for sinners, 14–15.
- ♦ He loves his people, 14.
- ♦ He rose again from the dead, 15. *See 1 Corinthians 15:3–4.*

- ♦ He came as God's Son into this world "in the flesh," that is, in a physical body, 16. *See John 1:14.*
- ♦ He "creates" new people by making sinners spiritually new, 17. *See Ephesians 2:10; 4:24.*
- ♦ He was the one in and through whom God reconciled sinners to himself; he is the Mediator, 18–19. *See Romans 3:24–25; 5:1; Ephesians 2:13–18; Colossians 1:19–20; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; and Hebrews 9:28; 10:10–14.*
- ♦ He now sends ambassadors, heralds, bearing this message of reconciliation, 20. *See Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; and Romans 10:14–15.*
- ♦ He became "sin," that is, the very embodiment of sin, on the cross, 21. *See John 1:19.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is Spirit of God, who gives him to us, 5. *See Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; and Romans 5:5.*

His work: He indwells the people to whom God has given him and serves as a guarantee of their future and final salvation, that is, being "clothed" with a heavenly body, 1–5. *See Romans 8:23; and Ephesians 1:13–14.*

## Mankind

### Our current condition

- ♦ We have an "earthly" house, that is, a body made of earthly elements, 1. *See Genesis 2:7; and 1 Corinthians 15:42–49.*
- ♦ In this body, which is frail and beset with troubles and burdens, we "groan," 2. *See Romans 8:23.*
- ♦ This body is like a temporary "tent," 4. *See 2 Peter 1:14.*
- ♦ This body is mortal, destined to die, 4. *See Genesis 2:17; 3:22–23; 5:5; Romans 5:12, 14–15, 17; 7:24; 8:10–11; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 42–44, 53.*
- ♦ Now we are "at home," that is, dwelling, in this body, 6.
- ♦ We are therefore, in some sense, "absent from the Lord," who dwells bodily in heaven (though he is spiritually always with us), 6. *See Philipians 1:23.*

- ◆ Nevertheless, what we do in this body is eternally important, 10. *See Matthew 25:45–46; and Romans 1:28–32; 2:5–10.*
- ◆ This body and its deeds in time and space are “according to the flesh,’ that is, done in the world of physical existence, 16.

*Note: “Flesh” in the passage does not carry the sinful connotations it does elsewhere in Paul’s letters, such as Romans 8:1–8, but is more like that in 1 Corinthians 15:39, 50.*

## Sin

### It includes

- Boasting in outward appearances, such as eloquence or impressive personal presence, 12

### Its consequences

- General unhappiness, “groaning,” 2, 4; *see Romans 8:19, 23.*
- Physical death, 4; *see Romans 5:2; 6:23; and 1 Corinthians 15:22.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ◆ The hope of a new and eternal body, 1–4
- ◆ The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, 5; *see Titus 3:5.*
- ◆ Receiving the love of God for us, 14
- ◆ A kind of “death,” in and with Christ, to our old and sinful self, 14, 17; *see Romans 6:3–11; Galatians 2:19–20; and Colossians 2:11–12, 20; 3:3.*
- ◆ Being “in” Christ, that is, united to him by faith and the Holy Spirit in an intimate, spiritual, and eternal union, 17; *see John 15:1–7; 17:23; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:5–7, 21–22; and Colossians 3:3.*
- ◆ Being recreated in the moral image of Christ, beginning a process that will continue until we are completely glorified with him in heaven, 17; *see Ephesians 2:10; 4:24.*
- ◆ Reconciliation with God, 18–19; *see Romans 5:10.*
- ◆ Not having our sins imputed, or reckoned, to us by God, 19; *see Romans 3:24; 4:5–8; and Ephesians 2:14–17.*

- ◆ Becoming in some real sense “the righteousness of God,” 21

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ◆ The church is composed of those who have received the Holy Spirit, 5.
- ◆ The church has a ministry and word of reconciliation to proclaim, 18–19.

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return: When Christ returns

- He will raise up his people from the dead and give them new and glorified bodies, 1–14. *See Romans 8:21–23, 30; and Philippians 3:20.*
- From then on, his people will be “clothed,” and “present with the Lord” in a physical way, 1–2, 8.
- All people will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive their just rewards, 10. *See Matthew 25:31–46; Romans 2:16; 14:10, 12; Revelation 20:11–15.*

*Note: Though this receiving of rewards and penalties will be based on our performance, our eternal life with Christ on a new earth is based on our faith in Christ, See John 3:16; and Romans 3:24–25; 5:1–11; 8:1, 30–39; etc.*

- In some sense, the Last Things have already begun, as each believer is a “new creation” in Christ, 17.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Expect trouble and distress as long as we are in this mortal body, 2, 4. *See John 16:33; Romans 8:18–22; James 1:2–3; and 1 Peter 1:6–7; 4:12–13.*
- ◆ Eagerly await the day when we will be “clothed” with a new and glorious body, 2, 4.
- ◆ Be confident at all times, because we will someday be physically “present” to the Lord, 6.

- ♦ Conduct ourselves, and see our life, by faith in God's promises, not by our circumstances, 7.
- ♦ Seek to please Christ at all times, 9.
- ♦ Prepare to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, trusting that he will reward good and evil fairly, 10.
- ♦ Believe that we are well known by God, even if people reject us, 11–12.
- ♦ Seek by all means to persuade others to be reconciled to God through faith in the saving person and work of Christ, 11, 18–21.
- ♦ Ask God to fill us with his love so that we will be “compelled” to share the gospel with others, 14.
- ♦ Live not for ourselves, but for our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, 15. *See Romans 6:11.*
- ♦ See others from a spiritual, not a fleshly or outward, perspective, 16.
- ♦ Believe that in some fundamental way we have been recreated by God in the image of Christ, 17.
- ♦ Thank God for not imputing our trespasses against us, 19.
- ♦ Seek daily to be freshly “reconciled to God” through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, 20.
- ♦ See ourselves now as not fundamentally sinners but as, somehow, righteous in God's eyes, 21.

# 2 Corinthians 6

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its literary structure: Biblical revelation features many different literary styles and devices, such as

- ♦ The three groups of three elements in 4–5, dealing first with hardships in general; then with specific persecutions Paul had endured; and the third with tribulations that endured voluntarily.
- ♦ The “spiritual qualities, graces, and means whereby he has been enabled triumphantly to endure all these things” (Philip Hughes, 2 Corinthians, 226), 6–10.
- ♦ Different groupings: of single terms, 6a; then a series of double terms, 7b; then a series of antitheses, 7c–10.

Its messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation was given through Paul and the other apostles who considered themselves as God’s coworkers, 1.
- ♦ These men considered themselves “ministers” of God, that is, his servants with a commission to complete a mission, 3.
- ♦ They suffered greatly for the gospel, 4–10.
- ♦ Still, their lives were marked by purity of motive and holiness of conduct, 6–8.
- ♦ They were not always treated well by the believers in churches they had planted, 11–12.
- ♦ They loved these Christians with their whole heart, 11.
- ♦ They saw young believers as spiritual children, 13.
- 

Its content

- ♦ God’s grace to us in Christ, 1
- ♦ Salvation by grace, 2, 16, 18
- ♦ Truth, 7
- ♦ Ethical exhortations, 13–18

Its historical nature: Biblical revelation deals with events in time, past, present, and future, 2–10.

Its progressive nature

- ♦ Later passages build upon previous ones as God’s revelation unfolds, 2, 16–18.
- ♦ “Acceptable time,” 2; *see Isaiah 49:8.*
- ♦ Afflictions, 4; *see 2 Corinthians 1:6; 11:23 ff.; also, John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3; and James 1:3.*
- ♦ Needs [necessities], 4; *see 1 Corinthians 9:6; and 1 Thessalonians, 3:7.*
- ♦ Distresses, 4; *see 2 Corinthians 4:8; 12:10; and Romans 8:35.*
- ♦ Stripes, that is, lashes with the whip, leaving bloody stripes on the back, 5; *see 2 Corinthians 11:23ff; and Acts 16:23.*
- ♦ Imprisonments, 5; *see 2 Corinthians 11:23ff; and Acts 16:23.*
- ♦ Tumults [riots], 5; *see Acts 13:50; 14:5; 14:19; 16:22; 17:5; 18:12; 19:23ff; 21:27ff.*
- ♦ Labors, 5; *see 1 Corinthians 15:58.*
- ♦ Sleeplessness, that is, staying awake at night, “watchings,” 5; *see 2 Corinthians 11:17.*
- ♦ Purity, 6; *see 1 Thessalonians 2:10.*
- ♦ Knowledge, 6; *see 2 Corinthians 11:6; and Colossians 2:3.*
- ♦ Longsuffering toward other believers, 6; *see Ephesians 4:2; and Colossians 3:12.*
- ♦ Kindness, 6; *see 1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:22; and Ephesians 2:7.*

Its intended effects: Receiving the [message of] the grace of God not in vain, but with a changed life, 1, 14–18

## God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: God (often called the Father in the New Testament), 1, 4, 7, 16, 18; Son (often called Lord in the New Testament, or Christ or Jesus), 15; and the Holy Spirit, 6.

His greatness

- ♦ He can empower his servants to fulfill their ministry despite immense sufferings and obstacles, 7.
- ♦ He is the living God, possessing eternal life in himself, 16. *See John 5:26.*



- ♦ He is Almighty, 18.

### His goodness

- ♦ He offers us his grace, that is, his undeserved and unconditional love, 1–2.
- ♦ He saves us from sin, Satan, and death, thus helping us in our greatest need, 2.
- ♦ He sent ministers of the gospel especially the apostles, as his messengers to us, 4.

*Note: He continues to send his servants to communicate the gospel to those who have not heard and to his church; see Ephesians 4:11.*

- ♦ He is pure, longsuffering, kind, loving, true, righteous, and bestows the power to be imitate him on his people, 6–7, 14.
- ♦ He is light, 14. *See 1 John 1:5.*
- ♦ He condescends to dwell among his people, 16.
- ♦ He chose Israel, and then all believers in Christ, as his own special people, 16.
- ♦ He becomes a loving Father to those who follow Christ, 18.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is intimately associated with righteousness, 14. *See 1 John 2:1.*
- ♦ He is light, 14. *See 2 Corinthians 4:6; and John 1:4–5; 8:12.*
- ♦ He is the enemy and antithesis of Belial, Satan, 15. *See Matthew 4:2–11; and 1 John 3:8.*

## The Holy Spirit

His work: He empowers God’s people, especially the messengers of Christ, to serve as ministers and servants of the gospel, both by righteous conduct and by effective proclamation and powerful works, 6–7.

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

### His person

- ♦ He is associated with lawlessness and darkness, 14, 15.
- ♦ He is called Belial, 15, meaning, perhaps, “rebelliousness, lawlessness, unrestraint.” *See Deuteronomy 5:9; 13:13; and 2 Samuel 23:6–7.*

## Salvation

Its recipients: Believers in Jesus Christ, 14

Its benefits

- ♦ Receiving God’s grace, that is, his unmerited favor and love in Christ, 1; *see 2 Corinthians 1:2; 13:14; and Ephesians 2:8.*
- ♦ Being “heard” by God, that is, having one’s cry for mercy heard and answered, 2
- ♦ Being “helped” by God, that is, being saved by him from sin, Satan, and death, 2
- ♦ Being brought into the realm of righteousness and light, 14
- ♦ Having God as one’s personal God, 16
- ♦ Belonging to the people of God, 16
- ♦ Having God as our heavenly Father, 18

## The Church

Its identity

- ♦ The church – that is, all who trust and follow Christ – is the dwelling place of God, 16. *See 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:9; and Ephesians 2:19–22.*
- ♦ The church is a family of God’s spiritual children, 18.

Its ministers

- ♦ Ministers of the gospel are co-workers of God, 1. *See 1 Corinthians 3:9.*
- ♦ Their authority comes from the Word of God as they share it with others, 2, 16–18.
- ♦ They must seek to give no offense to anyone on grounds of sinful conduct, 3. *See Romans 13:15; and 1 Corinthians 9:24–27.*
- ♦ Their conduct should be marked by
  - Patience under much affliction, 4–5
  - Self-discipline and self-denial, 4–5

- Holy living, 6–7
- Knowledge of God’s Word, 6
- Kindness and love, 6
- The fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, 6; *see 1 Corinthians 2:4–5*.
- Speaking the truth of God’s Word, 7
- Relying on God’s power for success and survival, 7, 9; in the face of slander, rejection, and ignominy, 8
- Constant “dying” to self and to this world and God chastens them, 9
- Sorrow and poverty, 10
- God–inspired joy, 10
- Receiving God’s resources for all they need, 10
- Frankness of speech, 11
- Hearts of love for their people, 11
- Fatherly concern for the church members, 13

Its character and purpose: The church should be marked by a kind of moral separation from unbelievers (without leaving the world), 14–17.

## The Last Things

The Last Times: Even now, we are living in the eschatological age of salvation, which has begun and will be consummated when Christ returns, 2. *See 1 Corinthians 10:11; 1 Peter 1:9–12, 20; and Hebrews 1:2.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Receive God’s grace and acceptance daily, 1–2. *See 2 Corinthians 5:20.*
- ◆ Imitate Paul in his manner of life, 4–10. *See 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1.*
- ◆ Assume that we, like Paul, will face opposition and will suffer in many ways, 4–10. *See 2 Timothy 3:19–12.*
- ◆ Avoid intimate or close partnerships – including marriage – with unbelievers, 14–18. *See Nehemiah 13:23–27.*

# 2 Corinthians 7

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its messengers: Scripture comes to us from men with emotions like ours, like Paul, who expresses love, joy, sorrow, comfort, 1–16.

Its content: It contains not only narrations of historical events and exhortations to right belief and behavior, but revelations on the heart of the writer and recipients, this passage being among the most touching in all the Bible.

Its historical nature: This passage describes Paul's relations with the Corinthian Christians in historical terms, telling of his coming to Macedonia, 5, the coming of Titus to him, 6, the report by Titus of the Corinthians' response to Paul's earlier letter (not 1 Corinthians, apparently), 7–11, Paul's comfort in hearing this news, since it confirmed the truth of his "boasting" about them to Titus, 14, Titus's affection, 15, and Paul's current joy, 16.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is to be feared because of his greatness, 1. *See 1 Peter 1:15–17.*
- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, "seeing" everyone and everything, 12.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He is holy, 1. *See 1 Peter 1:15.*
- ♦ He comforts the downcast, 6. *See 2 Corinthians 1:3–7; and Psalm 34:18; 147:3.*
- ♦ He uses his people to do his work, including that of comforting others, 6, 13.

### Mankind

#### Our created nature

- ♦ We have a material part, "flesh," and an immaterial part, "spirit," 1, 5, 13.
- ♦ The immaterial part has several aspects, functions, or "parts," called variously heart, 2–3, "spirit," and other terms.
- ♦ The immaterial part experiences a variety of emotions, such as

- affection, 3
- pleasure in others, 4, 14
- joy, 4, 9, 13, 16
- fear, 5, 11, 15
- despondency and depression, 6
- comfort and encouragement, 6–7, 13
- strong desires, 7, 11
- zeal, 7, 11
- sorrow, 8–11
- regret, 8, 10
- repentance, 9
- indignation, 11
- care for others' welfare, 12
- shame, 14

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who truly repent of their sins, 10

Its benefits: Eternal life: the deliverance from spiritual death (implied), 10; *see Romans 6:23; 8:11; Galatians 2:20; and Colossians 3:3.*

## The Church

Its identity and membership

- ◆ The church is filled with people who err and sin, 10, 12.
- ◆ The church is marked by affection among its members, 3, 12, 15.
- ◆ The church is built up as members care for each other, 2–16.

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Remember God's promises to be with his people if they separate themselves from sin, 1. *See 2 Corinthians 6:16–18.*
- ◆ Open our hearts to each other as we try to work through conflicts among us, 2–4.
- ◆ Expect trouble from without and fears within ourselves, 5.
- ◆ Look to God to comfort us, 5, even as he uses other believers, 6.
- ◆ Seek to be instruments of God's consolation to other believers in trouble and sorrow, 6–7, 13.
- ◆ Speak the truth when necessary, even if it's painful, 8–10.

- ♦ Respond to Christian rebuke with repentance, even as we also try to explain ourselves to those who misunderstand us, 9–12.
- ♦ Recognize the benefits of godly sorrow that is caused by true repentance, 10.
- ♦ Obey the instructions of the apostles as written in the New Testament, 15.
- ♦ Rejoice when other believers behave in a godly and humble manner, 14, 16.

# 2 Corinthians 8

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its content

- ♦ The Bible contains historical narrative and ethical instruction (see below) but also doctrinal truths, 9, 16.
- ♦ The essential content of Scripture is the gospel, the good news of God's salvation in Christ, either foreshadowed and foretold, or completed, 9, 18.

Its historical nature: The Bible is an historical document that purports to relate actual events in history; every passage, almost, has its historical context, 1–7, 15, 16.

Its intended effects: The authors of Scripture intend for their readers to believe what they related and obey the commands revealed therein, 7–11.

Its cumulative nature: The Bible is a unified whole, with later parts building upon, and often quoting, earlier passages, though sometimes with new applications, 15.

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equal divine persons, God (often called Father), Son (called Lord, or Jesus, or Christ), 5, 9, 19, 21, 23, and Holy Spirit.

#### His greatness

- ♦ As a personal being, he has a will, which is always just and right and good to us, 5.
- ♦ He is omnipresent and sees everything, 21.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He gives grace of various kinds to his people, 1, 7, 9.
- ♦ He supplies all the needs of his people, 14–15.

# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, 5, 9, 19, 21.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 9.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed God–man sent by the Father to save us from our sins, 9, 23.
- ♦ He was from all eternity with the Father in heaven, “rich” in every way, 9.

## His work

- ♦ Though, as the eternal Lord and Son of God, he was always “rich” in glory, honor, etc., in heaven, he came down to earth in humility as a man, and as the son of a carpenter, not at all rich; later, he lived as an itinerant preacher, with no place to lay his head and no possessions of his own except his clothes (and, perhaps, a house in Galilee, Mark 2:1; John 1:38–39), 9. *See Matthew 8:20.*
- ♦ He now sends messengers, or “apostles,” of the churches, men who represent these churches in doing good works, 23.

# Salvation

## Its benefits

- ♦ Membership in the new family of God, in which we are all brothers and sisters, 1, 18, 22–23
- ♦ Transformation of the heart, leading to sacrificial love for other believers, 2–5

# The Church

## Its identity and membership

- ♦ All true believers are brothers and sisters in Christ, 1, 18, 22–23.
- ♦ They are also all “saints,” that is, those set apart for God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, 4. *See Romans 8:9, 14–17; and 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11.*



### Its life

- ♦ It will sometimes face persecution, trials, and poverty, 2.
- ♦ Members will have joy despite these troubles, 2.
- ♦ They show generosity toward each other, 2–4, 14.
- ♦ Members give themselves first to Christ, then to their leaders to do God’s will, 5.
- ♦ They are given a variety of spiritual gifts and graces, 7. *See 1 Corinthians 1:5; 12:13.*

### Its leaders and ministers

- ♦ The church is built on the foundation of the teaching and precedent-making practices of the apostles, including Paul, 5, 8, 10, 20–22. *See Ephesians 2:20.*
- ♦ There were also special men chosen by the apostles to represent them to the churches, such as Titus, 16.
- ♦ And there were other men like the unnamed brother in 18–19, who traveled with Paul and participated in some aspects of his ministry, and who were also appointed by the churches to help administer this gift of money, 19; and the unnamed brother in 22.
- ♦ These men were “messengers” or “apostles” of the churches, that is, men chosen and sent by the churches on a mission with a clear commission – not, like Paul, foundational apostles with authority to make binding commands or give authoritative instruction, 23.

### Its organization and structure

- ♦ New Testament churches seem to have been local assemblies. There was no denominational “church,” 1, 18–19, 23–24.
- ♦ They had some sort of authority to participate in important decisions, including the selection of people to handle finances, 19.

## **Life**

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ See all good deeds done by us as products of God’s grace, 1.
- ♦ Expect to suffer great trials and afflictions as part of following Christ, 2.
- ♦ Ask God to give us a spirit of great liberality and generosity toward our fellow believers in Christ, 2, 7.

- ♦ Give to other believers' physical needs as much as we can, even more than we think we can afford, though not so much as to reduce ourselves to poverty, 3, 13.
- ♦ Give ourselves daily to the Lord in willing submission and obedience, 5. *See Romans 12:1-2.*
- ♦ Seek God's will as we try to obey our spiritual leaders, 5.
- ♦ "Give" ourselves to the teaching of the apostles, the mission of the church, and our spiritual leaders when they urge us to do good works; that is, invest our hearts as well as our wills in carrying out God's will and our duty, 5.
- ♦ Demonstrate the sincerity of our love by concrete actions, and test others' professions of love by the same standard, 8, 24.
- ♦ Thank Jesus for making himself poor that in him we might become spiritually rich, 9.
- ♦ See ourselves as truly "rich" in Christ, 9.
- ♦ Complete the Christian projects that we have undertaken according to what we think is God's will, 10-11.
- ♦ Seek some sort of material equality with other believers by giving to them, 12-15.
- ♦ Handle church finances with total transparency and accountability, so as to avoid any hint of improper dealing, 18-21.
- ♦ Do all to the glory of God, 19. *See 1 Corinthians 10:31; and Ephesians 1:12.*
- ♦ Whenever possible, do ministry in teams, 16-24.

# 2 Corinthians 9

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its messengers: Biblical revelation came through God's chosen messengers, in this case Paul the apostle.

### Its content

- ♦ Recollections of past or recent events, 2–5
- ♦ The “gospel of Christ” – its primary and core content, 13

Its historical nature: This passage deals with actions by Paul and his Christian friends in Macedonia and Achaia, Greece.

Its progressive and cumulative nature: Each passage builds upon, or lays the groundwork for, other passages in Scripture.

- ♦ The history of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem; *see 2 Corinthians 8:1–7, 16–24; and Romans 15:25–28.*
- ♦ Christians in Macedonia, 2, and Achaia e.g., Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens; *see Acts 16:11–17:34; 20:1–3.*
- ♦ “He who sows sparingly . . .,” 6; *see Proverbs 11:24; and Galatians 6:7–10.*
- ♦ “He has dispersed abroad . . . forever,” 9; *see Psalm 112:9, which is a description of a godly and generous man.*
- ♦ “Seed for the sower,” 10: *see Isaiah 55:10.*

Its intended effects: To stir people to action, 3–8

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals – God the Father, 7–8, 11–15; God the Son (Christ), 13; and God the Holy Spirit.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing the heart and our motivations, 7.
- ♦ He owns everything and has unlimited resources, 8. *See Philippians 4:19.*

- ♦ He governs and superintends all the actions of nature and man to produce what we need, 10.
- ♦ He sovereignly works in the hearts of men to do his will, including to believe the gospel and to do works of charity, 13–14; otherwise, people would not thank him for the obedience of others to the gospel.

### His goodness

- ♦ He rewards us fairly for our actions, 6, 10. *See 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:7–10; Proverbs 11:24–26.; Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 10:43; Luke 6:38. That is, “to give is to sow” (Philip Hughes, Commentary on 2 Corinthians, 329).*
- ♦ He is a “cheerful giver,” 7, by implication; see verse 15. He gives to his people all that they need at all times and in every way; he is a God of overflowing grace, 8. *See 2 Corinthians 5:18; Philippians 4:1, 19; and 1 Timothy 6:6–10.*
- ♦ He causes people to believe the gospel and obey its law of love; all is of grace, 12–14.
- ♦ He answers prayer, 14.
- ♦ He has given us the indescribably wonderful gift of Christ as our Savior, 15. *See 5:20–21; Romans 8:12; 1 Corinthians 3:21–23; and John 3:16; 6:32.*

## Christ

His person: He is the Messiah, the divine–human Savior whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit, 13.

His work: He died for us and rose again, to save us from our sins, as declared by the gospel about him, 13. *See 1 Corinthians 15:1–11.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being called and regarded as “saints,” that is, being reckoned as holy in the eyes of God, 1, 12
- ♦ Membership in the family of God, in which we are all “brothers” and sisters, 5

Its recipients: Those who obey the gospel of Christ by believing it, 13; *see Romans 1:5.*

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ♦ The church is composed of “saints,” those who trust in Christ and have been born again by the Holy Spirit, 1. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11.*
- ♦ The church includes all those who truly trust in Christ and follow him, people from all nations and cultures, 2.
- ♦ The church is a family of brothers and sisters in Christ, 3.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Give generously to supply the needs of poor Christians, 1–11. *See Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 4:28; Deuteronomy 15:7–10; Leviticus 25:35; Hosea 1:12; and Matthew 6:1–4.*
- ♦ Imitate the example of other believers when they do good, 2.
- ♦ Complete the commitments we have undertaken, 5.
- ♦ Thank God for his work in other believers, 11–13.
- ♦ Show our commitment to Christ by giving to supply the needs of others, 13.
- ♦ Pray for other believers, 14.
- ♦ Thank God for his indescribable gift to us in Christ, 15.

# 2 Corinthians 10

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: The ultimate source of biblical revelation is God, who authorized his chosen messengers, including Paul, to communicate life-giving truth, 8. *See Romans 1:1–5.*

Its messengers: The writers of the Bible were men like us, with all the common human frailties and weaknesses, 1, 10.

Its content: The content of biblical revelation, throughout the Bible, is the gospel of Christ, 14, 16. *See Romans 1:1–3; 10:3–4; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Galatians 3:8; Luke 24:25–27.*

Its cumulative nature: Later passages build upon earlier ones, 17. *See Jeremiah 9:24; and 1 Corinthians 1:31.*

### Its intended effects

- ♦ Demolishing intellectual and belief strongholds, 4
- ♦ Casting down counter-arguments, 5
- ♦ Bringing every thought captive to Christ, 5
- ♦ Building up God's people in the truth, 8

## God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equal Persons: Father (often called God in the New Testament), 4, 13; Son (called Christ, Lord, Jesus, etc.), 1, 5, 7, 11; and Holy Spirit.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is mighty, more powerful than all opposing beings, 4–5.
- ♦ He is sovereign over his servants and their fields of ministry, 13. *See Acts 16:6–10.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He allows himself to be known by his people. *See Galatians 4:9; and John 17:3.*

- ♦ He sends his messengers to preach the gospel to those who have never heard, 13–14, 16.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed Messiah whom God sent to save his people from their sins, 1, 5, 7, 14.
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh in the person of Jesus, 8, 17, 18.
- ♦ He is meek and gentle, 1. *See Matthew 11:29.*

### His work

- ♦ He subdues all opposition to his authority, including all mental opposition, in his time and way, 5.
- ♦ He has purchased for himself a special people, who are his “own” and who belong to him, 7. *See Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:23; and Titus 2:14.*
- ♦ He sent his apostles, including Paul, with exclusive authority to proclaim the gospel and to command obedience to Christ, 5, 8.
- ♦ He commends his faithful servants, 18. *See Matthew 25:23.*

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, 15

### Its benefits

- ♦ Deliverance from deceptive ideas, 5
- ♦ Being “owned” by Jesus Christ, 7
- ♦ Receiving written revelation from God’s chosen messengers 10–11

## The Church

Its identity: The Christian church is “apostolic,” as the Apostles’ Creed says, because it is founded upon, and remains obedient to, the teachings of the apostles, including Paul, 1–4. *See Romans 1:5–6; 1 Corinthians 14:37–38; 15:1–11; Galatians 1:6–12; and Ephesians 2:19–22.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Imitate the humility and gentleness of Jesus and of Paul, 1.
- ♦ Accept the authority of Paul's writings, 5-6, 8, 13-14; see the apostolic nature of the church, above.
- ♦ Combat Satan's deceptive wiles, and all false ideas, with the spiritual weapons of truth, 3-6. *See Ephesians 6:10-20.*
- ♦ Use any spiritual influence or authority we have to build others up on Christ, not to exploit them, 8. *See Ephesians 4:1-4; Matthew 20:25-28; and 1 Peter 5:1-4.*
- ♦ Serve God only in the ways and areas that God has clearly appointed to us, 13-16. *See Romans 12:3; and Galatians 2:9.*



# 2 Corinthians 11

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God through his chosen messengers, 7.

#### Its messengers

- ♦ The true gospel came through God's chosen messengers, including Paul, 5, 12, 22. *See 2 Corinthians 12:13; 13:1-6.*
- ♦ Paul was God's chosen apostle to the Gentiles, though he always started by preaching to the Jews. His apostleship was foundational for the Gentile church, which soon became, and still is, the majority church. His qualifications included his immense knowledge; his self-sacrificing work without pay; his Jewish ancestry; his "apostolic" labors, which surpassed those of the other apostles; and his sufferings, both voluntary and involuntary, which were beyond imagining in their severity, variety, and frequency; and his endurance. See the Scriptures referenced above, as well as verses 5-9 in this chapter, and in the section on "the sufferings of Paul" below.
- ♦ There were, and continue to be, false "apostles," who are not from God and do not preach the pure gospel of God, 4-5, 12-15, 18-23.

#### Its content

- ♦ The content of biblical revelation is Jesus, 4. *See 1 Corinthians 2:12; Luke 24:27; and John 5:39.*
- ♦ The content of biblical revelation, and especially the New Testament, is the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ, 4. *See Galatians 1:6-9; and Galatians 3:8.*
- ♦ The gospel is also the gospel of God, since it comes from God and centers on God, 7.

*Note: There were, and are, counterfeit "gospels," that do not focus on salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone; these we must reject. See the Scriptures referenced above. These include the so-called "prosperity gospel", or "health and wealth gospel."*

Its cumulative nature: The Scriptures are a coherent whole, with later passages building upon earlier ones.

- ♦ “As the serpent deceived Eve,” 3; *see Genesis 3:1–6.*
- ♦ “A different gospel,” 4; *see Galatians 1:6–8.*
- ♦ “I was a burden to no one,” 9; *see Acts 20:33.*
- ♦ “Satan transforms himself into an angel of light,” 14; *see Galatians 1:8.*
- ♦ “Hebrews, . . . Israelites, . . . the seed of Abraham,” 22; *see Philipians 3:4–6; Genesis 12:1–3; 14:13; 17:5; 39:14; and Exodus 35:19.*
- ♦ “The Jews,” 24; *see 2 Kings 25:25; Matthew 2:2; John 4:22; Romans 3:9; and 1 Corinthians 1:22–24.*
- ♦ Sufferings of Paul, 23–33; *see Acts 13:50; 14:1–7, 9; 16:16–24; 17:5–9; 18:6–11; 19:8–10, 21–41; 20:1–21; 21:26–27:10, 16, 30–31.*

## God

His Triune nature: God exists as Father, usually called “God” in the New Testament, 31, except when “God” refers to the whole Trinity, 7, 11; Son, also called Christ and Lord and Jesus, 3, 10, 13, 17, 23, 31.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing all, even the hearts of men, 11, 31.
- ♦ He is eternal, 31.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is to be blessed, for he blesses us, forever, 31.
- ♦ He revealed himself through the message of the gospel, as communicated by his chosen apostles, 4, 7.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent to save his people from their sins, 3, 10, 13, 23, 31.
- ♦ He is the Bridegroom, whose bride is the church, the company of all who trust and follow him, 2. *See Romans 7:1–4; Ephesians 5:22–33; Matthew 22:1–22; John 3:29; and Revelation 19:7–10; 21:2.*
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, truly God and truly man, 17, 31.
- ♦ He is the unique divine and eternal Son of God, 31.

- ♦ He is Jesus, the human son of Mary, 31.

### His work

- ♦ He embodies and communicates the truth through his messengers to his people, 10. *See Ephesians 4:21; and John 14:6.*
- ♦ He sent apostles, chosen messengers with a commission, to communicate his gospel, 13, 23. *See 1 Corinthians 12:28; Galatians 1:11–17; 2:7–9; Ephesians 4:11; and Matthew 10:1–4.*

## Spiritual Beings

Angels: There are “angels of light,” whom Satan and his demons impersonate, 14. *See Galatians 1:8; 3:19; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 6:3; 11:10; 13:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:16; 5:21; and Colossians 2:18 (which probably refers to the worship offered by angels to God).*

Satan and demons: Satan (also called the devil, the slanderer who tells lies about God and others) is fundamentally a deceiver, often working through men who profess to belong to God, 14. *See 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 2:11; Galatians 1:11–17; Ephesians 4:27; 6:11; and 2 Timothy 2:16.*

## Sin

### Its nature

- ♦ Turning away from simple and sincere trust in Christ, 3, by accepting another message than the gospel that Paul and the apostles preached, 4.
- ♦ Aspiring to be seen as more than we are; especially trying to usurp the authority of the apostles, including Paul, 12–13.
- ♦ Boasting in oneself, especially our worldly, or “fleshly” abilities and accomplishments, 12, 18.
- ♦ Imagining that we are wise, 19; *see Romans 1:22; 12:16.*
- ♦ Exploiting and abusing those under our pastoral care, 20; *see 1 Peter 5:2–3.*
- ♦ Exalting ourselves over others, 20; *see Matthew 20:24; 23:11–12.*

Its penalty: God will recompense unrepentant sinners according to what they have done, 15. *See Philippians 3:19; Romans 1:18–32; 2:5–12; 6:20–23; Galatians 5:12; Ephesians 5:5–6; and often.*

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who accept the true gospel in faith, 4

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being joined with Christ in an intimate union, 2; *see Romans 7:4; and Ephesians 5:22–32.*
- ♦ Receiving the Holy Spirit, 4; *see 2 Corinthians 1:22; Romans 8:15; and Galatians 3:2.*

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ♦ The church is the bride of Christ, 2. *See Ephesians 5:22–32; Matthew 22:2; and John 3:29.*
- ♦ It is comprised of all who have received the Holy Spirit through responding to the gospel in faith, 4. *See Romans 8:9–16; Galatians 3:2; and Ephesians 1:13–14.*

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will judge the world in righteousness, rendering to each person good or evil, depending on our conduct in this life, 15. *See 5:10; Romans 2:5–11; and 1 Corinthians 3:11–17 (note: this passage refers to reward or loss of privileges, not to eternal salvation or condemnation); and Ephesians 5:5–6, 8–9; 6:8–9.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Cling to Jesus as our true Bridegroom, and not be seduced to give our love to another “savior” or “lord,” 2–3. *See Ephesians 6:24; John 21:15–19; and Revelation 2:4.*
- ♦ Stick to the original gospel message of salvation through faith in Christ alone, and not turn aside to other doctrines, 4. *See Galatians 1:6–10; Matthew 24:4–5, 11:23–26; and 2 John 2:9–10.*
- ♦ Beware of Satan’s wiles and guile, and false messengers who seem attractive but are not from God, 13–15.
- ♦ Acknowledge Paul’s apostolic authority, and not believe those who would denigrate him, 22–33. *See 2 Corinthians 12:11–13; 13:1–4.*

- ♦ Expect to work hard, endure hardship, and suffer for the gospel, being ready to imitate Paul, who, like Jesus, suffered greatly, 22–33. *See 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; and 1 Corinthians 11:1.*

# 2 Corinthians 12

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its varieties: Biblical revelation records revelatory experiences of God's chosen messengers, including visions and other "revelations," 1–4, 7. *See 2 Corinthians 12:9; Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–11; 22:17–21; 26:12–19; Galatians 2:2; Acts 16:9–10; 18:9–10; and the book of Revelation.*

### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation, in all its varieties, came from God, 1.
- ♦ In some sense, God is incomprehensible, though not unknowable; in other words, there are some things about him that cannot be communicated in human words, 4.
- ♦ He is totally sovereign over his self-revelation, to whom and how much he tells us about himself, 4.

### Its messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through God's chosen messengers, including Paul, as he asserts repeatedly in this letter, 1–10. *See 2 Corinthians 1:1; 2:17; 3:1–18; 4:1–2, 6; 5:20; 6:1–4; 10:8, 13–16; 11:23.*
- ♦ Paul tells us a great deal about himself, as does Luke in Acts. He was the special envoy of God to the Gentiles whose life and teachings became foundational for the church around the world and throughout the centuries. Biographical information about him is thus an essential component of biblical revelation, and not just a matter of historical interest.

### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation includes personal narratives of the experiences of the authors, like Paul, 1–13. *See 2 Corinthians 11:22–27; 1 Corinthians 15:1–3; 8–10; Galatians 1:17–2:21; and 2 Timothy 4:9–18.*
- ♦ It also includes statements of the personal feelings of the messengers, including Paul, and personal defense, 14–21. *See 2 Corinthians 13:9.*
- ♦ It includes sayings of Jesus not recorded in the Gospels, 9. *See Acts 20:35.*

Its cumulative nature: Later passages build upon and often refer to earlier ones.

- ♦ Paul's visions and revelations; *see above*.
- ♦ "That the power of Christ may rest upon me," that is, upon a weak person, 9. *See Isaiah 40:29-31; Ephesians 1:19; 6:10; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11, 29; 2 Timothy 2:1; 4:17; and Hebrews 11:34.*

Its intended effects

- ♦ Humility, 7
- ♦ Holy conduct and not sin, 20-21

## God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called "God" in the New Testament), 3, 19, 21; Son (called Lord, Jesus, Christ), 2, 8-10, 19; and Holy Spirit.

His greatness

- ♦ He lives in "heaven," far above our created world, and expressed here as "the third heaven" and Paradise, referring, perhaps, to his transcendence beyond the atmosphere and even the stars in "heaven," a realm where God is immediately present in his glory, along with Christ and the angels, 2-4.
- ♦ He knows everything; he is omniscient, 2.
- ♦ He is sovereign even over Satan and suffering; Paul knows that his "thorn" "was given" to him, that is, from God though through Satan, and that God could take away this thorn in the flesh, 7-8.
- ♦ He is omnipotent; his power can overcome our weaknesses, 9.
- ♦ His power is seen also in his giving his people, especially the first Apostles but also now some of his people, the ability to work miracles through faith in Christ, 12. *See Romans 15:18; Acts 14:8-10; 5:12-18; 19:11-12; 28:1-10; and 1 Corinthians 12:9-10a, 28-30.*
- ♦ He is omnipresent, 19.

His goodness

- ♦ He hears our prayers and answers them, even when the answer is "No," 8.
- ♦ He sometimes speaks to his people directly to help them respond well to suffering and to know how he is handling their prayers, 9.

- ♦ He gives grace – that is, here, sufficient ability – to endure suffering and even to triumph over it by relying on his strength, 9–10.
- ♦ He works miracles – signs and wonders – through his people, especially his chosen messengers, 12.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, fully God and fully man, 1, 8.

*Note: “Lord” (Kurios in Greek), was the translation of the Hebrew name Yahweh used in the Greek translation of the Bible known as the Septuagint; thus, to call Jesus “Lord” is to say that he is Yahweh.*

- ♦ He is the Christ, the Anointed one, the Messiah, whom God sent into the world to save us from our sins, 2, 9–10, 19.
- ♦ As God, he is all–powerful, 9.
- ♦ As God, he dwells in Paradise, the third heaven, the realm where the souls of God’s people now reside in his direct presence, 2, 4. *See Ephesians 1:20–21; and Revelation 1:12–17; 4:6.*

### His work

- ♦ As Lord, he rules the world and all people; thus, he has the authority to allow his people to suffer or to remove their pain, 8.
- ♦ He now hears and responds to the prayers of his people, 8.

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

- ♦ Also called the devil, meaning the slanderer, Satan is a spiritual being of great and malign power who constantly seeks to thwart God’s plan of salvation for his people through Jesus Christ. *See 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14–15; Ephesians 2:2; 6:19, 12; and Matthew 4:1–10.*
- ♦ He uses various means, including physical pain and illness (possibly the meaning of Paul’s “thorn for the flesh), to discourage and distract God’s servants from their ministry, 7.



## Sin

### Its nature and manifestations

- ♦ Baseless boasting, 1, 5, 11; *see Galatians 6:14.*
- ♦ Pride in the revelation, and other spiritual benefits, given to us by God, 7; *see 1 Corinthians 4:7.*
- ♦ Refusing to recognize and commend the authority of Paul, the other Apostles, or any other genuine servant of God, 11
- ♦ Suspecting the motives of those who are sincere in their love toward us, 16–18
- ♦ Using our spiritual authority or church position to take advantage of others, 17–18; *see 1 Peter 5:2–3.*
- ♦ Contentiousness, 20
- ♦ Jealousy, 20
- ♦ Outbursts of anger and wrath, 20; *see Ephesians 4:29–31; Colossians 3:8; and 1 Peter 3:1.*
- ♦ Selfish ambition, 20; *see Philipians 2:3.*
- ♦ Slander, 20
- ♦ Pride and conceitedness, 20
- ♦ Insulting others, 20
- ♦ Failure to repent of known sin, 21
- ♦ Sexual impurity, fornication, and lewdness, 21; *see Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:2–5; Colossians 3:5; and 1 Peter 4:3.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Ontological and conscious spiritual union with Christ, so that we are said to be “in” him, that is, to have the closest possible relationship with him, 2; *see Ephesians 1:1–14.*
- ♦ Direct access to God through prayer, 8
- ♦ Access to spiritual and even physical power to endure suffering and accomplish God’s will for us, 9–10; *see Ephesians 1:19; and Colossians 1:11, 29.*

## The Church

Its identity and membership: The church is also a spiritual family, whose members are “brothers” and “sisters” of each other in Christ, 18. *See 2 Corinthians 8:18, 27.*

Its nature and organization

- ♦ The biblical church is a fellowship located in various places, 13. *See 2 Corinthians 11:9, 25.*
- ♦ The church is founded upon the ministry of the original foundational apostles, including Paul, 11–12. *See 2 Corinthians 10:8–16; 11:5–13; 13:1–3; 1 Corinthians 9:1–2; 11:23–26; 12:28–29; 14:37; 15:1–11; and Ephesians 2:19–20; 3:1–13; 4:11.*

*Note: These original apostles were those who had personally seen the risen Lord Jesus, and their authority is unique and foundational; no other person can be, or be called, an “apostle” in the same sense, or have the same degree of authority.*

- ♦ The church is also served by ministers of the gospel, who are chosen and appointed to preach the gospel and lead Christians into the truth and holy living; these included Paul’s co-workers like Titus, 18. *See 2 Corinthians 1:1; and the letters to Timothy and to Titus.*

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Respect Paul and his unique authority.
- ♦ Boast not in ourselves or our works, but only in our weaknesses, which God can use for his glory, 6, 9–10.
- ♦ Accept “thorns” that God gives us to restrain us from spiritual pride, 7.
- ♦ In our weaknesses and troubles, trust God to supply us with sufficient strength to be and to do all that glorifies him, 9–10.
- ♦ Seek the welfare of those committed to our spiritual care, even to the point of giving ourselves totally, 12–13, 15.
- ♦ As parents, steward our resources so that we can pass on something to our children, 14.
- ♦ Expect to be misunderstood, even by those whom we are trying to serve, 16–17.

- ♦ Choose like-minded people to work with us in the ministry of the gospel, people who will serve, not seek to be served, 19.
- ♦ Always do everything for the sake of the edification of others (and God's glory, of course), 19. *See 2 Corinthians 10:8; and Ephesians 4:29.*
- ♦ Rather than reacting with anger at others' sins, mourn for them before God, 21.

# 2 Corinthians 13

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ Revelation was given by God to his messengers; he is its ultimate source, 3.
- ♦ Christ, as the Son of God and Word of God, gave revelation to his apostles, 3.

Its messengers: Biblical revelation was given by God through chosen messengers, including Paul, as one of the foundational apostles with unique authority, 2–3, 10.

Its cumulative nature: Later passages build upon earlier ones.

- ♦ “By the mouth of two or three witnesses,” 1; *see Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; also 1 Timothy 5:19; John 8:17; Hebrews 10:28; and 1 John 5:8.*

*Note: Many interpreters think that this refers to Paul’s third visit to Corinth, coming up, but others, including Philip E. Hughes (The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 475), believe that Paul is speaking literally and that when he comes to deal with his opponents in Corinth, he will follow the Law of Moses and call other witnesses to attest to the truth of his defense of his actions.*

*Note: Although Christians are under the New Covenant and not bound by the Mosaic Law as law, principles in the Mosaic Law reflect God’s character and his will for us now and can be applied to current situations. See Romans 7:1–6; 8:1–4; 13:8–9.*

- ♦ “He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God,” 4; *see Romans 1:4; 6:4; and 1 Peter 3:18.*
- ♦ Paul’s “weakness” and the Corinthians’ “strength,” 9; *see 1 Corinthians 4:10.*
- ♦ “We are glad when we are weak,” 9; *see 2 Corinthians 12:10.*
- ♦ “That you may be made complete,” 9, 11; *see Colossians 2:8.*
- ♦ Paul writes strongly, lest when he comes to them, he will have to speak harshly, 10; *see 1 Corinthians 4:21.*
- ♦ For edification, not destruction, 10; *see 2 Corinthians 10:8; and Jeremiah 1:10.*
- ♦ “Be of good comfort,” 11; *see 2 Corinthians 1:4, 7.*
- ♦ “Be of one mind,” 11; *see Romans 15:5; 16:12, 16, 18; Philippians 2:2; and 1 Peter 3:8.*
- ♦ “Live in peace,” 11; *see Ephesians 4:3; and Colossians 3:15.*

- ♦ “All the saints greet you,” 13; *see Romans 16:21–23.*
- ♦ “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . be with you,” 14; *see 2 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:24; 1 Corinthians 16:23; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 4:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; and 2 Timothy 4:22.*

#### Its content

- ♦ Personal communication of plans and desires, 1–2; *see Romans 15:22–28.*
- ♦ Gospel truth and its application to us, 4
- ♦ Exhortations, 5, 11–12
- ♦ Paul’s personal thoughts, 6
- ♦ Prayers, or reports of prayers, 7; *see Romans 1:8–10; Ephesians 3:14–21; and Philippians 1:3–11.*

#### Its intended effects

- ♦ Action appropriate to warning given, to avoid painful discipline, 2, 10
- ♦ Self-examination, 5
- ♦ Ethical conduct, 7
- ♦ Edification, or building up, in our character and faith, 10
- ♦ Strengthening of Christian fellowship through greetings, 12

## God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equal beings, Father (usually called God, 4, 14), Son (also called Lord, Jesus, Christ, 14), and Holy Spirit, 14.
- ♦ Sometimes the entire Godhead is referred to without distinction as “God,” 7, 11, and perhaps 4.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is all-powerful, as shown in his raising Jesus from the dead, 4.
- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, hearing prayers from his people wherever they are, 7.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He warns us to encourage us to avoid sin and its consequences, 2, 5.

- ♦ He sent Jesus to die for us and thus take the penalty for our sins in our stead, 4. *See 2 Corinthians 5:21.*
- ♦ He raised Jesus from the dead, thus confirming the efficacy of his sacrifice and his intention to save us as well, 4.
- ♦ He gives his power to his people, 4.
- ♦ He hates evil and seeks our growth in goodness, 7.
- ♦ He is true and wants us to live according to his truth, 8.
- ♦ He seeks our edification, 10.
- ♦ He is filled with love, which he desires to communicate with us, thus creating peace between us and himself, and between us and other believers, 11, 14.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the Messiah, truly God and truly man, anointed with the Holy Spirit to save us from our sins, 3, 5, 14. *See Matthew 3:16-17; and John 1:32-34.*
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, whose name means, “Yahweh is salvation,” 5, 14. *See Matthew 1:21.*
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh (“Lord” is Kurios in Greek, the name used in the Septuagint to translate the personal name Yahweh), 10, 14. *See Philippians 2:11.*
- ♦ He is strong, infinitely so, 3-4.
- ♦ He is alive, having been raised from the dead by God, 4. *See Romans 6:4; and John 14:19.*
- ♦ He has all authority, 10. *See Matthew 28:18.*
- ♦ He is full of grace, that is, unmerited favor and love toward his people, 14. *See John 1:14.*

### His work

- ♦ He spoke uniquely and authoritatively through his chosen apostles, 3.
- ♦ He works mightily in the hearts and minds of his people, 3.
- ♦ He was crucified as the Lamb of God to take away our sins, 4. *See 2 Corinthians 5:21.*

- ♦ He rose from the dead, 4.
- ♦ He dwells in his faithful followers, 5. *See Galatians 2:10; and John 15:5, 10.*
- ♦ He gave authority to his apostles to exercise rule over the early church, 10.

*Note: No one since these apostles can rightly claim to have that kind of authority.*

- ♦ He communicates his grace/his love to those who trust in him, 14. *See 2 Corinthians 1:2; and Ephesians 1:2.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God himself, of the Father and of the Son; as such, he possesses all the attributes of deity, 14. *See 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Romans 8:9–11.*
- ♦ He is, therefore, fully personal; he is not an impersonal force, 14. *See John 16:7–8, 13–14, where the personal pronoun “he” is used.*
- ♦ He is holy, completely righteous and pure, and set apart, 14.
- ♦ Some interpreters, including, notably, Augustine of Hippo, Peter Lombard, and Jonathan Edwards, believe that he is the personal bond of love between the Father and the Son; thus, the word “communion,” or “fellowship,” 14.

### His work

- ♦ He communicates to us the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God the Father for us, through the fellowship that he has with his people, 14.
- ♦ He creates community, communion, fellowship, between God and his people, and between and among his people, 14. *See Ephesians 4:3–4; and Philipians 2:1.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Refusal to acknowledge the God-given authority of Paul and other apostles, 3; *see 1 Corinthians 14:37–38.*
- ♦ Doing anything that is evil or dishonorable, 7
- ♦ Acting against the truth, 8

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who believe in Christ, 5; *see 2 Corinthians 1:24; 4:13; 5:7; and 1 Corinthians 1:2; 15:1–11.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ Life, that is, spiritual vitality and communion with Christ, through Jesus Christ, 4
- ♦ The indwelling of Christ by his Spirit, 5; *see Romans 8:10; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27; and John 15:4–7.*
- ♦ God's comfort to us in all our troubles, 11; *see 2 Corinthians 1:3–7; and Philippians 2:1.*
- ♦ The presence of the love and peace of God, 11; *see Romans 15:33.*
- ♦ The status of being "saints," those who, by the work and presence of the Holy Spirit, are set apart for God's ownership and use, and who are already considered holy in his sight, 13; *see 2 Corinthians 1:1.*
- ♦ God's grace = his unmerited favor = his love towards us in Christ, 14
- ♦ God's love, 14; *see 2 Corinthians, chapter 11.*
- ♦ The communion = fellowship of the Holy Spirit, 14

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ♦ Those who acknowledge, and submit to, the authority of the original apostles, including Paul, 2–3, 6, 10
- ♦ Those who savingly trust in Christ, and are "in the faith," 5
- ♦ Brothers and sisters in Christ, 11
- ♦ Saints, that is, those who have been set apart by the Holy Spirit for God's ownership and use, and who are considered holy in his eyes already, 11

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Establish charges against believers and our leaders by the testimony of two or three witnesses, not just one witness, 1.
- ♦ Acknowledge the God-given authority of Paul and the other original apostles, 3.



- ♦ Examine ourselves often to see whether we are truly born again and “in the faith,” 5.

*Note: We should avoid trying to judge the spiritual state of others, except to evaluate their open conduct and see whether it matches their profession of faith.*

- ♦ Avoid evil and all that is not honorable, 7.
- ♦ Live according to God’s revealed truth as much as possible, 8.
- ♦ Thank God when other believers are spiritually “strong,” 9.
- ♦ Seek maturity in Christ, unity with other believers, harmony within the church.
- ♦ Express godly affection to other believers in a way that is holy, 12.
- ♦ Bless others with words, 14.

# **GALATIANS**

# Galatians 1

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Paul's apostleship, 1, 9, 11–24; *see Acts 9:1–16; 22:14–15, 26:16–18; and 2 Corinthians 12:11–13.*
- ♦ Paul's special calling to the Gentiles, 16; *see Acts 9:15; 22:21; and Romans 1:5; 11:13; 15:16.*
- ♦ "This present evil age," 4; *see Ephesians 5:16; called the "world" in Romans 12:2; James 4:4; and 1 John 2:15.*
- ♦ Paul's gospel, 6–8; *see Romans 1:16–5:21 and 1 Corinthians 15:1–11.*
- ♦ Pleasing God, not men, 10; *see Colossians 3:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; opposite to pleasing men, not God, John 5:44.*
- ♦ Paul's previous life, 13–24; *see Acts 7:57–59; 9:1–30; 22:3–21; 26:9–23; 2 Corinthians 11:21–12:10; and Philippians 3:4–11.*
- ♦ Jewish traditions, 14; *see Matthew 15:1–9 and Colossians 2:8.*
- ♦ Separation and calling from the womb, 15; *see Isaiah 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:7; and Luke 1:13–17; 2:41–44.*
- ♦ James, the brother of Jesus, 19; *see Matthew 13:55; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Acts 15:13–21; and James 1:1.*

### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation comes from God alone not from human reason or tradition, 15.
- ♦ Biblical revelation came from God to and through his chosen messengers, including Paul and the other apostles, 1, 11–6, 18–19.

Its finality: God's prophetic and apostolic revelation is final and cannot be "added to or subtracted from" in a way that violates its integrity and central message, 6–8. *See Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5–6; and Revelation 22:18–19.*

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to raise Jesus from the dead, 1.
- ♦ He has a will that accomplishes all his purposes, that is, he is also omnipotent as well as all-wise, 4.
- ♦ He deserves unlimited praise for his intrinsic glory, 5.
- ♦ He is eternal, 5.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is the Father of Jesus Christ and of all believers, 1, 3.
- ♦ He gives grace and peace, 3.
- ♦ He calls people through the preaching of the gospel to know Christ and be saved, 6. *See 2 Corinthians 5:19-20; Ephesians 1:18; and 1 Thessalonians 2:14.*
- ♦ He chose Paul and called him to be an apostle, 15.
- ♦ He revealed his Son Jesus to Paul and in Paul, 16.
- ♦ He “owns” and takes care of his church, 13.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, 1.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, Yahweh in the flesh, equal to God (the Father), 3.
- ♦ He gave himself for our sins, 4.
- ♦ He has power to deliver us from this present age, 4.
- ♦ He gives grace, 6.
- ♦ He is the subject and center of the gospel, 7.
- ♦ He is Lord and is pleased to use people as his servants, 10.
- ♦ He revealed himself to Paul, 12.
- ♦ He is intimately related to all believers, who are somehow “churches in Christ,” 22.

## Salvation

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who hear and believe the gospel about Christ, 6-9, 11-16.

### Its conveyance

- ♦ Salvation comes from God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, 3.
- ♦ Salvation issues from God's grace alone, as found in Christ alone, 6.

### Its benefits: Salvation brings

- ♦ Grace – God's unmerited favor and love
- ♦ Peace – reconciliation with God and with other believers, 3

## The Church

### Its membership

- ♦ The "church" exists as local "churches," that is, congregations of believers, in various places, 2, 22.
- ♦ The church is constituted by the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is received in faith, 6,
- ♦ The church consists of "brothers," that is, brothers and sisters in Christ, who are united to each other and to God by a common spiritual life, 11.
- ♦ The universal church is the "church of God," "the Body of Christ," 13. *See Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22; and Colossians 1:18.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Attend carefully to what Paul has written, for it comes from God.
- ♦ Beware of any other "gospel" that does not accord fully with the message preached by Paul and the other apostles.
- ♦ Avoid any "gospel" that does not focus on Jesus Christ and the spiritual grace we have in him through faith. These "other gospels" would include Roman Catholicism, liberal Protestantism, the "prosperity gospel," and all sects that emphasize rules, regulations, and their traditions more than the revelation given to us in the Bible, especially the New Testament.
- ♦ Thank God for sending Jesus to die for our sins and deliver us from this present evil age.

# Galatians 2

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Paul's trips to Jerusalem, and the Jerusalem Council, 1–10; *see Acts 15:1–21*.

*Note: Some scholars believe that this trip is the one described in Acts 11:30.*

- ♦ Barnabas, 1; *see Acts 4:36; 13:1–14:28*.
- ♦ Titus, 3; *see 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6, 13–15; and Titus 1:4–5*.
- ♦ Circumcision required of all Jewish males, 3; *see Genesis 17:10–14 and Leviticus 12:3*.
- ♦ Faith in Christ brings freedom, 4; *see Galatians 2:4; 3:13; 5:1*.
- ♦ Submission to the Mosaic Law brings bondage, 4; *see Galatians 4:21–5:1*.
- ♦ God shows no favoritism, that is, he does not regard external appearance, 6; *see Deuteronomy 10:17; 1 Samuel 16:7; Luke 20:21; Acts 10:34; and James 2:1*.
- ♦ Paul's special calling to the Gentiles, 3; *see Acts 9:15; 22:21; and Romans 1:5; 11:13; 15:16*.
- ♦ Three “pillars” of the church, 9; *see Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33*.
- ♦ James, 9; *see Matthew 13:55; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Acts 15:13–21; and James 1:1*.
- ♦ Paul's care for the poor, especially the poor believers in Jerusalem, 10; *see Acts 11:29–30; Romans 15:25–27; and 2 Corinthians 8–9*.
- ♦ No one can be justified—considered righteous—by doing the works that the Mosaic law requires, 16; *see Psalm 143:2*.

### Its nature and content

- ♦ The revelation to Paul was primarily “gospel,” that is, good news of reconciliation to God through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ his Son, 5, 7, 14, 16.
- ♦ This gospel is “truth,” an absolutely reliable body of information with divine authority, 5, 14.
- ♦ The truth centers on “grace,” that is, God's unmerited favor towards those who believe in Jesus Christ, 21.

- ♦ This New Testament gospel replaces the Old Testament Mosaic law as God's binding revelation of his will for us now, 16–21.

Its source: It comes from God to and through his chosen messengers, including Paul and the other apostles, among whom Paul was recognized as an equal, with a gospel received from God, 1, 6–9.

## God

### His goodness

- ♦ He gives grace to his servants to fulfill the ministry he has entrusted to them, 8–9.
- ♦ He gives saving grace—that is, his love and intimate fellowship—to all who truly trust in Christ, 21.

## Christ

His person: He is the divine–human Son of God, 20.

### His work

- ♦ He died on the cross for us to deliver us from God's wrath against our sins, 20.
- ♦ He gave himself for us voluntarily as a sin offering, 20.
- ♦ He lives now (by his Spirit) in those who trust in him, 20.
- ♦ He loved us; that is why he died for us, 20.

## Salvation

### Its conveyance

- ♦ Salvation comes through faith in the person and atoning work of Jesus Christ, 16–17.
- ♦ Salvation does not come through keeping the requirements of God's ceremonial or moral law, 16.
- ♦ Salvation comes when the moral law of God “kills” us by showing us that we deserve condemnation and wrath for our sin (and when we then trust in Christ alone), 19. *See Galatians 3:19 and Romans 7:1–13.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ Salvation brings freedom from the Mosaic law, 4.

- ♦ Salvation includes justification, that is, the declaration by God that we are righteous and not liable to condemnation or eternal punishment for our sins, 16–27.
- ♦ Salvation brings new life, that is, a relationship with God the Father through vital union with God the Son by the indwelling Holy Spirit, 20.
- ♦ This new life is begun and continued by trust in Christ, 20.

## The Church

Its characteristics: The church is the temple of God, in which some leaders are “pillars,” 9. See *1 Corinthians 3:16* and *Ephesians 2:21*.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Do not compel people to obey the Mosaic law.
- ♦ Do not compel people to fulfill extra-biblical requirements in order to be considered “good” Christians.
- ♦ Do not compromise with legalism in the church.
- ♦ Do not compromise with any dilution or distortion of the central gospel.
- ♦ Remember to take care of poor Christians around the world.
- ♦ Do not try to be “justified,” or considered righteous, by any performance or obedience.
- ♦ Do not try to “earn” right standing with God by any good actions.
- ♦ Trust in Christ’s saving work alone for right standing with God.
- ♦ Allow the moral law of God to bring conviction of sin so that we turn from all self-effort and striving to trust in Jesus alone.
- ♦ Live daily by faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us.



# Galatians 3:1–18

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ “The works of the law,” that is, the stipulations of the Mosaic Law and the results of obedience or disobedience, 2, 10–14; *see Exodus 20 – Leviticus 27, Deuteronomy.*
- ♦ “Abraham believed God,” 6; *see Genesis 15:6.*
- ♦ “In you all the nations shall be blessed,” 8, 14; *see Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.*
- ♦ “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law,” 10; *see Deuteronomy 27:26.*
- ♦ “The just shall live by faith,” 11; *see Habakkuk 2:4.*
- ♦ “The man who does them shall live by them,” 12; *see Leviticus 18:5.*
- ♦ “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree,” 13; *see Deuteronomy 21:23.*
- ♦ “And to your seed,” 16; *see Genesis 12:3, 7; 13:15; 24:7.*

Its plenary, verbal inspiration: Every word is from God; even the singular number of the word “seed” is significant, 16.

Its content and source: “Scripture” is portrayed as a person, to show that in Scripture God himself reveals his character and his will, 8.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 17.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to work miracles through his Spirit, 5.
- ♦ He is eternal, 8.

### His goodness

- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to die for us, 1.
- ♦ He gives his Spirit to those who believe in Jesus, 2, 14.
- ♦ He supplies the Spirit and works miracles among all who continue to trust in him, 5.
- ♦ He justified Abraham. that is, declared him to be righteous in God's eyes, when Abraham believed his promise, 6.
- ♦ He promised to bless all nations through the Seed of Abraham, 8, 16–18.
- ♦ He gave the law through Moses to teach his people his will and ways, 10–12.
- ♦ He promised to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, 18.
- ♦ He keeps his promises, 17–18.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, 1, 14.
- ♦ As true man, he was capable of death, 1, 14.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent by God to save us, 1.
- ♦ He is a descendant of Abraham and thus a Jew, 16.
- ♦ He is actually “the” seed, or descendant, or offspring, indicated by God in his promise to Abraham, 16. *See Genesis 12:3, 7; 13:15; 24:7.*
- ♦ He is the one in whom all God's blessings come to those who are united with him by faith, 14.

### His work

- ♦ He died on the cross in our place as a payment [ransom] for our sins, to free us from God's curse and wrath, 1, 13.
- ♦ He became accursed for us by dying on a cross, 13.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person and work

- ♦ He is given by God to those who trust in Christ, 2.
- ♦ His coming into our hearts is the beginning of our new life in Christ, 3.

- ♦ Coming from God, he energizes believers and works miracles in and through them, 5.
- ♦ He was promised by God in the Old Testament and now comes to those who trust in Christ, 14. *See Isaiah 32:15 and Joel 2:28.*

## Salvation

Its substance: Salvation consists in

- ♦ Receiving the Spirit, 2, 14 (also termed the baptism with the Spirit, regeneration by the Spirit, etc.; *see Acts 1:8; John 3:3,5; 1 Peter 1:3; Titus 3:5.*)
- ♦ The constant presence, indwelling, and “supply” of the Holy Spirit, 5; *see Acts 1:8.*
- ♦ Justification, that is, being declared righteous in God’s sight, 6, 8; *see Romans 3:21–5:21.*

*Note: Justification is not the same as sanctification, which is the ongoing process of being made practically holy and righteous.*

- ♦ Being blessed by God instead of cursed, 8–14
- ♦ Receiving the promise of an eternal inheritance, 18

Its source

- ♦ Salvation comes from God, not man, 2, 18.
- ♦ It results from God’s mercy, not man’s works, 5–6.

Its conveyance

- ♦ It comes through hearing the gospel about the saving person and work of Jesus, especially his death on the cross for our redemption, 1, 2, 13.
- ♦ It comes to those who believe the gospel and entrust themselves entirely to God’s grace to us in Christ, not relying on their works to justify them, 2, 5–14. *See Romans 10 and Ephesians 2:9–10.*
- ♦ It comes as the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, 2, 14.

# The Church

## Its members

- ♦ The church consists of all those who truly believe in Christ, 2.
- ♦ The church consists of those who have received the Holy Spirit, 2. *See Romans 8:9.*
- ♦ The church, that is, those who trust in Christ, are joined to Abraham as his spiritual “sons,” 7–9, 14–18.

## Its substance

- ♦ The church is founded on the preaching of the gospel of Christ, 1.
- ♦ The church will suffer in this world for its faith in salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, 4.
- ♦ The church should be marked by the constant work of the Spirit, 5.

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, especially his sacrificial death upon the cross for our redemption, 1, 8.
- ♦ Having believed in Christ, do not try to justify ourselves before God on the basis of our performance.
- ♦ Thank God for sending Jesus to become a curse in our place so that we might receive his eternal blessing!
- ♦ Read every word of the Bible carefully, for each one has meaning.
- ♦ Set our hopes fully on the inheritance we shall receive when Christ returns.

# Galatians 3:19–4:7

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ The concept of “son” as “heir,” linked to the promise to give an inheritance to the descendants of Abraham, underlies Paul’s contrast of the slave and the son in a household. That is why the correct translation is not “sons and daughters,” for, except when a man had no sons, daughters did not receive an equal inheritance with sons under Old Testament law, 3:28–4:7. *See Numbers 27:1–11.*

### Its content and source

- ♦ The Mosaic Law came from God through angels, 3:19.
- ♦ The Mosaic Law came through a mediator, Moses, 3:19.
- ♦ As God is one, so is his revelation; his promises to Abraham and his commands through Moses are not in conflict, 3:20–21.
- ♦ “Scripture,” that is, the Mosaic Law, partakes of the nature of God, confining us all under sin, 3:22.

### Its progressive stages

- ♦ The Mosaic Law was given in order to reveal our sin, 3:19–22.
- ♦ The Mosaic Law thus served as a household tutor, to educate us in such a way that we would turn to Christ in faith, 3:23–25.
- ♦ Since tutors were almost always slaves, the Mosaic Law, so to speak, kept us in “slavery” to elemental principles of conduct until we could attain the “maturity” of faith in Christ, 4:1–5.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 4:4, 6.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is one, 3:20.

- ♦ He has life in himself, and he gives it to his creatures, 3:21.
- ♦ He rules all the events of time according to his own eternal plan, 4:4.

### His goodness

- ♦ He made promises to Abraham to bless him, his descendants, and all nations through him, 3:19. *See Genesis 12:3, 7 and Romans 4:13.*
- ♦ He gave his Law through Moses, so that his people might know his ways and his will, 3:19.
- ♦ He is righteous and requires righteousness from us, 3:19, 21.
- ♦ He must deal with sin in human beings, first by exposing it through the Law, 3:19, 22.
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to redeem us from bondage to the law, 4:4–5.
- ♦ He provides adoption as sons (and daughters) for all who trust in Christ, 3:26; 4:4, 5.
- ♦ He gives the Holy Spirit to his sons by adoption, 4:6.
- ♦ He allows us to call him “Abba, Father!” and thus to have an intimate relationship with himself, 4:6.
- ♦ He makes his children by adoption heirs of eternal life and of the kingdom that Christ will bring when he returns to earth, 4:7.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ As a descendant of Abraham, he is the Seed to whom God was referring when he made his promise to Abraham, 19. *See Galatians 3:16; 4:4; and Genesis 12:3, 7; 13:15; 24:7.*
- ♦ He is Jesus, the son of Mary, the man from Nazareth, 3:22.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed divine–human Messiah, whom God sent to save us from our sins, 3:22, 24, 26, 27, 29.
- ♦ He is the eternal and fully divine Son of God, 4:4.
- ♦ As a man, he was born of a woman, Mary, 4:4.
- ♦ As a Jew, he was born under the Mosaic Law, which he fulfilled all his life, 4:4.

### His work

- ♦ He joins himself intimately to his people—those who fully trust in him—through a spiritual baptism into himself and through a “clothing” of them by himself, 3:27. *See Romans 6:3; 13:10:12; 13:14.*
- ♦ He was sent by God the Father into the world, 4:4.
- ♦ He died on the Cross for our redemption as a ransom, or payment, for our sins, in our place, 4:5.
- ♦ He is the heir of God’s kingdom, 4:7.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is “sent” by God the Father, and thus, in some sense, subordinate to him, 4:6.
- ♦ He is the Spirit of the Son of God, 4:6.

### His work

- ♦ He is sent by the Father into the hearts of those who trust in Christ and are therefore sons of God by adoption, 4:6.
- ♦ He enables us to trust that God is our Father and to have an intimate relationship with God as Father, 4:6.

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ It confers “life” eternal, 3:21.
- ♦ It is a coming to Christ, 3:24.
- ♦ Believers are “baptized” into Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, 3:27. *See 1 Corinthians 12:13.*
- ♦ It is a putting on of Christ, that is, it confers intimate union with Christ, 3:27–28.
- ♦ It brings spiritual union with all believers, 3:28.
- ♦ Believers become “Christ’s,” that is, they belong to him, 3:29.
- ♦ It brings the blessing promised to Abraham, 3:29.
- ♦ It is redemption from the obligation to keep the commandments of the Mosaic Law, 4:5.

*Note: All the Ten Commandments except the fourth (concerning the Sabbath), are reiterated in the New Testament. Believers in Christ must seek to obey the moral law of God.*

- ♦ Believers receive adoption as sons (and heirs) of God, and an intimate union with him, 4:5–6.
- ♦ Believers receive the Holy Spirit, who comes to dwell in their hearts, 4:6. *See Acts 2:38; 10:47; and Romans 5:5.*

Its source: It comes entirely from God, 4–7.

Its conveyance

- ♦ It comes through faith to those who believe God’s promise, 3:22, 25, 26.
- ♦ It comes by the operation of the Holy Spirit, 4:6. *See Titus 3:5.*

## The Church

Its membership: It is composed of all those who

- ♦ Repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Savior and means of salvation, 3:22
- ♦ Have been baptized, 3:27; *see Matthew 28:18–19; Acts 2:38; and Romans 6:3.*
- ♦ Have received the Holy Spirit and can cry out, “Abba! Father!” from the heart, 4:6; *see Romans 8:9, 15, 16.*

*Note: The church contains people of all ethnicities and both genders. All are equally “in Christ,” 3:28.*

*Note: Some take 3:28 out of context and use it to deny all distinctions of role and function in the family and in the church based on gender, despite clear passages on these subjects elsewhere in Paul’s letters. See 1 Corinthians 11:2–16; 14:34–40; 1 Ephesians 5:22–33; Colossians 3:18; and Timothy 2:8 – 3:18.*

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Read the Bible often, to allow God’s Word to convict us of our sin.
- ♦ Believe God’s promise of forgiveness, reconciliation, and adoption as a “son” of God each day.
- ♦ Take time to reflect daily on our status as God’s beloved sons.



- ♦ Thank God for sending Jesus to redeem us not only from the curse of the Mosaic Law but also all obligation to keep its hundreds of statutes.
- ♦ Cry out in prayer to our heavenly Father daily.

# Galatians 4:8–5:1

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ The festivals and celebrations required by the Mosaic Law, 4:10; *see Romans 14:5, 11; Exodus 20:8–11; 31:12–18; 35:1–3; and Leviticus 16; 23; 25.*
- ♦ The two sons of Abraham, one by his wife’s servant Hagar and the other by his wife Sarah, 4:21–30.
- ♦ “Rejoice, O barren, . . .,” 4:27; *see Isaiah 54:1.* Paul emphasizes the aspect of Isaiah’s prophecy that promises inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s blessed family.

### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through God’s chosen servants, including Paul, who was, like us, frail and mortal, 4:12–15.
- ♦ God’s revelatory agents carried the authority of not only angels—God’s special messengers—but of God himself, 4:14.
- ♦ Revelation came supremely through Jesus Christ, by his Spirit, through his chosen messengers, 4:14.

### Its progressive stages

- ♦ God’s revelation gradually unfolded through the centuries of his dealings with his people, 4:21–30.
- ♦ The later revelation of salvation through faith in Christ replaces the Mosaic covenant, 4:21–28.

Its purpose and effects: Through special revelation, we come to know God, 4:8–9.

## God

His greatness: He is uniquely God, the Creator of the universe; all other so-called “gods” are not true gods, but useless idols, 4:8.

### His goodness

- ♦ He makes himself known to his people, 4:8–9. *See John 10:14; 17:3.*
- ♦ He knows his people personally and savingly, 4:9. *See John 10:14; 17:3.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent by God to save us from our sins, 4:14.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the son of Mary, the man from Nazareth, 4:14.

## Spiritual Beings

Angels: They are messengers of revelation from God, 4:14. *See Galatians 1:5; 3:19.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Serving non–gods, that is, idols, 4:8; *see Exodus 20:2–3.*
- ♦ Turning back to bondage to the Mosaic Law after coming to know God through faith in Christ, 4:9; 5:1
- ♦ Slavish observance to any “church calendar,” including the Old Testament feasts and Sabbaths, 4:10
- ♦ Turning away from Paul and his revelation, 4:16
- ♦ Pretending to be “zealous” for the well–being of others, when in reality being “zealous” only for their “zeal” for you, 4:17
- ♦ Persecuting Christians who claim that salvation comes through grace alone, through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, 4:29

## Salvation

Its nature: Salvation consists in

- ♦ Knowing God and being known savingly by him, 4:8–9
- ♦ Freedom from the ceremonial regulations of the Mosaic Law, 4:9–10, 31; 5:1
- ♦ “Blessing,” or “happiness,” that is, the joy that comes from being set free from bondage to the principle of law as the way to get right with God, 4:15

- ♦ Having the life and character of Christ “formed,” or “take shape,” in us, 4:19

## The Church

Its members: The church consists of all those who have believed God’s promise of blessing through faith, 4:23, 28.

Its marks: The church is marked by persecution, 4:29.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God that we can truly know him through faith in his revealed Word.
- ♦ Thank God that he knows us savingly in Christ.
- ♦ Do not allow religious legalists to impose extra-biblical, or even Old Testament, regulations that compromise our freedom of access to God by faith in Christ.

# Galatians 5:2–24

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Circumcision as the required action of all Jews, 2–3, 6, 11; *see Genesis 17:10.*
- ♦ Circumcision as a representative of all the commandments in the Mosaic Law, 3; *see Genesis 17:10–14 and Leviticus 12:3.*
- ♦ “A little leaven leavens the whole lump [of dough],” 9; *see 1 Corinthians 5:6.*
- ♦ “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” 14; *see Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 7:12; 22:40; and Romans 13:9.*
- ♦ The offense of the cross, 11; *see 1 Corinthians 1:23.*
- ♦ “Do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh,” 13; *see Romans 6.*
- ♦ “Led by the Spirit,” 18; *see Romans 8:14; for the concept, see Romans 6:14; 7:4.*
- ♦ The struggle between our flesh and God’s Spirit, 17; *see Romans 7:18–8:13.*
- ♦ Works of the flesh, 19–21; *see Romans 1:18–32; 1 Corinthians 5:9–11; Ephesians 5:3–5; and Colossians 3:5–9.*
- ♦ Unrepentant sinners do not enter the kingdom of God, 21; *see 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Ephesians 5:5.*
- ♦ Bearing fruit = living a godly life, 22; *see Psalm 1:3; 92:14; Matthew 3:8, 10; 7:17–18; 12:33; 13:23; John 15:1–8; Romans 7:4–5; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:10; and Hebrews 12:11.*
- ♦ “Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh,” 26; *see Romans 6:6.*

Its nature: Biblical revelation is truth, 7.

Its authority: God’s revelation commands obedience, 7. *See Romans 1:5.*

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as an eternal Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 4, 5, 6, 10, 16–18, 21, 22, 24, 25.

His greatness: He rules as sovereign King over all the world, 21.

### His goodness

- ♦ He sent his Son to die on the cross for our redemption, 11.
- ♦ He is loving and requires us to love each other, 14.
- ♦ He is holy and abhors all sin and unrighteousness, 19–21.
- ♦ He is righteous and will produce conduct in his people, 22–26.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent by God to save his people from their sins, 1, 4, 6.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, 6.
- ♦ He is Lord, the Old Testament Yahweh come in the flesh and now ruling as Lord over all, 10. *See Ephesians 1:17, 20–22; and Philippians 2:9–11.*

### His work

- ♦ He joins himself to all who believe in him, 4.
- ♦ He died on the cross for our redemption, 11. *See Galatians 1:4; 3:13; 4:4–5.*
- ♦ He gathers a people to himself who belong to him and are therefore “his,” 24. *See Romans 8:9 and Titus 2:14.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His work

- ♦ He gives us a longing for our future glorification, 5. *See Romans 8:19–26.*
- ♦ He enables us to “walk,” that is, live, according to God’s will and thus not to follow the desires of the sinful nature, 16. *See Romans 8:1–14.*
- ♦ He contends with our flesh, 17.
- ♦ He produces the “fruit” of godly living in us, 22.

## Salvation

Its source: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; though the Father is not mentioned, the passive voice in, for example, “called to liberty,” 13, implies the activity of the Father. The other two are mentioned by name often throughout this passage.

### Its substance

- ♦ Christ is some “profit” to us; we have a relationship with him, 2, 4.
- ♦ We are in a state of grace, that is, we stand in God’s grace, 4, 9. *See Romans 5:2.*
- ♦ We have the Holy Spirit in us, 5.
- ♦ We have hope of full righteousness someday, 5. This is either a final declaration of justification by God, or—more likely—full sanctification that makes us completely righteous. *See Romans 8:18–28.*
- ♦ Through ongoing faith, we begin to love God and others, 6, 13, 22.
- ♦ We obey the truth, 7.
- ♦ We are freed from the obligation to keep the Mosaic Law and, indeed, from measuring up to any standard in order to be justified in God’s eyes, 13.
- ♦ We have the ongoing work of the indwelling Spirit, who “leads” us into good works, fights against our sinful flesh, and enables us to “bear fruit,” that is, to have godly thoughts and actions, 18, 22–23.

Its conveyance: It comes through faith in God’s promises, 6.

Its benefits: In some sense we have “crucified,” or put to death our sinful flesh and its passions. The old man has no binding authority over us; we are free now to do good, 24. *See Romans 6:6 and Colossians 3:9–10.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Renounce all attempts to justify ourselves before God on the basis of our good deeds.
- ♦ Realize that we shall be fully righteous only when Christ returns and set our expectation on that hope.

- ♦ Maintain a close relationship with Christ through faith in him, asking him to transform us into his ethical likeness by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Renounce all allegiance to our sinful passions of mind and body, of which a representative sample is listed in 5:19–21.
- ♦ Seek to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- ♦ “Walk in the Spirit,” that is, rely on God’s Spirit to produce good thoughts and actions in us. Ask God to produce the “fruit of the Spirit” in us.
- ♦ Seek total moral transformation. The “fruit of the Spirit” is singular; all forms of it relate to all the others, and each is necessary for any of the others to be produced.



# Galatians 5:25–6:18

## Truth

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### God

His Triune nature: He exists eternally as a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 5:26; 6:2, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

### His greatness

- ♦ He knows everything, including all that we do, 6:7.
- ♦ He has the power and authority to render to each person according to his deeds, both now and at the last judgment, 6:7–8.
- ♦ He is eternal, 6:8.
- ♦ He possesses life in himself eternally, 6:8.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is utterly just and fair, rewarding each person according to his deeds, 7–9.
- ♦ He chose Israel to be his special people, 6:16. This verse may also mean that those who believe in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles, are now the “Israel of God.”
- ♦ He sends teachers of his Word to his people, 6:6. *See Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; and Ephesians 4:11.*

### Christ

### His person

- ♦ He has given us a “law,” or guiding principle, by which to live, 6:2. Paul probably refers here to the gentle manner in which Christ deals with sinners. *See Luke 22:54–62.*
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent by God to save his people from their sins, 6:12, 14, 15, 18.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, fully God, the Old Testament Yahweh come in the flesh, 6:14, 17, 18.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, fully human and thus liable to suffering (“marks,” 6:17) and death, 6:12, 14, 15, 17, 18.

### His work

- ♦ He has given us a “law,” or guiding principle, by which to live, 6:2. Paul probably refers here to the gentle manner with which Christ deals with sinners. *See Luke 22:54–62.*
- ♦ He died on the cross for our redemption, 6:12, 14.

## The Holy Spirit

### His work

- ♦ He gives new life to believers, 5:25.
- ♦ He is the “sphere,” or “realm,” or Person, in whom we live, 5:25.
- ♦ He is the one by whose power and prompting we should conduct our lives, 5:25. *See Galatians 5:18 and Romans 8:4, 5, 14.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Conceit, 6:1
- ♦ Needlessly provoking others, 6:1
- ♦ Envy, 6:1
- ♦ Thinking more highly of yourself than you should, 6:3
- ♦ Mocking God by thinking that he will not punish sin, 6:7; *see Genesis 3:4 and Ephesians 5:6.*
- ♦ “Sowing to the flesh,” that is, indulging sinful passions and desires rather than seeking sanctification by the Holy Spirit, 6:8
- ♦ Using another’s loyalty or obedience to us as a way of justifying ourselves, 6:12–13
- ♦ Boasting in anything other than the sacrifice of Christ for us, 6:13–14

## Salvation

### It includes

- ♦ Belonging to Christ, 5:24
- ♦ “Crucifixion” of the flesh at the time of true conversion and regeneration, 5:24

- ♦ New life in the Spirit, 5; *see Galatians 3:2-3, 14 and Romans 8:1-10.*
- ♦ Membership in the family of God, 6:1, 10
- ♦ Eternal life (for those who continue to walk in the Spirit), 6:8
- ♦ “Crucifixion” to the world, that is, severance of all obligation to live by its corrupt principles, 6:14
- ♦ Being made a new creation, 6:15; *see 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 2:10; 4:24.*
- ♦ An ongoing sense of the grace and favor of Jesus Christ our Lord, 6:18

## Life

---

### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Seek to live by the daily leading and power of the Holy Spirit, 5:25.
- ♦ Deal gently with Christians who sin, 6:1.
- ♦ Be generous towards other believers, especially teachers of the Bible, 6:6-10.
- ♦ Remember that our true “worth” comes only from the redemptive work of Christ for us, 6:14.

# EPHESIANS

# Ephesians 1:1–14

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation came to us from God, 1.

#### Its messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation came to us through God’s chosen messengers, the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament foundational apostles and prophets, including Paul, 1. *See Ephesians 2:20; 3:3–5, 8, 10–11.*

*Note: The New Testament foundational prophets probably included Mark, Luke, the author of Hebrews (if Paul did not write it), James, and Jude.*

#### Its content

- ♦ The mystery of his will, that is, the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in the universal Body of Christ, 9–10; *see Ephesians 3:4–7.*
- ♦ The word of truth, that is, the gospel of salvation, 13

Its recipients: All the New Testament, and almost all the Old Testament, was written for believers, 1.

#### Its literary structure

- ♦ Ephesians 1:3–14 is one long sentence in Greek.
- ♦ It has no main verb, but the translations rightly render the first clause as “Blessed be the God and Father . . .” They add “be” as the understood verb to go with “Blessed.”
  - This builds on Old Testament passages of a similar nature that start with “Blessed be . . .”
  - It marks the main point of the passage: that we should praise and bless God at all times. *See also Ephesians 5:20.*
- ♦ The passage divides into three parts, each ending with some variation of the phrase, “to the praise of his glorious grace,” 6, 12, 14.
  - The first section, 3–6, focuses on God the Father; the second, 7–12, on God the Son; the last, 13–14, on God the Holy Spirit.

- ♦ Roughly, the progression of thought is from eternity past, to our present condition, to eternity future.
- ♦ The entire passage is held together by the phrase, “in Christ,” “in Him,” or some variation of it, 3–7, 9–13.
  - This emphasizes that all of God’s saving purposes for us, and all his blessings to us, come to us “in Christ,” that is, as we are united to Christ in a spiritual union by the work of the Holy Spirit, received by faith.

## God

His Trinitarian nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament), Son (often called “Lord”), and Holy Spirit, 2, 3, 13.

### His greatness

- ♦ He possesses a personal and sovereign will, 1, 4–5, 9, 11.
- ♦ He is transcendent, high and lifted up above us, dwelling in heaven, 3.
- ♦ He created the world, 4. *See Ephesians 3:9.*
- ♦ He is eternal, existing before the foundation of the world, 4.
- ♦ He is all-wise, 8.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing the future from all eternity, 9–10.

### His goodness

- ♦ He graciously reveals himself to us as Father of all believers in Christ, 2–3, 5.
- ♦ He has given us every kind of spiritual blessing that exists in heaven, 4.
- ♦ He chose us in Christ to become holy, 4.
- ♦ He is also utterly holy, that is, completely free from sin or corruption of any kind, 4.
- ♦ He is glorious, that is, resplendent in beauty and majesty, 6, 12, 14.
- ♦ He is rich in grace, which is the free and unmerited favor that he showers upon his people, 5–7. *See Ephesians 2:4–5, 8–9.*
- ♦ He has begun the process that will result in the unification of God, angels, and all believers in Christ in the one Body of Christ, 10. *See 22–23; Ephesians 2:11–22; 3:6; 4:4–6.*

# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 1–3, 5.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed divine–human Savior, Messiah, sent by God to save his people from their sins, 1–3, 5, 10, 12.
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, the risen Lord Jesus, 2–3.
- ♦ He is the beloved Son of God the Father, 6.

## His work

- ♦ He chose, commissioned, and sent messengers with unique authority – apostles – to communicate his truth to his people and to suffer in the process of doing so, 1. *See Ephesians 3:13.*
- ♦ He now, with the Father, continuously bestows grace upon those who trust in him, 1–2.
- ♦ He died for us as a propitiatory sacrifice, that he might redeem us from the penalty, power and – eventually – the presence of sin, by shedding his blood upon the Cross, 7.

# The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Holy Spirit of God, revealed in the Old Testament and New Testament, 13.

## His work

- ♦ He inspired the New Testament apostles and prophets, including Paul, to communicate God’s truth to us, 5.
- ♦ As promised in the Old Testament by the prophets, by John the Baptist, and by Jesus, he comes to dwell in the hearts of those who truly trust in Christ, “sealing” them as those who belong to God and guaranteeing that they will finally be redeemed by God to enjoy eternity with him, 13–14. *See 2 Corinthians 1:22.*

## Spiritual Beings

Angels: There are spiritual beings who inhabit heaven, the unfallen angels, 10.

## Mankind

### Our fallen state

- ♦ As creatures of flesh, we live in this world of space, time, and matter, as the recipients of this letter lived in Ephesus, 1.
- ♦ As originally created, we were intended to be morally spotless, 4.
- ♦ In our current fallen state, we are sinners in need of forgiveness and deliverance, 7. *See Ephesians 2:1–3.*

## Sin

### Its nature

- ♦ Sin includes any action or attitude that is not “holy,” that is, focused on and dedicated to God, 4.
- ♦ Sin also includes any action or attitude that would rightly bring “blame” upon us by God or other people, 4.
- ♦ Specifically, sin includes not doing what we are told to do, and doing what we are told not to do. *See Ephesians 4:1–6:20.*

### Its consequences

- ♦ Bondage to sin itself, to Satan, and to the impending wrath of God, 7; *see Ephesians 2:1–3.*
- ♦ Liability to judgment, and a state of needing forgiveness by God, 7; *see Ephesians 4:32.*



## Salvation

### It includes

- ♦ Being considered holy, that is set apart and consecrated to God for his ownership and use, and reckoned already to be holy, 1
- ♦ Election unto holiness, 4
- ♦ Being progressively sanctified – made holy – by God, 4
- ♦ Receiving the love of God, 4; *see Ephesians 5:1.*
- ♦ Predestination to be adopted as sons into intimate fellowship with himself, 5
- ♦ Forgiveness of trespasses and sins, 7; *see Ephesians 4:32.*
- ♦ Wisdom and insight to understand his will and ways, 8–9
- ♦ The promise of an eternal inheritance, 11, 14

*Note: Some believe that this phrase should be translated to mean that God has given himself to us as our inheritance, which may be possible.*

- ♦ Being joined to the risen Christ in such an intimate spiritual union that we are said to be “in” him, and thus are given all spiritual blessings that inhere in him and come from him, 1, 3–7, 10–13.

### Its beneficiaries: Salvation comes to those who

- ♦ Trust in Christ Jesus and are therefore “faithful” in him, 1, 12–13
- ♦ Were chosen by God from before the creation of the earth, 4
- ♦ Were predestined according to the will of God, 5, 11

## The Church

### Its identity: The church is

- ♦ Founded, formed, and governed by the teaching of the apostles and prophets, 1; *see Ephesians 2:20.*
- ♦ Composed of those who are “saints,” that is, separated by the Holy Spirit unto God, 1

*Note: All believers in Christ are saints, not just a few especially holy ones, as in Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theology.*

- ♦ Marked by people who are growing in holiness of conduct, 4, 15
- ♦ Intended to worship and praise God, 6, 12, 14

## The Last Things

Christ's return: At the end of the age

- ♦ All things – the Triune God, unfallen angels, the saints who have gone to be with the Lord, and the Christians who are on earth at the time, will be united under the universal lordship and headship of Jesus Christ, 10.
- ♦ Believers in Christ will receive their promised inheritance, 14; this will be the kingdom of God, 5:5; *see 1 Corinthians 6:9; 15:50*; “the world” as promised to Abraham; *see Romans 4:13 and 1 Peter 1:3–4*. This “world” is the new heaven and new earth that all believers will inhabit with God for all eternity; *see Revelation 21–22*; the “heavenly country” that the Old Testament saints were seeking; *see Hebrews 11:13–16*; “the grace of [eternal] life,” *see 1 Peter 3:7*.

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Constantly read and meditate upon the words of the apostles, 1. *See Ephesians 3:3–4*.
- ♦ Praise and thank God continually for all the blessings he has bestowed on us in Christ, 3, 6, 12, 14.
- ♦ Eagerly look and long for the day when we shall enter into our inheritance, 11–14.
- ♦ Preach the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, 13.

# Ephesians 1:15–23

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Revelation of any kind, whether written or interior, comes from God the Father, through God the Son, by the working of God the Holy Spirit, 17–18.

Its messengers: New Testament revelation came through God's chosen messengers the apostles, including Paul, 16–18; *see Ephesians 1:1; 3:2–5.*

### Its form(s)

- ♦ Authoritative revelation came orally and then in written form from the apostles; the interior understanding of the revelation, often called illumination, comes from the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and minds. Only the former is authoritative for the church, 15–18.
- ♦ Interior revelation is so called because it is an unveiling of truths about God otherwise hidden to us, 15–19.

*Note: Though biblical revelation is objectively true, regardless of whether we believe or understand it, we need the work of the Holy Spirit to know God personally and to apprehend and appreciate his saving works and great power.*

*Note: Those theologians who reserve the term "revelation" only for the interior, subjective reception of God's objective truth fail to do justice to the objective, eternally true and independent revelation of God given to us through the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles. See Ephesians 3:3–5.*

### Its content

- ♦ Whether it is written revelation or the inner revealing of truth to believers by the Holy Spirit, the content is God and his saving works; here, it is first the knowledge of God and then the knowledge of the hope to which he has called us, the inheritance that he has in the saints, and his immeasurably great power, 15–19.

# God

## His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as a Trinity of Father (“God,” 17–22), Son (“Lord,” 17), and Holy Spirit, 17 (though some interpreters believe that “spirit” in this verse refers to the human spirit).
- ♦ These three are equal in eternity, power, glory, and all other divine attributes, yet they are one God.

## His greatness

- ♦ He is omniscient and omnipresent, and thus able to hear the prayers of his people from anywhere, 16–17.
- ♦ He is God, the Creator of the universe, 17.
- ♦ He is all-wise and thus able to grant wisdom to his people, 17.
- ♦ He holds the future in his hands and can give the promised possession to his people, 18. *See Ephesians 1:11–14.*
- ♦ He is sovereign in grace, calling those whom he wills to salvation in Christ, 18. *See Romans 8:28–30.*
- ♦ He is infinitely powerful, 19.
- ♦ He is King over all the universe, sitting on his throne in heaven, 20.
- ♦ He is sovereign over all other spiritual beings, both angels and demons, 21–22.
- ♦ He is eternal, his kingdom lasting from eternity to eternity, 21.

## His goodness

- ♦ He invites and hears the prayers of his people, 16.
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, 17.
- ♦ He is glorious, resplendent in beauty and majesty, 17.
- ♦ He allows himself to be known by us as Father, 17.
- ♦ He gives spiritual wisdom and understanding; or he gives the Spirit to his people, endowing them with understanding, 17.
- ♦ He allows himself to be known by us, 17. *See John 17:3.*

*Note: Those who say that God cannot be known are drawing upon an extra-biblical mysticism. God can be known not only in his acts, such as raising Jesus, but in his essence, such as wisdom, power, glory, Fatherhood, etc.*

- ♦ He has called his people to a future inheritance that he will certainly give them, 18.
- ♦ He has given his people an inheritance – life with him in a new heaven and new earth – that is glorious; or, as some interpreters say, he has made his people his own inheritance, 18.
- ♦ He gives his resurrection power even now to his believing people, that they may experience new life with him and a new moral energy, 19. *See Ephesians 2:1–10.*
- ♦ He has created his people as the church, the body of Christ his Son, 22–23.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 15, 17.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 15, 17.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the Messiah – anointed one – sent by God to save his people, 17, 20.
- ♦ He is the risen Lord who rules over all things, 21–22.
- ♦ He is eternal, 21.
- ♦ He is somehow subordinate to the Father, who gave him authority, and yet he is equal with the Father in deity, 20–21.
- ♦ He is the head of the church, which is his body, 23. *See Ephesians 5:22–33.*

### His work

- ♦ He died for our sins, 20. *See verse 7; Ephesians 2:16; 5:2, 25.*
- ♦ He rose from the dead, 20.
- ♦ He rules over all things, 22.
- ♦ He “fills all in all,” 23; either he fills the entire universe with his presence, mind, and power, or he fills the church with the fullness of his life and grace. *See Colossians 1:17, 19; 2:9–10; and John 1:16.*

*Note: This does not mean that as “Cosmic Christ” he is savingly present in all persons, as some teach.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the gift of the Father, through the Son, to his people, 17 (if “spirit” here is taken to mean the Holy Spirit).

His work: He gives spiritual wisdom and insight to his people, 17–18. *See Ephesians 3:16–19; and 1 Corinthians 2:10–12.*

## Spiritual Beings

Their identity: There are various sorts of spiritual beings, both good and evil, who have some delegated authority over parts of the world; these are fully under the authority of Christ, 20–21. *See Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:15; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 John 5:19; and Jude 5–9.*

*Note:*

- ♦ *It is difficult to know which sorts of spiritual beings are referred to in this verse, but probably all are.*
- ♦ *Likewise, it is useless to speculate about various orders of angels, good and evil, since the Bible is largely silent on this matter.*
- ♦ *All angels, including the devil and his demons, are totally under the authority and power of Christ; we must not suppose that they are able to thwart the will of God for his people. Most popular books on this subject are totally wrong.*

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen condition, we are

- ♦ Darkened in our understanding, “being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in [us], because of [our] hardness of heart,” so we need for God to enlighten our hearts to know him, 17–18.
- ♦ Struggling against spiritual forces of wickedness, whom we cannot overcome by our own power, and thus needing Christ, 21–22; *see Ephesians 6:12.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ The status of being a “saint,” one of those who are positionally sanctified by the Holy Spirit, 15; *see Ephesians 1:1,4; 5:26; 1 Corinthians 6:11; and 1 Peter 1:2.*
- ♦ The inner knowledge of God as Father, 17
- ♦ Calling by God to a certain hope of an eternal future with him, 18; *see Ephesians 1:12–14.*
- ♦ Membership in the community of God’s people, who are his special treasure; or, to whom God promises a rich inheritance of glory, 18; *see Romans 8:19–21; and Colossians 1:27.*
- ♦ The promise of empowerment from God as we trust in him constantly, 19
- ♦ Membership in the Body of Christ, with him as our living Head, 22–23

Its recipients: Those who continually trust in Christ as Lord and Savior, 15; *see Ephesians 1:1, 13 (where “faithful” can also mean, “trusting”); 2:8.*

## The Church

### Its nature and membership

- ♦ The church is composed of those who have ongoing, saving faith in Christ Jesus and who love all other believers, 15, 19.
- ♦ The church is the Body of Christ, of which he is the risen head, 21–22.
- ♦ The church is that body of believers who are “filled” with Christ, and who somehow “fill out” the life of Christ, 23. *See Ephesians 3:19 and Colossians 1:19, 24.*

## The Last Things

### Two ages

- ♦ We now live in this present age, 21, which is transitory and, in some sense, “evil.” *See Ephesians 5:16; Galatians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 7:31; and 1 John 2:17.*
- ♦ There is an “age to come,” when Christ will return and reign visibly over the universe, 21. *See 1 Corinthians 15:24–28.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Ask God to give us unswerving faith in Christ and love for all believers, 15.
- ♦ Give thanks for other believers when we pray for them, rather than just interceding for them, 16.
- ♦ Pray as Paul did, for deep inner illumination and transformation, 17–19. *See Ephesians 3:14–19.*
- ♦ Set our hope fully on the hope to which we have been called, rather than on this world, 18. *See 1 Peter 1:13.*
- ♦ Greatly value the riches of God's glory in the church; or greatly value the inheritance that we will someday share with other saints, 1. *See Colossians 1:12.*
- ♦ Constantly believe in the resurrection power of God, continually asking him to supply us with all the power we need to do his will, 19. *See Ephesians 6:10, 13; and Colossians 1:11.*
- ♦ Firmly believe that, even now, Jesus reigns over all things, and governs everything for the good of his church, 22. *See Psalm 2:6–12; 110:1–2; Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:25; and Revelation 1:5.*



# Ephesians 2:1–10

## Truth

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### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (“God,” 4, 8, 10), Son (“Lord,” “Christ,” 5–7, 10), and Holy Spirit, equal in power, glory, and all other divine attributes.

### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to give new life, both physical and spiritual, 5, and to raise us up to the heavenly places (spiritually), 6.
- ♦ He is transcendent, dwelling in heaven, far “above” us, 6.
- ♦ He is sovereign, sitting on his heavenly throne, 6. *See Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; and Psalm 110:1.*
- ♦ He is eternal, living from ages past to ages future, without end, 7. *See Ephesians 1:4; 2:10; 3:9.*
- ♦ He is utterly sovereign in his gift of salvation to sinners, 8–10. *See Romans 9:14–33.*
- ♦ He is almighty Creator, first of the universe and then, in spiritual re-creation, of new lives for his people, 10. *See Ephesians 1:4; 3:9.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He is rich in mercy, 4. *See Ephesians 4:32; Psalm 103:8; and Jonah 4:4.*
- ♦ He is filled with love– agape, unconditional love – for his people, 4. *See Ephesians 1:4; 3:18–19; 5:1; John 3:16; and 1 John 3:1; 4:9–10.*
- ♦ He gives new spiritual life to his people in Christ, 5.
- ♦ He is full of grace, that is, unmerited love to sinners, 7–8.
- ♦ He is full of kindness, acts of love to his people, 7.
- ♦ He changes sinners so thoroughly that this transformation is likened to creation; it is a new and fresh beginning, 10.
- ♦ He is good and seeks to do good to people through his re-created children, 10.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is alive, 5.
- ♦ He is in heaven, 6.

### His work

- ♦ Having been raised to God's right hand, he welcomes his people into his own life and proximity to the Father, 6.
- ♦ He has joined himself to us spiritually, so that we are "in" him, 6-7, 10. *See Ephesians 1:3-4, 6-7, 10-11, 13.*

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

- ♦ He is "the prince of the power of the air," ruling over a realm under heaven but somehow "above" the earth, 2. *See Ephesians 6:12.*
- ♦ He works evil in all those who are "sons" (children) of obedience, that is, all whose lives are marked by slavery to sin and habitual disobedience to God, everyone who has not yet been set free by Christ, 2. *See John 8:41, 44.*

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen condition, we are

- ♦ Spiritually dead, that is, alienated from God, 1, 5. *See Ephesians 2:12.*
- ♦ Locked in habitual disobedience to God, 1, 5
- ♦ Bound up in the world system, 2
- ♦ Slaves to Satan, 3
- ♦ Bound up in bodily and mental passions and desires, 3
- ♦ Destined for God's wrath, 3

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Trespasses, that is, all transgressions of God's will, 1
- ♦ Sins, that is, all actions of mind and body that are wrong before God, 1

- ♦ Disobedience to God's known will, 2
- ♦ Both bodily and mental passions that are not of God, 3

Its consequences: See notes above on our current fallen condition.

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ New life in Christ, 5; *see Romans 6:4-11*.
- ♦ Salvation from sin, Satan, God's wrath, death, etc., 5
- ♦ Spiritual resurrection with and in Christ to the Father's right hand, with immediate access to the Father, 6
- ♦ Enjoyment of God's eternal kindness and grace, 7
- ♦ The power to do good works, 10

### Its recipients

- ♦ Sinners, 1-3
- ♦ Those who trust in Christ for salvation, 8

### Its origin and conveyance

- ♦ God's sovereign, life-giving action to those who are spiritually dead and unable to save themselves, 1, 4-6
- ♦ God's rich love and mercy, 4
- ♦ God's free, unmerited grace, 5, 8
- ♦ God's kindness, 7
- ♦ God's gift, 8
- ♦ God's creative act, 10

*Note: Salvation does not come from us in any way, not even as a result of our free-will choice of God; the faith by which we are saved is itself a gift from God, 8-9; faith is a response to his Word, as the Spirit works in us. See Ephesians 1:13.*

## The Church

### Its nature and membership

- ♦ The church is composed of people who, through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and true faith, have been given new life in Christ, 1–10.
- ♦ These people are marked by a zeal to do good works by the power of God, 10.

## The Last Things

### Two ages

- ♦ When Christ returns, he will inaugurate the next period of time, which will be endless, lasting for ages and ages, 7.
- ♦ During this time of endless bliss, God will display more of the richness of his grace in being kind toward us Christ; that is, it seems that we and the angels will come to know and realize more and more just how vast is his love toward his people and how he has worked through the life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and return of Christ to manifest his grace to us, 7.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Confess that our salvation comes entirely from God's grace, and not in any way from ourselves, and give praise to him.
- ♦ Pray for others to be saved by God's sovereign grace.
- ♦ Not imagine that we can bring anyone else to new life in Christ, by persuasion or even prayer, but that it is all a matter of God's sovereign grace.
- ♦ Do all we can to communicate God's love and goodness in Christ to everyone we know; this is our responsibility.
- ♦ Urge people trust in Christ; this, too, is our responsibility and theirs.
- ♦ Insist that those who have been truly born again will be marked by a zeal to do good works. *See Titus 2:14; 3:8; and James 2:18.*
- ♦ Abandon our own agendas and ask God to lead us into the good works that he has already prepared for us to do.

# Ephesians 2:11–22

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its messengers

- ♦ New Testament revelation came to us by way of the apostles and prophets, who were chosen and taught by Christ, either while he was on earth or after his ascension and the outpouring of his Spirit at Pentecost. *See Ephesians 3:5.*

*Note: The “prophets” here probably are not the Old Testament prophets, but those in the New Testament who, though not being apostles, were chosen by God and guided by the Spirit of Christ to write the books we now have, including Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews, James, and Jude.*

Its content: Jesus Christ is the focus of revelation, just as he is the cornerstone of the church, 20.

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (“God,” 12, 16, 18–19, 22), Son (“Lord,” “Christ,” 12–13, 20–21, and all verses referring to “him”), and Holy Spirit, 18, 22. They are equal in wisdom, power, and all other attributes of full deity; though three, they are one; though one, they are also three, 18, 22.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is extraneous to us, not immanent in all persons, 12.
- ♦ He is “far” off from us except as we are in Christ, 13, 17.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He made a covenant with his people Israel, the sign of which was circumcision, 11–12.
- ♦ He made covenants with them, 12.
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to shed his blood so that we could be reconciled to him, 13–18.
- ♦ He revealed his will in the Old Testament law, 15.

- ♦ He reached beyond his people the Jews to include Gentiles in his new people, 14–20.
- ♦ He brings his new people into close fellowship with him in Christ by the Spirit, 18.
- ♦ He condescends to dwell among his people through the Spirit, 21–22.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah who came to save his people, 12–13, 20.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 13, 20.
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 21.

*Note: “Lord” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Adonai, which was substituted for the name Yahweh when the Old Testament was read; it was used in the Septuagint where Yahweh was in the Hebrew original. The New Testament use of “Lord” for Jesus indicates that the apostles saw him as Yahweh in human form.*

- ♦ He is now the cornerstone of the church, the new dwelling place of God, 20–22.

### His work

- ♦ He shed his blood as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins, 13. *See Ephesians 1:7.*
- ♦ In his life and death, he fulfilled all the demands of the Mosaic law, thus removing observance of the law as a barrier to Jews and Gentiles, 14–15.
- ♦ He reconciled both Jews and Gentiles to God through his death on the cross, which was a sacrificial offering for the forgiveness of our sins, 16.
- ♦ He thus put an end to the enmity between Jew and Gentile and between man and God, 16.
- ♦ In so doing, he created a “new man,” that is, his own mystical body, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in him, 14–15.
- ♦ He came and preached peace with God to both Jew and Gentile, who were near and far from God before, 17.
- ♦ He made it possible for both to have access to God the Father through the Spirit, 18.

- ♦ He has established a new commonwealth, a new nation, with himself as ruler, 19.
- ♦ He established a new family, and new household, of which he is the cornerstone, 20.
- ♦ He constructed a new, spiritual temple, with himself as cornerstone, 20–22.
- ♦ He is the life that holds this new temple together and makes it grow, 21.
- ♦ He incorporates believers into himself, so that they are considered to be “in” him, that is, in the closest possible relationship, 13, 15, 21–22.

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is one, unique, the living personal essence and bond of communion between God the Father, and God the Son, 18.

### His work

- ♦ He enables believers in Christ of all sorts to have intimate access through Christ to God the Father, 18.
- ♦ He is also the one, it seems, through whom Christ now preaches peace to both Gentiles and Jews, 17.
- ♦ He is the personal presence of God, dwelling among the people who are united to Christ by faith, as in a spiritual temple, 22.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen condition, we non-Jews are

- ♦ Without Christ, 12
- ♦ Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, God’s people, 12, 19
- ♦ Strangers to the covenants of promise that God made with the Jews, 12, 19
- ♦ Without hope in this world, 12
- ♦ Without God in this world, 12
- ♦ Far off from God, alienated from him, 13
- ♦ At enmity with God, 15–16

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Nearness to God, 13
- ♦ At one with all believers in Christ, 14–16
- ♦ Freedom from the law of Moses as a way of salvation, 15
- ♦ Reconciliation to God, 16
- ♦ At peace with God, 17
- ♦ Constant access to God the Father, 18
- ♦ The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, 18
- ♦ Being fellow citizens of God’s kingdom with all the saints, 19
- ♦ Membership in the household of God, 19
- ♦ Being part of the living temple of God, 21–22; *see 1 Peter 2:4–5*.

### Its recipients

- ♦ All kinds of people, including Jews and non–Jews, 13–20
- ♦ Those who are “in Christ Jesus” by faith, 13; *see Ephesians 2:8; 1:13*.

## The Church

### Its nature and membership

- ♦ The church is composed of both Jews and non–Jews, 11–20.
- ♦ These people are “in Christ Jesus,” 13.
- ♦ They are near to God and to each other, 13.
- ♦ They are one, 14.
- ♦ They are a “new man” in Christ, created in and by him, 15.
- ♦ They are the body of Christ, 16.
- ♦ They are, individually and collectively, indwelt by the Spirit of God, 18.
- ♦ They have one Father and are thus all children, brothers and sisters, 18.
- ♦ They are a new nation, 19.
- ♦ They are a new household or family, 19.
- ♦ They are a new temple, 21.
- ♦ Their foundation is Jesus Christ and the apostolic teaching about him; this is an “Apostolic” church, 20.



*Note: See how little there is here about organization, bishops, "priests," committees, denominations, etc.!*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Remember our previous condition of alienation from God and from the people of God.
- ♦ Trust in the shed blood of Jesus as our only basis of access to God.
- ♦ Renounce all principle of law-keeping as a basis for acceptance with God and each other.

*Note: That doesn't mean that we ignore the ethical demands of Christ and the apostles, or that we allow open sin to go unchecked in our fellowship; it only means that we accept all true believers as one with us, regardless of their ethnic, cultural racial background and whether they keep the Law of Moses.*

- ♦ Thank God for our unity in Christ.
- ♦ Preach peace with God to others.
- ♦ See our fellowships as places where God dwells by his Spirit.
- ♦ Search the apostolic writings diligently to know God, his will, his saving grace.

# Ephesians 3:1–13

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation came from God by his Holy Spirit, 5.

*Note: Biblical revelation is not the result of human speculation, but the product of divine revelation.*

#### Its messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation came to us through God's chosen messengers, including the New Testament apostles and prophets, 5.
  - *Note: The New Testament writing apostles were Matthew, John, Peter, and John; the prophets were Mark, Luke, the writer to the Hebrews (if it was not Paul), James, and Jude (the latter two being the blood brothers of Jesus).*
- ♦ In particular, Paul was entrusted with a special revelation of the mystery of the gospel, 1–8, 13.

Its form(s): New Testament revelation comes in several forms, including letters (epistles), of which Ephesians is a prime example, 4.

#### Its content

- ♦ The core content of the biblical revelation is God, especially his saving work toward mankind in Christ Jesus.
- ♦ In Paul's writings, the special content was the mystery of the full inclusion of believing Gentiles in the people of God, who are now the Body of Christ, 3–6, 8–9. *See Ephesians 2:14–22.*

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called God in the New Testament, 7, 9–10), Son (often called Lord in the New Testament, 11), or Christ (Christ Jesus, Jesus Christ, 1, 4, 6, 8–9, 11), and the Holy Spirit, 5. The three persons are equal in all divine attributes, such as wisdom, eternity, and power, but they are one God.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is hidden to us, except insofar he chooses to reveal himself, 3–5, 9.
- ♦ He is eternal, 5, 11.
- ♦ He is the almighty Creator, 9. *See Ephesians 1:4.*
- ♦ He is infinitely wise, 10.
- ♦ He is transcendent, living in heaven, 10. *See Ephesians 1:3.*
- ♦ He is sovereign, working all things according to his will and purpose, 11. *See Ephesians 1:4–5, 9, 11.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He graciously called and empowered Paul to preach the mystery of the gospel among the Gentiles, 2–5, 7–9.
- ♦ He thus graciously revealed to us this great mystery, 4.
- ♦ He planned for Gentiles as well as Jews to become full members of his people, heirs to the promises, members of the body of Christ, simply by faith, 6. *See Ephesians 1:13–14; Romans 4:13–25; Galatians 3:15–17, 26–29; and Revelation 7:9–10.*
- ♦ He empowers his chosen ministers to serve him effectively, 7. *See Colossians 1:29.*
- ♦ He now offers free and immediate access to his presence through faith in Christ, 12. *See Ephesians 2:17–18; Romans 5:1–2; and Hebrews 4:16; 10:19–22.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah, sent by God to save his people, 1, 4, 6, 8–9, 11.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 1, 9, 11.
- ♦ He is the personal repository of all the riches of God, 8. *See Colossians 1:27; 2:2–3.*
- ♦ He is the one through whom God created the world, 9. *See John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; and Hebrews 1:3.*

### His work

- ♦ He now incorporates into intimate union with himself all who believe in him, so that they are said to be “in Christ,” 6.
- ♦ He accomplished the eternal purpose of God through his incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and outpouring of his Holy Spirit, 11.
- ♦ He grants immediate access to God the Father to all who by faith are “in him,” 12. *See John 14:6.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His work

- ♦ The Holy Spirit is the member of the Trinity by and through whom God’s truth was revealed to his chosen messengers, in this case, the mystery of the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s people was revealed to the New Testament apostles and prophets, 5.

*Note: The Spirit is the one who led the prophets and apostles, as well as Old Testament prophets, to write down the very words of God. See 2 Timothy 3:16.*

## Spiritual Beings

### “Principalities and powers in the heavenly places”

- ♦ These spiritual beings live in the heavenly realm, 10.
- ♦ They include both holy angels and evil spirits, including Satan, 10. *See Ephesians 1:21; 6:12.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Becoming heirs of God’s kingdom, 6; *see Ephesians 5:5.*
- ♦ Membership in the Body of Christ, 6; *see Ephesians 1:23; 2:16; 4:4–6; 5:23–32.*
- ♦ Being partakers of all the promise that come to us in Christ through faith in the gospel, 6; this may refer primarily to the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit; *see Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 3:14; Acts 1:4–5.*

- ◆ Being counted as a “saint,” that is, one who has been set apart by the Holy Spirit to belong to God and to be considered holy in his eyes, 8; *see Ephesians 1:1, 15; 3:18; 4:12; 5:3, 26; 6:18.*

#### Its recipients

- ◆ Both Jews and Gentiles who receive salvation by grace through faith, 6, 8
- ◆ Those who receive the gospel of Christ with faith, 6; *see Ephesians 1:13.*

## The Church

#### Its foundation and ultimate authority

- ◆ The church is founded upon the ministry and writings of the New Testament apostles and prophets, 5 *See Ephesians 2:19–20.*

*Note: That is the sense in which it is called “apostolic” in the Nicene Creed. It does not refer to a supposed succession of bishops who consecrate other bishops by the laying on of hands, as believed by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican bodies.*

#### Its membership

- ◆ The church is composed of people of all religious, ethnic, social, national, and cultural backgrounds, 6.

*Note: As such it is the only worldwide fellowship of its kind.*

Its nature: The church is a body, the Body of Christ on earth, 6. *See Ephesians 1:23; 4:4, 12–16; 5:23–31; Romans 12:4–5; and 1 Corinthians 12:12–13.*

Its purpose and mission: The church is called to manifest the wisdom of God in bringing together people of all sorts into one harmonious unity in Christ, 10.

## Life

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#### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Read the writings of Paul often, along with the rest of the Scriptures, to understand the eternal purpose of God and how he manifests his wisdom and grace to his people and to the world, 1–9.

- ♦ Accept the writings of Paul as revelation from God, with divine authority, 3–5. *See 2 Peter 3:15–16.*
- ♦ Welcome people of all sorts into our churches, treating all believers with equal honor, 6.
- ♦ Ask for God to empower us to communicate the message of his grace in Christ with effectiveness, 7.
- ♦ See ourselves as we really are, “less than the least of the saints,” 8.
- ♦ Seek all wisdom and spiritual knowledge in Christ alone, not in worldly philosophy or other religions, 8. *See Colossians 2:3–4, 8–10.*
- ♦ Come boldly and with confidence to God the Father through the Lord Jesus, by the ministry of the Spirit, 12. *See Ephesians 2:18; and Hebrews 4:14–16.*
- ♦ Expect trouble as we proclaim the gospel, especially as we share it with new audiences, 13.

# Ephesians 3:14–21

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its form(s)

- ♦ Revelation must be distinguished from illumination and transformation. Revelation is the communication of objective truth through the inspired words of the prophets and apostles; illumination occurs when the Holy Spirit opens our eyes and hearts to receive objective revelation subjectively, in our minds and wills.
- ♦ In this passage, Paul is talking about illumination, whereby the indwelling Christ by his Spirit causes us to receive and experience the love of God in Christ for us, 14–19.

Its content: The content of revelation is God's love for us in Christ, which Paul prays will be received and experienced subjectively in the inward being of believers in Christ, as the Spirit grants to them illumination, 18–19.

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (often called God in the New Testament), 14; Son (called Lord, Jesus, and Christ), 14, 17, 19, 21, and Holy Spirit, 16.
- ♦ These three are equal in deity and all attributes pertaining to deity (divinity), though they are distinct Persons existing together as one God.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a sort of subordination, whereby God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God causes his Spirit to work within our hearts, 14, 18.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is exalted and transcendent, leading us to bow before his majesty and ascribe all honor and glory to him, 14, 21.

- ♦ He is the original Father, from whom all fatherhood and family take their name, 15.
- ♦ He is not “on earth,” but in heaven, 15. *See Ephesians 1:3, 20–21.*

*Note: God the Father is not a projection of our longing to have a father; rather, our earthly fathers, and our desire for an ideal Father, reflect the eternal Fatherhood of God.*

- ♦ He is infinitely rich in all ways, 16.
- ♦ He is glorious, magnificent, resplendent in beauty and honor, 16.
- ♦ He is all-powerful, 16, 20.
- ♦ He is omnipresent, ubiquitous, and thus able to cause the risen Christ to dwell in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, 16.
- ♦ He is incomprehensible, in that his love (and other divine attributes and actions), cannot be fully known or understood by mortals, 19.

*Note: This does not mean, as many say, that he is unknowable or ineffable (incapable of being spoken about accurately by men), for Paul expressly prays that believers might “know” his love (see 1:17; John 17:3); it only means that we cannot know him fully, even though we know him truly.*

- ♦ He is eternal, 21.

### His goodness

- ♦ He allows, invites, and enables us to know him as our heavenly Father, 14.
- ♦ He revealed himself as Father through the life, teaching, ministry, redeeming death, resurrection, and ascension of his only Son Jesus Christ, 14. *See John 14:7.*
- ♦ He sent his Son Jesus to be our saving Messiah (Christ), 14.
- ♦ He established families, and fathers as heads of families, for our life and growth and nurture, and as a way to reflect his love and authority and power to us, 15.
- ♦ He gives us his Holy Spirit to strengthen us to know his love, 16.
- ♦ He causes Christ to dwell in our hearts through his Spirit, 17.
- ♦ He is full of love and has revealed that love to us in Christ, 19.
- ♦ He works wonderfully in us to flood our hearts with his love, 19–20.
- ♦ He answers prayer but goes beyond that to work far more wonderfully than we can ask or think, 20.



# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is the fully divine, unique, eternal Son of God the Father, 14.

*Note: He is, therefore, in some way functionally and relationally, though not essentially or ontologically, subordinate to God the Father.*

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, fully divine, 14.

*Note: "Lord" was chosen as a title for Christ not because it would make sense to people in the Roman Empire, for whom Caesar was Lord – though this was certainly true – but because it reflected the usage of the Septuagint, which translated "Yahweh" as "Kurios – Lord." The main meaning of calling Jesus "Lord" is to ascribe full deity to him.*

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 14, 21.
- ♦ He is Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah, sent by God to save his people, 14, 17, 21.
- ♦ He is the risen and ascended Christ who can now dwell in his people through the Spirit, 17.
- ♦ He embodies the fullness of God in himself, especially the fullness of God's love, 19. *See Ephesians 1:19; 2:9.*
- ♦ He is the one by whom, and in union with whom, glory is ascribed to God the Father in and through the church, 21.

*Note: "By Christ Jesus" of the NKJV reflects the Majority Text, which I think is a better reading than "and in Christ Jesus" as in most English translations.*

- ♦ He is eternal, 21.

## His work

- ♦ He revealed God the Father to us while on earth, and later through the revelation given to the apostles, 14. *See John 14:7, 9–11; and Hebrews 1:1–3.*
- ♦ He now dwells spiritually, through the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those who trust in him, 17. *See John 15:4–5, 7.*
- ♦ He loved us and gave himself for us, and he still loves us, 19. *See Ephesians 5:2, 25–32; and Revelation 3:19.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is the Spirit of God the Father, 16.
- ♦ Therefore, he can be given by the Father, or he can be used by the Father to work within his people, 10. *See verse 20, where he is the “power” of God.*

### His work

- ♦ He gives inner spiritual strength to God’s people, 16–18. *See verse 20; Acts 1:8; and Colossians 1:11.*
- ♦ He enables God’s people to “know,” that is, to appreciate, appropriate, and sense, the love of God for them in Christ, 18–19. *See Romans 5:5.*

*Note: Some theologians, notably Augustine and Jonathan Edwards, see the Spirit as the personal bond of love between God the Father and God the Son.*

## Spiritual Beings

Their identity: There is some kind of “family” in heaven, 18; perhaps this includes angels.

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ We are born into families, in which fathers play the leading role, in imitation of God the Father, 14–15. *See Ephesians 6:4.*

*Note: This does not mean that mothers are ontologically inferior to fathers, or that they don’t have authority over their children (see Ephesians 6:2), only that fathers have a kind of relational and functional priority.*

- ♦ One implication of this passage is that all human beings, and certainly all Christians, are related as creatures of God, and Christians are brothers and sisters in the born–again family of God.

- ♦ We consist of a physical and material part, the body, and a spiritual or immaterial part, 16–17, that includes the “mind” and the “heart,” 16–17. *See Ephesians 1:18; 4:17–18.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Knowing that is, having an intimate personal relationship with – God as our loving heavenly Father, 14; *see Ephesians 1:2; 5:1; and John 17:3.*
- ♦ Knowing Jesus as our Savior and Lord, 14; *see Philippians 3:8, 10; and John 17:3.*
- ♦ The indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit, 16, and the experience of his moral and spiritual power and energy in us, 20; *see John 14:17.*
- ♦ The indwelling of the risen Christ through his Spirit, 17

*Note: Here, this seems to refer to an ongoing, or repeated, sense of the indwelling of Christ as we believe and trust in him for grace, 17.*

- ♦ Knowing and experiencing the love of Christ, 18–19
- ♦ Belonging to a family of “saints,” all true believers in Christ, 18
- ♦ Being filled with the fullness of God, that is, his love for us in Christ 18; *see Colossians 2:9–10; and John 1:16.*
- ♦ The privilege of prayer, 14, 20
- ♦ Membership in the church of Jesus Christ, 21

Its recipients: All those who truly and ongoingly, continuously, trust in Christ, 17

## The Church

### Its nature and membership

- ♦ Its members include all those who worship Jesus Christ as Lord and unique Son of God, 14, 17.
- ♦ The church is a “family” under God the Father, 15 (if the word translated “fatherhood” is taken to mean “family”).
- ♦ The church is, individually and corporately, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, 16. *See Ephesians 2:22.*

- ♦ Likewise, the church is indwelt by Christ through the same Spirit, 17. *See Colossians 1:27.*
- ♦ All the members of the church are “saints,” consecrated by the Holy Spirit, 18. *Note: This contradicts the practice of Roman Catholicism to designate only some especially “holy” people as saints.*
- ♦ The church exists to glorify God through Jesus Christ, 21. *See Ephesians 1:12, 14.*

## The Last Things

### Two ages

- ♦ After this age, there will be another, perhaps many, during which God’s glory will be manifested in his resurrected and glorified people, 21. *See Ephesians 2:7; and Revelation 7:9–17.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for allowing us to know him as Father through Jesus Christ his Son.
- ♦ Pray often to God the Father with confidence, 14. *See Ephesians 3:12; 6:18.*
- ♦ Pray for others the prayer that Paul prayed for the Ephesians, 16–19.

*Note: This type of prayer is perhaps even more important than asking God to give people health, safety, material provision, etc.*

- ♦ Daily, hourly, ask Christ to take up residence in our hearts again, and believe that he will do so.
- ♦ Ask God that we might know the love of Christ.
- ♦ Believe that God can answer this prayer and manifest his love to others.
- ♦ Give glory to God constantly, both individually and corporately.

# Ephesians 4:1–16

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source and messengers: Biblical revelation came to God's people through Christ, who chose and spoke to the prophets and apostles of New Testament times, 11. *See Ephesians 2:20.*

### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation consists of “one faith,” which is the message given through the apostles and prophets and now written down for us in the New Testament, supplementing the Old Testament, 5, 13. *See Romans 10:8; and Jude 3.*

*Note: “Faith” can be used either subjectively, to refer to the Christian's trust in Christ, or objectively, as here, to refer to the content of the message that we believe.*

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (often called God and Father in the New Testament), 6; Son (called Lord, Jesus, and Christ), 5, 7, 12–13, 15, and Holy Spirit, 4.
- ♦ These three are equal in deity and all attributes pertaining to deity (divinity), though they are distinct Persons existing together as one God.

His greatness: He is “above all,” that is, transcendent and sovereign over all people, 6.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He deigns to be known as our heavenly Father, 6. *See Ephesians 1:2; 3:14; 5:1.*
- ♦ He condescends to work through each and all of his children in Christ, 6.
- ♦ He is “in” all of his children, through the Spirit 6.

*Note: “All” here refers to true believers in Christ, not to all mankind generally. See Ephesians 2:2, 3; 4:18; 5:6.*

# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is the Lord, that is, Yahweh in the flesh, the Second Person of the Trinity, fully divine with the Father and the Spirit, 1, 5.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent by God to save us from our sins, 7, 12–13, 15.
- ♦ He is the risen one, now sitting at God’s right hand and ruling with the father, 8–10.
- ♦ He is the Head of the Body of Christ, the church, the body of all who truly believe in him, 4, 12, 15.
- ♦ He is the unique Son of God, eternal with the Father and the Spirit, but functionally subordinate to God the Father, 13.

## His work

- ♦ He gives gifts to the church; in the passage, these gifts are people who exercise certain offices or functions, as well as some unspecified gift or ability bestowed on each believer, 7–8, 11–12, 16.

*Note: The quotation of Psalm 68:18 (“he gave gifts to men”) does not conform to the Hebrew text. Scholars differ as the reason(s) why.*

- ♦ At the incarnation, he descended to the lower regions, that is, the earth, 9–10.

*Note: This does not refer to a descent into hell after his death, as many have asserted. Technically, “of the earth” is an epexegetical genitive, that is, a genitive (“of the earth”) that defines the previous term (“lower parts”).*

- ♦ As the risen Lord and Head of the Body of Christ, he fills all things; that is, he fills the entire church, each member, with his spiritual presence, 10. See *Ephesians 1:23*.

*Note: This does not mean that he somehow fills the entire universe, though as God he is universally omnipresent (see Matthew 28:20), or even that he fills all persons on the earth with himself or his Spirit; rather, he fills each believer.*

- ♦ After his death and resurrection, he ascended far above the heavens, to the right hand of God the Father, 8, 10. See *Ephesians 1:20–22*.

- ♦ In that act of ascension, he took captive all that had taken mankind captive, probably referring to the evil powers led by Satan, 8. *See Ephesians 2:2; 6:11–12.*
- ♦ Now, he supplies the spiritual life that enables the Body of Christ, the church, to grow up into full maturity, working in each member of the Body, 16. *See Colossians 2:19.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the unique Spirit of God; there is no other spirit like or equal to him, 4.

### His work

- ♦ He indwells members of the Body of Christ, that is, believers, individually, 3–4, and corporately, 4. *See Ephesians 1:13; 2:18; 3:16; 5:18; 6:18.*
- ♦ He thus gives believers a spiritual unity that is not found in the world, 3.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen state, we are subject to deception from false teachers and evil spirits, 14. *See Ephesians 6:11.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Calling to become children of God who are saved by grace through faith, 4
- ♦ Membership in the Body of Christ, 4, 12, 16; *see Ephesians 1:23; 2:14–22.*
- ♦ The hope of everlasting life with God and other believers as heirs of his kingdom, 4; *see Ephesians 1:11, 14.*
- ♦ Knowing Jesus as our Lord and Savior, 5; *see Ephesians 1:2.*
- ♦ Knowing God as our heavenly Father, who indwells us and works through us, 6; *see Ephesians 1:2–4, 17; 3:14–15; 5:1.*
- ♦ At least one spiritual gift that enables us to participate in the work of building up the Body of Christ, 7, 12, 16
- ♦ Knowing Christ both intellectually and experientially, 13

- ♦ Gradual growth, with other believers, toward Christ-likeness, with the hope of full conformity to his moral image later, 13–15; *see Romans 8:29–30; and 1 John 3:1–2.*
- ♦ Liberation from error and the ability to know and communicate the truth, 14–15
- ♦ Liberation from selfishness and the ability to love others and be loved by them, 15–16

#### Its recipients

- ♦ Those who are effectually called by God, 1; *see Romans 8:28–30; and 1 Corinthians 1:26–30.*
- ♦ Those who agree to, and fully trust, the “faith,” that is, the gospel, of Christ, 5
- ♦ Those who, upon believing, are baptized, 5; *see Mark 16:16; and Acts 2:38.*

## The Church

#### Its nature and membership

- ♦ The church consists of all those who have been effectually called by Christ, 1, 3.
- ♦ The church has been given a fundamental ontological unity by each member’s possession of the indwelling Holy Spirit, one common hope, 3; one Lord Jesus, one common faith, one baptism in the name of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, 5; one God, the Father of all true believers, who is transcendent over all believers, works through each and every one of them, and indwells each one, 6.
- ♦ The universal church is one body, the Body of Christ, 4.
- ♦ The church consists of individual members who differ according to the special gift or ability to serve that Christ has given each one, 7.
- ♦ The church is founded upon the teaching of the New Testament apostles and prophets, 11. *See Ephesians 2:20; 3:5.* These are foundational, unique, and unrepeatable offices; there are no others with equal authority.
- ♦ These apostles were restricted to those who had seen the risen Lord Jesus, and they included Paul.

*Note: That is why the church is called “apostolic” in the Apostles’ Creed; it is founded on, and governed by, the teaching of the New Testament apostles.*

*Note: The New Testament prophets are most likely those who wrote the other books of the New Testament, namely, Mark, Luke (author of Luke and of Acts), James, the brother*



*of Jesus, and Jude the brother of Jesus, as well as the author of the letter to the Hebrews, if it was not Paul.*

*Note: Anyone who claims to be an apostle or prophet with authority over others in the church is false; that includes the Roman pontiff, Joseph Smith, and self-styled “apostles” and “prophets” in churches in Africa and elsewhere.*

- ◆ Each member of the church is a “saint,” that is, one indwelt and set apart, and progressively sanctified, by the Holy Spirit, 12. *See Ephesians 1:1, 4, 15; 3:18; 5:3; 6:18.*

*Note: There is no biblical warrant for calling a select group of especially holy believers “saints,” nor has any church leader, such as the Roman pope, the authority to decide who is to be called a “saint.”*

- ◆ Each member of the church has an indispensable part to play in the process of helping all believers become mature in holiness, like Christ, 16.
- ◆ The church is constantly threatened by false teaching and needs to guard against it, 14.
- ◆ The members of the church are all mystically united to Christ the head of the church through the Holy Spirit, 15.

*Note: Christ alone is the head of the church, his body; no monarch, such as the sovereign of England, or church leader, such as the Roman pope, can be given this title.*

- ◆ The members of the church are all constantly growing in love and likeness to Christ, 16.

## The Last Things

### Our hope

- ◆ True believers in Christ have hope, a hope that looks to the return of Christ and the blessings to follow, 4. *See Ephesians 1:9–10, 12, 14, 18; 3:10; 5:5.*
- ◆ That hope includes full maturity in Christ, that is, Christ-likeness, both for individual Christians and for the whole Body of Christ, 13, 15.

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Follow Paul's commands in 4:1–3.
- ♦ Seek earnestly to promote unity among Christians, 3.
- ♦ Remember the things we have in common and realize that we are really one with other believers, 4–6.
- ♦ Look to God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as he works in us, 4–6.
- ♦ Remember that God the Father is over us all, works through us all, and dwells in us all, 6.
- ♦ Honor those who have gifts of leadership, care, and teaching, 11. *See 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; 1 Timothy 5:17; and Hebrews 13:17.*
- ♦ Ask God to show us what unique part he wants us to play in upbuilding the Body of Christ, and do our best to fulfill that role, 12–16. *See Romans 12:3–9; 1 Corinthians 12:1–31; and 1 Peter 4:10–11.*
- ♦ Beware of false teachers, 14.
- ♦ Speak, and hold to, the truth with love, 15. *See Ephesians 4:19–31.*
- ♦ Seek conscious communion with, and dependence upon, Christ, the head of the Body, 16.

# Ephesians 4:17–32

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source and messengers

- ♦ Biblical revelation came from God through his chosen messengers, including Paul the apostle, 17, 20–21.
- ♦ Paul wrote “in the Lord,” that is, from his relationship with Christ and under the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, 17.
- ♦ At the same time, we can say that the Ephesians Christians have been directly taught by Christ, who worked through his chosen messengers to communicate saving truth, 21.
- ♦ The message came primarily by hearing the gospel preached, as is the case today, though the written revelation given through apostles and prophets means that those who did not hear the apostles or cannot hear good preaching today can still be taught through the Scriptures, 20–21. *See Ephesians 1:1; 3:1–9.*

#### Its content

- ♦ The core of biblical revelation is Christ, in all his fullness, including his person and work, 20–21.
- ♦ This message is entirely true and inextricably bound up with Christ, 21. *See Ephesians 3:4, 8; 1 Corinthians 1:23; and Colossians 1:28; 2:2–3.*

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (often called God and Father in the New Testament), 18, 32; Son (called Lord, Jesus, and Christ), 17, 21, 24, 32; and Holy Spirit, 30.
- ♦ These three are equal in deity and all attributes pertaining to deity (divinity), though they are distinct Persons existing together as one God.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He possesses all life in himself, 18.

- ♦ He is the almighty Creator, who made heaven and earth and who remakes believers in his righteous and holy image, 24. *See Ephesians 1:4; 2:10; 3:9; and Genesis 1:1, 26.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He sent Jesus to liberate us by his truth, 20–21.
- ♦ He recreates true believers into the moral image of God, who is Christ, 24.
- ♦ He is righteous and holy, 24.
- ♦ He sets apart his chosen ones for his own possession and marks them as his by the gift of the Holy Spirit, 30. *See Ephesians 1:13–14.*
- ♦ He forgave, and forgives us, through the saving work of Christ upon the cross for our redemption, 32.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, fully divine and fully human, 17. *See John 1:1, 14.*
- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human anointed savior sent by God, 20, 32.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 21.

### His work

- ♦ He chose, sent, and equipped certain men to communicate his truth to his people; one of these was Paul, 17.
- ♦ He embodied, taught, and enacted God’s faithfulness and truth; now, in him all of God’s saving revelation is contained, 20–21.
- ♦ He offered himself as an atoning sacrifice to pay for our sins, so that our righteous God could forgive those who trust in Christ, 32. *See Ephesians 1:7; 5:2, 25; Romans 3:24–26; and 2 Corinthians 5:18–19, 21.*

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is a person, not a “force,” 30.
- ♦ He is the Holy Spirit of God, fully equal with God in deity and purity, 30.
- ♦ He is the seal God has put on and in his people to signify that they belong to him and guarantee that they will be fully redeemed on the last day, 30.

His work: He seals God's people, 30.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen condition, we are

- ♦ Dominated by a mind filled with futile thoughts, 17
- ♦ Darkened in our understanding of truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil, and the knowledge of God, 18
- ♦ Alienated from the life – both present, and eternal – of God, 18
- ♦ Ignorant of God and of his saving work and righteous demands, 18
- ♦ Blinded in our hearts, that is, in the center and core of our being, especially our motivations and desires, 18
- ♦ Crippled by a conscience that does not see, or care about, doing right, 19
- ♦ Driven by an ever-increasing desire for more and more of everything, including possessions, personal satisfaction, and sexual fulfillment, and thus slaves of all that is morally unclean, 19
- ♦ Increasingly corrupted by lusts that deceive us, 22

*Note: See Ephesians 2:2-4; and Romans 1:18-32.*

*Note: This passage and others like it prove that “optimistic” views of human nature are wrong. Though created in the image of God and thus able to do some good things, our motives are always mixed, at best, and often totally driven by selfish, worldly, and ungodly desires.*

## The Church

Its nature and membership

- ♦ The church consists of all those who have “learned” Christ and been taught inwardly by him through the Spirit and acknowledge that the truth is in him alone, 20-21.
- ♦ The church submits to the authority of the teaching of Christ and the biblical witness to him, 20-21.
- ♦ The church consists of people who are being progressively transformed into the moral likeness of Christ, that is, righteousness and holiness as defined by God in Scripture, 24.
- ♦ The church is the Body of Christ, with each believer being a member of that body, 25.

- ♦ The church consists of those who have received the forgiveness of their sins from God through faith in Jesus Christ, his person and his work, 32.

## The Last Things

### “Already”

- ♦ We live in a new era, one in which people are being liberated from sin by Jesus Christ through his teaching and inward transformation, 17–32.
- ♦ Forgiveness of sins is available “already” to believers in Christ, 32. *See Ephesians 1:17.*

### “Not yet”

- ♦ Though we have present redemption in the form of the forgiveness of sins and the possession of the Holy Spirit, we await the full redemption of our mortal and sinful bodies on the last day, when Christ returns, 30.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Reject the futile lifestyle of those who do not believe in and follow Christ, as was the case with us, 17–19. *See Ephesians 2:1–3.*
- ♦ Constantly review the “truth as it is in Jesus” through reading and hearing the words of the Bible, 20–21.
- ♦ Tell others truth about Jesus, in all its ethical ramifications, 21.
- ♦ Ask God to transform us by renewing our minds through increasing knowledge of, and submission to, the truth of the Bible, 23.
- ♦ Avoid lying, 25.
- ♦ Not harbor grudges and resentment overnight, but speak to those who have offended us, in humility, or forgive them from our hearts by God’s power, 25–27, 32.
- ♦ Give some of our earnings to those in greater need, 28.
- ♦ Speak only what will build others up in Christ, 29.
- ♦ Restrain our tongues from all evil speaking, 30–31.
- ♦ Forgive others from the heart, as we have been forgiven, 32.

*Note: This can be done only if we ask God to show us our sins, the seriousness of them, and the greatness of God’s forgiving mercy to us, 32.*

# Ephesians 5:1–17

## Truth

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### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equal persons – Father (often called God in the New Testament, 1–2, 5–6), Son (often called Lord in the New Testament; also, Christ and Jesus, 2, 5, 10, 17), and Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional and relational (not ontological or essential) subordination, in which the Son offered himself to God the Father as a sacrifice for our sins, 2. *See Ephesians 1:17, 20; and Romans 3:24–26; 5:1, 8.*

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is the King of the universe, 5. *See Psalm 95:3; 97:1; 99:1.*
- ♦ As King he is able to punish unrepentant evildoers, 6.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He deigns to reveal himself to believers as our heavenly Father, 1. *See Ephesians 1:2, 5, 17; 3:14–15; 5:20; and Matthew 6:9.*
- ♦ He loves his children, those who believe in Christ, 1. *See John 3:16; and 1 John 3:1–2.*
- ♦ He instituted the system of animal sacrifices for his people the Jews so that they could draw near to him in worship, their sins having been covered over and forgiven, 2. *See Leviticus 1:3, 7, 9, 13, 17; 3:5, 16; 6:15, 19–7:10.*
- ♦ He accepted the sacrifice of Christ for our sins, 2. *See Ephesians 1:7; 2:13–18.*
- ♦ He is holy and righteous and responds in wrath to those who refuse to repent, trust in him, and walk in his ways, 6. *See Ephesians 2:2; Romans 1:18–32; 5:9; and Colossians 3:6.*

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent to save sinners, 2

- ♦ He is king, ruling with God the Father, 5.
- ♦ He is equal in deity and power with the Father, 5.
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 17.

### His work

- ♦ He loved his people even unto death, 2. *See Ephesians 1:7; 2:14–16; 5:2; John 13:1; and Galatians 2:20.*
- ♦ He gave himself for us as an atoning sacrifice to God, 2. *See Ephesians 5:25.*
- ♦ He rules and reigns over the universe, 5. *See Ephesians 1:20–22.*
- ♦ He communicates his moral will to his people, 10.
- ♦ He gives spiritual light to those who turn to him, 14.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current condition, we are

- ♦ Inclined toward all manner of sexual impurity and degradation, 3–5; *see Ephesians 4:19.*
- ♦ Children of disobedience; that is, people who are bound to disobey God, 6
- ♦ In moral darkness, 8, 11
- ♦ Darkness itself; that is, so bound up in moral blindness that we are active forces for evil, 8, 11
- ♦ “Asleep” morally; that is, without a clear moral sense or a strong motivation to serve God and do what is right, 14
- ♦ Dead in sin, 14; *see Ephesians 2:1–3.*

## Sin

It includes

- ♦ Actions, attitudes, and words that violate God’s standards of sexual purity, 3–5
- ♦ Anything done in “darkness,” that is, in secret, so that it may not be known by others, 8, 11–12
- ♦ Wasting time in foolish and unprofitable words, actions, and attitudes, 15–16

Its consequences

- ♦ Loss of any inheritance in God’s eternal kingdom, 5



- ♦ God's wrath upon sinners, 6
- ♦ Shame, 12

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Becoming beloved children of God, rather than children of disobedience and wrath, 1, 6; *see Ephesians 2:2-3; John 1:12-13; and Romans 8:14-17.*
- ♦ Knowing God as Father and in particular knowing him as a forgiving Father, 1; *see Ephesians 4:32.*
- ♦ Implied: The power to imitate God's moral character, especially his love, 1
- ♦ Redemption = forgiveness of sins through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, 2; *see Ephesians 1:7; 5:25-26.*
- ♦ The status of being considered saints, holy ones, separated by the Holy Spirit to God for his possession and use, 3
- ♦ A sure inheritance in the coming kingdom of God and of Christ, 5; *see 1 Thessalonians 2:12; and 2 Thessalonians 1:5.*
- ♦ Transferal from the dominion of darkness to the light of God, in which we also become light, 8; *see Colossians 1:13.*
- ♦ The ability to know God's moral will for our lives, 10, 17
- ♦ New life in Christ, 14; *see Ephesians 2:1-6.*

## The Church

### Its nature and membership: The church consists of

- ♦ All who have become children of God by regeneration and faith, 1
- ♦ Those who are being transformed into the moral likeness of God and of Christ, 1-14

*Note: This is the meaning of the adjective "holy" describing the church in the Apostles' Creed. It is holy because its members have been set apart by the Holy Spirit and are being progressively sanctified by him.*

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ He will usher in the kingdom of God on earth, when he will visibly rule over all the earth, 5. See *1 Corinthians 15:24*; and *Revelation 22:3*.

*Note: Some interpreters believe that Christ will first return to establish a one-thousand-year reign on earth from Jerusalem; others believe that he is ruling now as king and that he will only come again once, to establish God's eternal kingdom on earth.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Think often of God's forgiveness of our sins, and imitate this forgiving love towards others, 1.
- ♦ Think often on the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, and imitate his sacrificial love towards others, 2.
- ♦ Avoid all sexual immorality of thought, word, and deed, 1-15.
- ♦ Thank God often for delivering us from the wrath to come, 6.
- ♦ Beware of those who deceive with words that lead us into sin, 6.
- ♦ Avoid intimate fellowship with non-believers, lest they influence us to do evil, 7, 11.
- ♦ Avoid talking about sexual immorality, 12.
- ♦ Stay alert and awake spiritually and morally, 14.
- ♦ Make the most of every moment, not wasting time, because the days are evil, 16.

*Note: Christians need to be very careful how we spend our leisure time, lest we become morally dull and corrupted. In particular, we must watch over our entertainment.*

- ♦ Seek constantly to know God's practical will for our lives today, 17.

# Ephesians 5:18–33

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation includes the Psalms, 19.
- ♦ Biblical revelation also includes the Old Testament, including the Pentateuch, including Genesis, which remains authoritative for us now, 31. *See Genesis 2:24.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation also includes the inspired writings of Paul the apostle, who interpreted the Old Testament for us, 32.
- ♦ Biblical revelation centers upon Jesus Christ, his person and his work, 22–32.

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called God in the New Testament, 20), Son (called Lord, Christ, Jesus Christ in the New Testament, 19–20, 22–25, 29, 32), and Holy Spirit, 18.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional (not ontological or essential) subordination, in which we give thanks to the Father in the name of the Son, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, 18, 20.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is sovereign; his will is to be obeyed, 17.
- ♦ He is sovereign, governing all events for our good, and thus to be thanked at all times for all things, 20. *See Romans 8:28; and Genesis 50:20.*
- ♦ He is God, our Creator and Ruler, and so is to be feared, 21.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He is good and causes all things to work together for our good, 20.
- ♦ He allows us to know him as Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, 20. *See Ephesians 1:5; 5:1.*
- ♦ He sent Jesus his Son to be our Savior, 23.
- ♦ He established marriage for our good, 22–33.

- ♦ He is holy and requires our holiness, 27.
- ♦ He is love and expresses his love to us supremely in Christ, 25–32.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 17, 19–20, 29.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent to save us from our sins, 20, 23–25, 32.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 20.
- ♦ He is the head of the Body, the church, the company of all who have truly trusted in him, 23, 29–30, 32.
- ♦ He is the Savior of the church, his body, 23.

### His work

- ♦ He communicates his moral will to his people, 17.
- ♦ He hears and receives the praises of his people, 19.
- ♦ He loved the church and gave himself for her, 25. *See Ephesians 5:2.*
- ♦ He sanctifies his church through the Word and Holy Spirit, 26–27.
- ♦ He nourishes and cherishes his body the church, 29.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: He fills the hearts and lives of those who rely on him, 18.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen condition, we are

- ♦ Lacking in wisdom, which we must find in the Lord, 17
- ♦ Inclined to give ourselves over to various controlling substances, 18
- ♦ Given the divine institution of marriage, whereby the husband is the head of his wife, who is his body, 22–29
- ♦ Inclined not to respect our husband or love our wife, 33

## Salvation

### Its benefits include

- ♦ Freedom from bondage to addictions, such as to alcohol, 18
- ♦ Knowing God as Father, 20; *see Ephesians 1:5, 17; 2:18; 3:14–15.*
- ♦ Inner joy, 19–20
- ♦ The assurance that God is working all things together for our good, so that we can thank him for all things, 18; *see Romans 8:28.*
- ♦ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the possibility of being filled, that is, governed, illumined, renewed, brought into God's presence, strengthened, and empowered by him, 18; *see Ephesians 1:13, 17; 2:18, 22; 3:16; 6:17–18.*

*Note: All true believers have been given the Holy Spirit, but the ongoing fullness of the Spirit is for those who constantly trust in Christ and mediate on his Word, 18. See Acts 6:3; 7. There is another "filling with the Spirit" that is indicted by a different word in Greek, that refers to an experience of empowerment to speak God's word with power. See Acts 2:4; 4:8, 32; 13:9.*

- ♦ Christian marriage, a relationship of mutual love through submission to Christ, 22–33
- ♦ Membership in the Body of Christ, the church, 23–32
- ♦ Positional sanctification and cleansing by the Word of Christ, and then ongoing sanctification by the continued work of the Spirit in our lives, 25

*Note: Some take "washing with water" to refer to baptism, which is possible, but this could also be a Greek construction by which "washing with water" is explained by the phrase, "by the word"; see Titus 3:5, where regeneration is compared to washing with water to bring inner cleansing. See also John 15:3; 17:17; James 1:1; 1 Peter 2:23; and John 3:5, which also seems to refer to inner cleansing by the Holy Spirit. See also Ezekiel 16:9.*

- ♦ Being nourished and cherished by Christ daily in every way, 29

Its recipients: All those who belong to Christ by faith, 23; *see Ephesians 1:1, 13.*

# The Church

## Its nature and membership

- ♦ The church is the mystical, that is, spiritual, Body of Christ, who is the head of the Body; that is, all those who truly trust in Christ are united with each other as a corporate entity to Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, from whom each believer, and the whole body, receive spiritual nourishment and life, 22–32. *See Ephesians 1:22–23; 2:16, 19–22; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 15–16, 25; Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; and Colossians 1:18, 24; 3:15.*
- ♦ The church – that is, all who trust in Christ – naturally and instinctively submits to Christ as its head; all believers want to submit to the Lordship of Christ individually, and all true Christian churches acknowledge Jesus as Lord; we may fail to follow his commands, and often do fail, but we all, without compulsion, sincerely seek to submit our individual and corporate lives to him, 24.
- ♦ We gratefully also acknowledge Christ – and Christ alone – as our Savior from sin and all its effects, 23.
- ♦ The church is also the mystical, that is, spiritual bride of Christ, joined to him in an intimate spiritual union that is the true meaning of the union between man and wife, 25–33. *See 2 Corinthians 11:2; John 2:1–11; Revelation 19:7–8; 21:2; and Genesis 1:24.*

*Note: This idea finds its roots in the Old Testament idea of Yahweh as the husband of his people Israel. See Psalm 45, which is interpreted christologically in Hebrews 1:8–9; Isaiah 54:5; 62:5; Jeremiah 31:32; Ezekiel 16:1–63; and the entire book of Hosea. Paul's use of this image demonstrates his understanding, common to all New Testament writers, that Christ is Yahweh in the flesh.*

## Its meetings

- ♦ The church is constituted by the Holy Spirit; its meetings are to be directed by the Holy Spirit working in each person and in the group, 18.
- ♦ Church gatherings – indeed, gatherings of Christians in most settings, should include singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs – that is, all sorts of songs, including the Psalms, 19.
- ♦ The church gathers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and directs its attention to God the Father, 20.

- ♦ The goal of church life in Christ is individual and corporate holiness – not necessarily numerical growth, 26–27. See Ephesians 1:4; 4:13–15.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- When Christ returns, he will complete the process of sanctifying his people, and present them to himself as a spotless bride, 27. See Revelation 19:8–9; 21:2; 22:14–15.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Avoid all intoxicating and mind-altering substances, including alcohol and drugs, 18.
- ♦ Seek the continuing fullness of the Spirit, 18.
- ♦ Use gatherings of believers as opportunities to build each other up by singing songs that are based upon, or consist of, the words of Scripture, 19. See *Colossians 3:16*.

*Note: We can also fill our homes with Christian music.*

- ♦ Give thanks always for everything, 20. See *1 Thessalonians 5:18*; and *Psalms 34:1*.
- ♦ Submit to other believers out of reverence for God (or Christ) our common Lord, 21. See *1 Peter 5:5*.
- ♦ Order our marriages according to God's Word, with wives submissive to, and respectful of, their husbands, and husbands loving and serving their wives as Christ does the church, 22–33. See *Colossians 3:18–19*; and *1 Peter 3:1–7*.

*Note: Submission and loving leadership are not based either on the godliness or loveliness of the other person, but upon our mutual roles and relationships.*

*Note: Submission of wife to husband does not imply inferiority of character or worth, any more than the submission of Christ to the Father does. See *Philippians 2:1–11*.*

- ♦ Think often of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us and imitate his humility and loving service.
- ♦ Husbands: Make the wife's sanctification your goal, 26–27.
- ♦ Husbands: Provide for your wife's physical and emotional needs (nourish and cherish), 29.
- ♦ Trust that Christ is nourishing and cherishing us as individuals and the church as a whole, even when he is leading us through deep waters, 29.
- ♦ Remind husbands that they must leave the dominating influence, and usually even the physical home, of their parents, 31.



# Ephesians 6:1–24

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source and messengers: Biblical revelation came to us through God's chosen messengers, among whom was Paul, 19–22.

#### Its content and nature

- ◆ Biblical revelation includes the Old Testament, including the five books of Moses, 2–3. *See Deuteronomy, 5:16; and Exodus 20:12.*
- ◆ Biblical revelation is “the word of God,” 17, which is the gospel. *See Ephesians 1:13.*
- ◆ The core content of biblical revelation, especially the New Testament, is the gospel about Jesus Christ, 19; this is the gospel of peace, that is, the message that speaks of, and effects in believers, peace with God and with other believers, 15.
- ◆ This word of God – which here may refer to the oral proclamation of the truth – is inseparable from the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writers of the Bible and who illumines the minds and hearts of the hearers, thus making the word effective, 17. *See Ephesians 1:17–23; 3:14–21.*

#### Its literary structure

- ◆ Grammatically, 6:1–9 continues the discussion of the Spirit-filled life, beginning at 5:18; the command, “be filled with the Spirit,” is followed by several present participles, ending with “submitting to one another.” All the commands about marriage, family and slave–master relationships fill out the meaning of “submitting.”
- ◆ 6:10–20 is another section grammatically, in which the main verbs are “be strong, put on, take up, and stand,” with 14–20 explaining how we “stand.”

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: Father (often called God in the New Testament), 6, 23; Son (usually called Lord or Christ in the New Testament), 1, 6, 24; and Holy Spirit, 17–18.

### His greatness

- ♦ He has the authority to issue binding commands, 2–3.
- ♦ He has the power to give long life, because he has life in himself, 3.
- ♦ He has a sovereign will, to which we are expected to conform, 6.
- ♦ He has the power to overcome Satan, 11, 13.

### His goodness

- ♦ He graciously reveals his good will for us in his Word, 2–3, 6.
- ♦ He rewards obedience to his commands, 2–3.
- ♦ He gives prosperity (especially spiritual prosperity) to those who follow his commands, 2–3.
- ♦ He gives us spiritual weapons with which we can stand against Satan and defeat him, 11–18.
- ♦ He has given us his truth (in the gospel), 14.
- ♦ He gives his people the power to do what is righteous, 14. *See Ephesians 4:24.*

*Note: "Righteousness" here has also been interpreted as imputed righteous, which we received when we trust in Christ. See Romans 1:16–17; 3:21–26. The former interpretation is more likely, however.*

- ♦ He has given us a gospel of peace – peace with himself and with other believers, 15. *See Ephesians 1:2, 13; 2:14–18; 4:3; 6:23.*
- ♦ He has saved us with an everlasting salvation through faith in Christ, 17. *See Ephesians 2:1–10.*
- ♦ He has given us the written Word of God, which we can speak with authority against Satan's wiles, 17.
- ♦ He has given us the Holy Spirit, 18. *See Ephesians 1:13; 3:16; 4:4.*
- ♦ He hears and answers our prayers, 18.
- ♦ He has put us into the community of "the saints," those who are sanctified by the Spirit through faith in Jesus, 18.
- ♦ He gives us his peace, 23.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is "the Lord," that is, Yahweh come in the flesh, and thus fully divine as well as human, 1, 4, 7–10, 21, 23–24.

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent to save his people from their sins, 5–6, 23–24.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 23–24.
- ♦ He is the risen Lord, with a spiritual body that includes all his people, 1, 4, 7–8, 21, 23. *See Ephesians 1:22–23.*
- ♦ He is our heavenly Master, whom we serve when we are doing his will, 7, 9, 21.
- ♦ He is equal to the Father and so united with him that spiritual blessings come to us through both of them at once, 23.

#### His work

- ♦ As risen Lord, He fills his people and allows them to dwell spiritually “in” him; he is our life, our environment, 1, 10, 21. *See Ephesians 1:1, 3–4, 6–7, 10–11, 13, 23; Galatians 2:20; and Colossians 3:3.*
- ♦ He gives strength to his people as they trust and follow him as he is revealed in the word of truth, the gospel, 10–20. *See 2 Corinthians 12:9.*
- ♦ He gives peace and love to his people (with the Father), 23.

## The Holy Spirit

#### His work

- ♦ As the one who inspired the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16), he enables Christians to wield the word of God as a spiritual sword against the wiles of Satan, 17. *See Hebrews 4:12.*
- ♦ He guides and empowers believers as they pray, 18.

## Spiritual Beings

#### Satan

- ♦ He is the devil, the slanderer, 11.
- ♦ He is the deceiver, 11.
- ♦ He is the temporary ruler of this evil age, leading an army of evil spirits, 12.
- ♦ He is a “heavenly” being, that is, one who is not from or of this earthly world, 12.
- ♦ He and his minions are morally dark and actively evil and wicked, 12.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: In our current fallen condition, we are

- ◆ Placed in families with parents responsible to teach and discipline their children, and children to obey, 1–4
- ◆ Placed in worldly relationships of authority and subordination, like slaves and masters, employees and employers, students and teachers, citizens and rulers, 5–9; *see Romans 13:1–7; and 1 Peter 2:13–3:7.*
- ◆ Locked in constant spiritual warfare against Satan, 10–12; *see Ephesians 2:2, 4.*

*Note: This spiritual warfare is the battle to gain and retain the unity of redeemed men and women with each other and with Christ. See Ephesians 1:10; 4:1–6.*

*Note: Spiritual warfare does include resisting evil spirits, but it is mostly a conflict in which we resist Satan’s attempts to divide us from God and from each other.*

- ◆ Living in “evil days,” that is, days after the Fall of mankind and before the visible return of Jesus Christ; during these times, evil rules in the world and constantly threatens to overcome us, 13. *See Ephesians 5:16.*

## Salvation

Its benefits

- ◆ Being “in” Christ, connected to him in a spiritual union that is intimate and total, 1; *see references above.*
- ◆ Knowing the truth that we can teach our children and according to which we can discipline them, 4, 14; *see Ephesians 4:21.*
- ◆ Having the status of servants or slaves of Jesus our Lord, who is a good Master, 5–7, 9
- ◆ Empowerment by God’s own power, so that we may do his will, 10; *see Ephesians 1:19.*

*Note: This power frees us from the dominion of Satan over our wills, 10–13. See Romans 6:8–23.*

- ◆ The ability to do God’s will, despite the deceptions of Satan and his demons, 13
- ◆ The ability to know and live according to the truth, 14
- ◆ The ability to do what is right, 14

- ♦ Possession of the gospel of peace (see above), the only message that brings communion and union between God and his people, and among believers, 15
- ♦ The gift of faith that enables us to protect ourselves from “the fiery darts” of Satan, that is, his many attempts to deceive us with his lies, 16; *see Ephesians 4:15, 21–25.*
- ♦ Salvation, that is, the assurance that true believers are already saved from God’s coming wrath through the work of Jesus Christ, and thus freed also from the power of sin, the world, and Satan, 17. *See Ephesians 1:13; 2:8; 5:23, 25.*
- ♦ The privilege of prayer, accompanied by the assurance that God hears and answers our prayers according to his will, 18–19. *See Philipians 4:6–7; Matthew 6:5–15; 7:7–12; 21:22; John 16:24; James 4:2–3; 1 Peter 4:7; and 1 John 5:14–15.*
- ♦ Status of being “saints,” those who are separated by the Spirit for God’s possession and use, 1
- ♦ Membership in the family of God, all believers in Christ, 21
- ♦ Peace with God, 23
- ♦ Love and faith from God, 23
- ♦ Knowledge of God as our heavenly Father, 23
- ♦ Grace from Jesus Christ, 24

#### Its recipients

- ♦ Those who have faith in Christ, which is a gift from God, 23; *see Ephesians 2:8.*
- ♦ Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, or with an incorruptible love; this love shows that they have received, and are responding to, God’s prior love to them in Christ, 23. *See Romans 5:5; Galatians 2:20; and 1 John 4:10.*

*Note: Those who say that they love the Lord Jesus but do not love his Word or his people, and do not try to follow his commands, are not loving him in sincerity. See 1 John 2:4–6; 3:10; 4:20; 5:2–3.*

## The Church

#### Its nature and membership

- ♦ The church includes all sorts of people, including young and old and “slaves” and “masters,” 1–9.

- ♦ The church is a family, whose members are brothers and sisters in Christ, 10, 21, 23.
- ♦ The church consists of “all the saints,” that is, those who have been set apart and sealed by the Holy Spirit for God’s possession and use, 18. *See Ephesians 1:1, 13–14.*

*Note: There is no biblical warrant for calling some especially sanctified believers “saints,” as distinct from all other believers in Christ.*

- ♦ The church is a fellowship of love, 21.
- ♦ The church is led and fed by people who have been especially gifted by God and placed by him into positions of service and leadership, 21. *See Ephesians 4:7, 11–12.*
- ♦ The church is a fellowship of grace, fully based on the love of God for us in Christ, 24.

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ He will reward all his people according to what they have done, 8. *See Colossians 3:24–25; Romans 2:6; 1 Corinthians 3:8, 12–17; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 5:4; Psalm 62:12; and Matthew 5:12; 16:27.*

*Note: The passage in 1 Corinthians 3 does not refer to the gain or loss of salvation, but to the gain or loss of rewards in heaven, based on how we have served Christ.*

*Note: Final salvation is based on God’s grace, received by faith, not on our works; rewards and loss for believers have to do with how God will recompense us for our conduct on earth as those who have become children of God by faith. *See Ephesians 2:8–10; and Revelation 20:12–13, where the Book of Life records the names of those who were saved by God’s grace, and the other books contains records of the deeds of both believers and non-believers.**

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Teach our children that importance of obedience to their parents and elders.

- ♦ Teach parents – especially fathers, who bear responsibility for leadership in the home – the importance of training our children in the things of the Lord and discipling them fairly and lovingly.
- ♦ Teach subordinates – students, employees, citizens, etc. – the importance of respectful submission to authority – something that is foreign to Western, and especially American, culture.
- ♦ Teach people the importance of all work, even menial labor, since it is really being done for Jesus, our true Lord and Master.
- ♦ Teach people to work diligently and honestly, as to the Lord.
- ♦ Teach those in authority to treat their subordinates fairly, kindly, and in the fear of Christ, who is their Lord and Master in heaven.
- ♦ Remind people that God will reward all our deeds done in obedience to him and love for others.
- ♦ Be aware that we are *always* engaged in spiritual warfare with Satan and his demons, and to be alert.
- ♦ Learn about the activity of demons to deceive and even to work upon us to turn us from God and each other.
- ♦ Realize that our true “enemies” are not people or social forces, but the evil beings who manipulate these to tempt us to turn away from God and each other.
- ♦ Learn to trust in the resurrection power of Jesus to resist spiritual enemies.
- ♦ Realize that all days now are “evil,” in the sense that all time involves spiritual struggle, 13.
- ♦ Learn about, and study how to use, the spiritual resources given to us by God to enable us to withstand Satan’s wiles.
- ♦ Especially learn how to deploy specific passages of the Bible to speak into particular situations, including our own habitual temptations.
- ♦ Be in a state of constant prayer, for all things and at all times, but especially for other believers and for ministers of the gospel.
- ♦ Weed out from our lives all things that distract us from God and from prayer; this would include most of our entertainment, and much social media.
- ♦ Pray with others: these commands of Paul are all in the plural and assume that we will be resisting Satan and his lies together; we must have prayer partners and Christian comrades-in-arms.
- ♦ Let each other know just how we are doing, so they can pray for us, 21–22.

- ♦ Think often of the peace and love that God intends to give us, 23.
- ♦ Center our lives upon, and remind ourselves and others, that God's first and last words to us are "Grace," 23. *See Ephesians 1:2.*



# PHILIPPIANS

# Philippians 1:1–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: It comes to us through the Holy Spirit–inspired writings of the New Testament apostles (as well as Old Testament prophets, including Moses and writers of history and wisdom and Psalms), including Paul, “slave” of Jesus Christ, 1.

Its content: It focuses on the grace and peace that come to us from God the Father through Jesus Christ, not (anymore) on the Law’s demands, although the gospel also brings legal obligations, 2.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father and Son (and the Holy Spirit), 2, 3, 6, 8, 11.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is the source of all
  - Revelation, 1
  - Grace and peace, 2
  - Affection, 8
  - Love, knowledge, discernment, and righteousness, 9–11
- ♦ He deserves all praise and glory, 11.

### Christ

His person: He is fully equal with the Father, as source of divinely given grace and peace, 2.

### Salvation

It includes: A restored and reconciled relationship with God the Father, through the person and work of Jesus Christ, 2

Its conveyance: It comes to us entirely by God’s unmerited grace and favor, 2.

### Its benefits

- ♦ It brings individual moral transformation as a result of union with Christ, 9–11.
- ♦ It creates a community of love, comprised of all believers in Christ, 3–11.
- ♦ It will be completed in each person, and in the church, by God, who will bring all his saints (his elect), to full sanctification and salvation when Christ returns, 6.

## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ It consists of all who are considered “saints,” that is, reckoned to be holy—set apart for God’s possession and use and cleansed of all stain that would prohibit access to God—because of their union by faith with Jesus Christ, 1.
- ♦ It consists of all who are “partakers” with the apostles in grace through faith in Christ, 7.

### Its characteristics

- ♦ It resides in all sorts of places, 1.
- ♦ It is marked by mutual intercessory prayers, 1–2, 9.
- ♦ It joins together in promoting the gospel, 5, 7.
- ♦ It is united with other congregations in common submission and loyalty to the New Testament apostles as our ultimate authority, 1, 7.
- ♦ It is led by a plurality of “bishops,” or overseers, pastors, or elders (*see Acts 20:17, 28, Titus 1:5, 1 Peter 5:2*), and deacons in every place (and probably also in every congregation), 1.
- ♦ It lives for the glory of God, 11.

## The Christian Life

Its characteristics: It is marked by constant progress in knowledge, discernment, wise judgment, personal rectitude, and love, that is, righteousness, 9–11.

## The Last Things

Christ’s return: Jesus will return on the “day” of his coming to take his church to be with himself forever, 6.

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Begin each day with thanks for God's grace and peace to us in Christ; he is for us and will be with us!
- ◆ Attend carefully to the writings of the apostles (and Old Testament prophets) and ask for increase of knowledge and discernment that leads to love and righteousness.
- ◆ Pray for each other, using the words of the Bible, including Paul's prayers for his readers.
- ◆ Pray for other believers, and we should first give thanks for what God has already done in them.
- ◆ Support the work of the spread of the gospel beyond the boundaries of our own congregation and city to the whole world, by prayer and finances.
- ◆ Seek constant growth in love, knowledge, wisdom, and all righteousness, relying on Jesus alone to produce these in us as we draw near to him in prayer and faith.
- ◆ Live for the glory of God at all times and in every way.

# Philippians 1:12–30

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: The New Testament was given to us through the apostles and others (probably “prophets”) with special revelation and knowledge, like Paul, 17.

### Its content

- ♦ The gospel, that is, the message about God’s saving work in Christ, 12
- ♦ Christ, that is, the person and saving work of Christ, 15, 18
- ♦ The faith of the gospel, that is, the contents of the gospel, which are the truths we believe, 27

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 19.

His greatness: He governs all events and is able to turn hard things, like the imprisonment of Paul, to good and to the furtherance of the gospel, 12–18. *See Romans 8:28 and 2 Timothy 2:9.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He sent his chosen messengers to preach the gospel to those who had not heard, 12–17.
- ♦ He gives joy to his people as they trust in his providence, 18.
- ♦ He answers the prayers of his people for other believers, 19.
- ♦ He gives the Holy Spirit’s help and strength to his people in answer to prayer, 19.
- ♦ His presence in Paradise is much better than anything we can experience in this life, 23.
- ♦ He saves his people from their sins, 28.
- ♦ He sends unrepentant sinners to eternal perdition, destruction, and loss, 28.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah, anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 29. *See Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18.*
- ♦ He is Jesus of Nazareth, the fully human son of Mary, whose name means, “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation,” 19, 26. *See Matthew 1:21.*
- ♦ His Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God, 19. *See Romans 8:9.*
- ♦ He now lives in Paradise at the right hand of God the Father, 23. *See Philippians 2:9; Luke 23:46; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; and Hebrews 1:3.*
- ♦ He also lives in his people by his Holy Spirit; he is in them, individually and corporately, in a spiritual way, 21, 26. *See Philippians 1:1; John 14:18–20, 23; 15:4; Romans 8:10; 1 Corinthians 6:15; and Colossians 1:27.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, 19. *See Scriptures cited above.*

His work: He comes from God the Father, through Jesus the Son, to those who call on God in faith, to work in them and in their situations, sometimes effecting miracles of deliverance, 19. *See Galatians 3:5.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Preaching the gospel from bad motives, 15–16
- ♦ Envy, 15; *see Matthew 27:18; Mark 7:22; Romans 1:29; Titus 3:3; and 1 Peter 2:1*
- ♦ Any form of pretense or hypocrisy, 18; *see Matthew 6:1–4, 16–18; 7:1–5; 23:13–36; and 1 Peter 2:1*

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes to us entirely from and by God’s grace, his unmerited favor towards us in Christ, 29. *See Ephesians 2:9.*

### Its content

- ♦ Being united to the risen Christ and thus being “in” him, 13, 26
- ♦ Having the hope of everlasting life with Christ in heaven, 21, 23

Its benefits: The many benefits of salvation include joy, 25.

Its recipients: Salvation and its benefits come to those who trust in Christ in an ongoing way, 25–26.

## **Life**

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### Ethical imperatives:

- ♦ See all that happens to us, even suffering, as ordained by God for his good purposes, 12.
- ♦ Live in such a way that unbelievers can see our faith, hope, and love in Christ, 13.
- ♦ Be bold to preach the gospel even when we see others suffering for that and even though we know we may suffer for preaching the gospel also, 14.
- ♦ Love the ministers of the gospel, 17.
- ♦ Rejoice in the spread of the gospel, even when it involves our suffering, 18.
- ♦ Pray for those who are suffering on behalf of the gospel, 19.
- ♦ Seek for Christ to be glorified in our physical existence, no matter what happens, 20 *See 1 Corinthians 10:31.*
- ♦ See all of life, including our suffering, as being “in” Christ, and see our life as consisting of Christ and our union with him, 21. *See Colossians 3:4.*
- ♦ Earnestly desire to die and thus to be with Christ in Paradise, 23.
- ♦ Accept life in this body, even when it means suffering, as an opportunity to serve other believers and the lost, 24.
- ♦ Rejoice in the blessings God gives to others, 26.
- ♦ Seek unity with other believers, 27. *See Philippians 2:1–4 and Ephesians 4:1–3.*
- ♦ Work earnestly with other believers for the purity and furtherance of the gospel, 27.
- ♦ Do not be afraid of the adversaries of the gospel, 28.
- ♦ Expect to suffer for being a believer in Christ and one who proclaims the gospel, 29–30.

- ♦ Read the accounts of the apostles in Acts and the Epistles to see how they lived, worked, and suffered as servants of God, 30.
- ♦ Read church history to see how God's people have served him and suffered for the name of Christ throughout the ages.



# Philippians 2:1–11

## Truth

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### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ He exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 1, 5–6, 9–11.
- ♦ The three members of the Trinity are equal in deity, power, eternity, glory, and all other attributes of God, 6.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has the power to raise Jesus from the dead and exalt him to the Father's right hand, 9.
- ♦ He is highly – that is, supremely and infinitely – exalted and transcendent, 9–10.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He condescends to dwell among his people by his Spirit, 1.
- ♦ He sent his Son to become the man Jesus to save us from our sins, 8.
- ♦ He vindicated and rewarded Jesus by raising him from the dead and exalting him, 9. *See Acts 2:23–23, 32–33; and Ephesians 1:19–22.*
- ♦ He graciously allows us to know him as Father, 11. *See Matthew 6:9 and Romans 8:15–16.*

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah, anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 1, 5, 11.
- ♦ He is the exact representation and image – the “form” – of God, 16. *See John 1:18; 14:7–9; Colossians 1:15; and Hebrews 1:3.*
- ♦ He is equal with God the Father in his being, from all eternity, 16. *See John 1:1.*
- ♦ Since the Incarnation in the womb of Mary, he is now also fully human, 7–8. *See John 1:14.*
- ♦ He is Jesus, the man who is also God, 5, 10–11.

- ♦ He is “Lord,” that is, Yahweh (the Old Testament personal name for God), fully God from all eternity, 11.
- ♦ He is, nevertheless, somehow subordinate to the Father, obedient to his will and being and doing for the glory of the Father, 8, 11.

### His work

- ♦ He renounced his divine privileges and glory for a while in order to save us, 6–7. *Note: He “emptied” himself does not mean that he divested himself of his full deity, but that he put aside the honor and exaltation of his position as eternal Son of God, fully equal with the Father, enjoying the praises of the angels, in order to take on a human body and live among us in humility, 7–8.*
- ♦ He took upon himself the role and subordinate position of a servant, a slave, with no rights of his own, 7. *See Isaiah 52:13–53:12; and Mark 10:45.*
- ♦ He became fully man, 7.
- ♦ He lived a life of total obedience to the Father and of willing submission to human authority, to the point of crucifixion, 8.
- ♦ He took upon himself the curse that we deserve for our sins and carried the guilt of our sins to the cross, where he suffered vicariously in our place, the just for the unjust, 8. *See 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; and Peter 2:24; 3:18.*
- ♦ He rose from the dead and ascended to God’s right hand, 9. *See Matthew 20:19 and Mark 16:19.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 1. *See Romans 8:9.*

His work: He gives us spiritual fellowship and communion with God and with other believers, 1. *See 2 Corinthians 13:14.*

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ We are created in the image of God, which bears a close resemblance to God himself, as the person and incarnation of the Son of God demonstrates, 6–8. *See Genesis 1:16.*
- ♦ The true and original image, or likeness, or form, of God is his Son, who became the man Jesus, 6, so we are meant to be like him in our character, 1–8.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Ambition for self, 3
- ♦ Pride and conceit, 3
- ♦ Thinking of ourselves only, 4

## Salvation

### Its source

- ♦ Salvation comes to us wholly through the initiative of God in Christ, 6–11.
- ♦ Salvation is based upon the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension to glory of Jesus Christ, 6–11.

Its content: It consists in incorporation into the Body of Christ, the fellowship of believers with each other and with God through Christ by his Spirit, 1.

Its purpose and goal: God's purpose in our salvation is his greater glory through the exaltation and honor of Jesus Christ through believers, as well as through the eventual submission of all people, 10–11.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Seek to be united with other believers in our intentions, love, and thoughts, 2.
- ♦ Ask God to give us true humility of mind, 3.
- ♦ Consider others to be more important than we are, even if in some respects we are “better” than they are, 3.
- ♦ Avoid seeking our interests, but seek others' well-being, 4.

*Note: The word “only” is not found in the original Greek. Paul is not telling us to seek our interests – we already do that! – but to seek others' interests.*

- ♦ Meditate frequently on the incarnation and death of Jesus as our perfect example.
- ♦ Meditate on the saving work he accomplished on the cross for us.

- ♦ Meditate on his glorious resurrection and victorious ascension, as the ground of our current blessedness and security in God.
- ♦ Eagerly await the time when Christ will be openly glorified by all creation.
- ♦ Meanwhile, give him our praise daily, to the glory of God the Father.

# Philippian 2:12–30

## Truth

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### God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21, 27, 29–30.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He possesses all power and sovereignty, working his will in his people by causing them to will and to do what he wants, 13.
- ♦ He has the power to heal the sick, 27.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He saves his people from their sins, 12.
- ♦ He transforms his people so that they do his will, 13.
- ♦ He adopts people into his family as children, 15. *See Romans 8:14–17; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 4:6–7; and Ephesians 1:5.*

*Note: In the writings of John and Peter, “children of God” refers to those who are born again by the Spirit of God and thus share in his nature. See John 1:12–13; 1 Peter 1:2–3; 2 Peter 1:4; and 1 John 3:1.*

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent by God to save his people from their sins, 16, 21, 20.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human Son of Mary, 19, 21.
- ♦ He is Lord, that is, Yahweh in the flesh, fully God and fully man, 19, 24, 29.

*Note: “Lord” is the Greek translation of the Old Testament name Yahweh; applied to Jesus, it shows that he is fully God.*

#### His work

- ♦ He now dwells in and among his believing people, by his Spirit, so that they are said to be “in Christ,” or “in the Lord”; that is, their entire life is lived in the

closest possible union with him, so that all their thoughts and prayers have to do with him, 19.

- ♦ He now continues his saving work of proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel through his people, 30.

*Note: The work of redeeming his people from the penalty and power of sin was accomplished and completed on the cross; the “work of the Christ” now is what he does through his people to bring the knowledge of his redemptive action to others through preaching. See John 19:30 and Hebrews 1:3; 7:7; 9:28; 10:11–14.*

## The People of God

### Their identity

- ♦ In the New Testament era, the people of God are those who trust in Christ for salvation, 17.
- ♦ They include also special messengers and servants of God, who are sent by him to preach the truth about Christ and the Christian life, 16–17, 19–30.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Complaining, or “grumbling,” rather than giving thanks at all times for all things, 14; *see Ephesians 8:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18. This was the great sin of Israel in the wilderness: see Exodus 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Numbers 14:2, 29; 16:41; Deuteronomy 2:17; etc.*
- ♦ Crookedness and perversity, that is, departing from the right way of life prescribed by God in his Scriptures and even in the human conscience, 15; *see Romans 1:25–32.*
- ♦ Seeking, or looking out for, our own interests, rather than the interests of Christ and his kingdom, 21.

## Salvation

### Its nature and source

- ♦ Salvation is progressive, beginning with regeneration/justification and continuing through life, 12.
- ♦ Salvation consists in a new relationship with God (we are now his children) and thus the indwelling of God in Christ through his Spirit, who works in us to transform our attitudes and our actions, 12–13.
- ♦ Salvation leads to a transformed life that stands in stark and lovely contrast to the life of the unbelieving world, 15. *See Matthew 5:15–16.*
- ♦ Salvation comes from God alone, but the outworking of our new life in Christ includes our cooperation with God through faith and obedience, 12–13.

Its conveyance and recipients: Salvation comes to us through faith as we believe the message of the gospel proclaimed by God's chosen messengers, 17.

### Its benefits

- ♦ God's indwelling and transforming work, 13
- ♦ Becoming an adopted child of God, 15
- ♦ Deliverance from the power of darkness, 15; *see Colossians 1:12–13.*
- ♦ Possession of the word of life, that is, the gospel of new and eternal life through faith in Christ, 16
- ♦ Joy and gladness in fellowship with other believers, 16, 18, 28, 29

## The Last Things

Christ's return: Jesus Christ will return in glory for his people on a day appointed by God the Father, when believers will rejoice together with him in the consummation of their salvation, 16. *See 2 Corinthians 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4, 9; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:2; and 2 Timothy 1:12; 4:8.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Maintain an attitude of awe, reverence, and even fear towards God, not as slaves but as obedient children, 12. *See 1 Peter 1:14–17.*
- ♦ Ask God to work out in us the full effects of salvation from sin, 12–13.
- ♦ Work as hard as we can to cooperate with God in his sanctifying process in us, 12–13.
- ♦ Seek God’s pleasure and will above all, 13.
- ♦ Refrain from complaining and disputing, 14.
- ♦ Hold onto the word of life, that is, the message of the gospel revealed in Scripture, 16.

*Note: Some translate “holding onto” as “holding out”; in that case, the meaning would be for us to offer the word of the gospel to all around us.*

- ♦ Be willing to offer ourselves completely to the ministry of helping others come to faith and grow in faith, 17, 30.
- ♦ Rejoice with other believers over the grace of God that we experience together, 17–18.
- ♦ Seek to know the spiritual state of others, especially those with whom we have shared the gospel, 19.
- ♦ Care for the spiritual welfare of other believers more than for our own selfish interests, 20–21, 30. *See Philippians 2:4.*
- ♦ Share our material goods with ministers of the gospel, 25. *See Philippians 4:10–19.*
- ♦ Expect that even godly servants of Christ will sometimes suffer serious illness, 27.
- ♦ Trust that God can heal the sick, 27. *See James 5:13–14.*
- ♦ Welcome and esteem authentic ministers of the gospel, 29.

## Ministers of the gospel should

- ♦ See themselves as runners in a long-distance race, 16. *See 2 Timothy 4:7.*
- ♦ Be willing to risk their lives for the progress of the gospel, 17, 30.
- ♦ Work in teams whenever possible, 19–30.



- ♦ Seek to have a Paul–Timothy relationship with an older and a younger Christian, 19–22.
- ♦ See themselves as brothers and fellow workers with other ministers of the gospel, 25.
- ♦ See themselves as soldiers of Christ, ready to exercises strict self–discipline and suffer hardship for the sake of the gospel, 25. *See 2 Timothy 2:3–4; 4:7.*
- ♦ Build strong relationships with their sending and supporting churches, 19–30. *See Philipians 4:10–20.*

# Philippians 3:1–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ It came to the Israelites, the chosen people of God, through the Law—the Torah—given to God by Moses; Paul may also have included the entire Old Testament revelation here, 5–6.
- ♦ It comes supremely to those who believe in Jesus and includes intimate knowledge of him as Lord and Savior, 8–10.
- ♦ It comes to us now through the writings of Paul and other apostles, 1.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 3, 8–9.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is righteous, 9.
- ♦ He is willing to make himself known to us, 8.

### Christ

His person: He was the man Jesus, who was able to suffer and who rose again and the Son of God, who is divine Savior and Lord (Old Testament Yahweh), 3, 8, 10.

### Sin

It includes: Boasting in self, one's background, heritage, knowledge of God's written revelation, one's works of obedience to the revealed will of God—which Paul calls "the flesh," 2–4.

### Salvation

#### Its content

- ♦ It consists in
  - Knowing Christ, 8
  - Being "found" in him, that is, having an intimate relationship with him, 9

- Being counted as righteous as a result of this union with Christ, 9

Its conveyance: It comes to us through faith, not works of obedience, 9, this faith itself being a gift from God, 9.

#### Its results

- ♦ It leads to a participation (“know”) the resurrection of power of Christ now, 10.
- ♦ It leads to a participation in his sufferings now, 10.
- ♦ It leads to the resurrection of our body from the dead later, 11.

Its source: Salvation for us is based upon the historical incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, 10–11. *See also Philippians 2:1–10.*

## The Christian Life

Its content: The Christian life consists primarily in being conformed to the sufferings of Jesus, as we trust in God’s resurrection power, given to us through the constant work of the Spirit in our lives, 3, 10.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Rejoice at all times in Christ and in the salvation he has brought to us, 1.
- ♦ Do not put confidence in anything to make us “righteous” in God’s sight, including our own good deeds but only trust in Christ alone to be our salvation from sin and means of reconciliation with God, through faith, 3–7.
- ♦ Worship God for his mercy, and do so by faith in Christ, who gives us the daily supply of the Holy Spirit. This worship includes both prayer (praise, thanksgiving, petition), and service of good works done by God’s resurrection power as we trust in Christ to work within us, 3. *See also Philippians 2:12–13.*
- ♦ Be willing to give up all things—our self-righteousness, our former status, the approval of family and friends, and even life itself—in order to know and follow Christ, so that we may attain to the resurrection from the dead, 7–8.

# Philippians 3:12–4:1

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ It comes not only through theological and ethical teaching but also through the record of the lives of Christ and the apostles, as well as other followers of Christ, given to us as examples to follow, 3:12–17.
- ♦ It comes from God as he shows us where we still need to grow spiritually, 3:15.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father, Son, [and Holy Spirit], 3:12, 14, 20.

His greatness: He dwells in heaven where he rules as King, 3:20–21.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Lord – Old Testament Yahweh – God in substance, power, eternity, glory, and deity, and who, as God, is also Savior of his people, 3:20–21.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the man from Nazareth, 3:12, 14, 20, and therefore serves as our example.
- ♦ He rules now over all the universe, as God’s regent, 3:21.
- ♦ He lives in a glorious body, the one in which he was raised from the dead, 3:21.

#### His work

- ♦ He “lays hold” (takes possession of) his chosen saints for an eternal destiny, 3:12.
- ♦ He works with God in calling his people to salvation, 3:14,
- ♦ He will come to raise his people from the dead, 3:20.

## The Church

### Its membership

- ♦ It consists of all those who have the mind that possessed Paul, to press toward heaven in holiness, 3:12–15, 17.
- ♦ It consists of all those who wait eagerly for Jesus to return from heaven as their Savior, 3:20 (rather than being obsessed with earthly concerns, 3:19).

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Opposition to the cross of Christ, both as to its justifying effect (“the circumcision” party, holding to Jewish legalism, 3:2–3) and its ethical implications of self-denial for the sake of holiness, 3:18
- ♦ Worshipping the desires of the body (and of the mind, Ephesians 2:3) by indulging fleshly passions, 3:19 (especially sexual lust – see Colossians 3:5)
- ♦ Rejecting conscience to the extent even of glorifying in things which should cause us shame, 3:19
- ♦ Setting our mind on earthly things, rather than on heavenly things, 3:19; *see Colossians 3:1–5.*

## The Last Things

The last days: Christians will receive the “prize” of eternal life with God and Christ in heaven, 3:14.

Christ’s return: Christ will return and raise his people from the dead, giving them a glorified body like his own, 3:21.

## The Christian Life

### Its characteristics

- ♦ It is one of constant growth into holiness and Christ-likeness, 3:12–14.
- ♦ It requires strenuous and unrelenting effort to move forward towards the goal, 3:13–14.
- ♦ It never reaches moral or physical perfection in this life, 3:12–13, 21.

- ♦ It does lead to such improvement that some believers may be called “mature,” relative to their earlier Christian life and relative to new or immature believers, 3:15.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Imitate Paul and other saints of old, as well as mature Christians we see around us, who constantly sought to grow in holiness and kept trying to move “upward” towards heaven by trusting in Christ and following him.
- ♦ Forget things that lie behind, including both sins that we have confessed and for which we have trusted God for forgiveness, and the things about which people tend to boast, including their heritage, education, and moral achievements.
- ♦ Set our hopes on heaven (or, to use the words of John and Peter, a new heaven and a new earth), not on things on this earth, no matter how good they may be.
- ♦ Never imagine that we have “attained” spiritual perfection, though we should seek a level of maturity.
- ♦ Proceed on the basis of what we have already learned and follow the truths we have already believed and experienced, 3:16.

# Philippians 4:2–9

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ It comes through the ministry of different people in the church as they share the full gospel with others, 3.
- ♦ It comes authoritatively through the life and teachings of the apostle Paul and other apostles, and must, in order to be received with profit, be appropriated into our lives through active obedience and imitation of them, 9.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is the source of Life, and the one who gives eternal life to us, 3.
- ♦ He exists as “Lord,” i.e., Jesus Christ, and God, i.e., God the Father, 4–6.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He hears and answers prayer (because of his love and his power), 6.
- ♦ He is the God of peace, the one who has made peace between himself and us through the sacrifice of Jesus, and who grants us inner peace as we trust in him, 7, 9.

### The Church

#### Its membership

- ♦ It consists of those who are “in the Lord,” that is, united to Jesus Christ our Lord through faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 2, 4.
- ♦ Their names are written in the Book of Life, which means that they were chosen from before the foundation of world to receive eternal life from Christ, and their destinies are secure, as long as they trust in him, 3.
- ♦ It includes those who work for the advance of the gospel, both men and women, though not all have the same rank or office in the church, 3. At the same time, these people are still sinners, and thus will still have conflicts among themselves, even among leaders, 3.

- ♦ Church unity through resolution of conflict is essential, and results when we are of the same “mind in the Lord,” that is, convinced of the same truths, submitting to the same Lord and having the “mind” of Christ, as described in Philippians 2:1–14.

## The Christian Life

### Its characteristics

- ♦ It consists of
  - Faith, expressed through explicit and confident prayer
  - Thanksgiving
  - Joy in Christ as our Savior and Lord
  - Gentleness and forbearance toward others and toward our afflictions—all based on meditation upon what is good, true, and beautiful (found in the example and teachings of the apostles and the lives of godly believers), 4–8
  - Action, as we obey the teachings and apostolic example of Paul and the other apostles, 9

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ Jesus will come soon to judge the living and the dead and will give everlasting joy and peace to his people, 5.
- ♦ In that sense, he is always “at hand,” that is, near to us, regardless of our circumstances, for (1) he will come soon, and (2) he is already present to us in the Spirit.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Pray at all times about everything that concerns us and do it with thanksgiving, based on the knowledge that God will do what is best and will always be with us and those whom we love, no matter whether he answers our prayers in the way we want.
- ♦ Constantly rejoice in the Lord Jesus, who has saved us from the penalty of sin and given us a relationship with God as Father, and the God of peace for us. We can do this by faith, regardless of how we feel or what is going on around us.



- ♦ Think on things that are good and true and beautiful. This means that we should greatly restrict our watching, reading, hearing, of things that are not good, true, or beautiful.
- ♦ Meditate on the teachings and examples of Paul and other apostles and ask God for ability to imitate them.
- ♦ Work hard for unity among believers, urging ourselves and others to have the “mind of Christ Jesus” which Paul described in chapter 2.

# Philippians 4:10–23

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ Paul's relationship with the church in Philippi, 10–18; *see Acts 16:11–40*.
- ♦ Paul's relationship to Thessalonica and its church, 16; *see Acts 17:1–4*.
- ♦ Epaphroditus, 18; *see Philippians 2:25*.
- ♦ "Sweet-smelling aroma, . . . well pleasing to God, 18; *see Leviticus 4:31 and Ephesians 5:2*.
- ♦ "An acceptable sacrifice," 18; *see Hebrews 13:16*.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 18–20.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, seeing and knowing all that is done, 18.
- ♦ He is infinitely rich, possessing the entire universe and able to give to his people what they need, 19.
- ♦ He is glorious, transcendent in beauty and exaltation, 19–20.
- ♦ He is eternal, 20.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He rewards those who do good, 17.
- ♦ He is pleased to accept our offerings of love and good works, 18.
- ♦ He instituted the sacrificial system, including the sin offering, so that his people could approach him, 18. *See Leviticus 1–7*.
- ♦ He richly gives to his people all that they need, as a father does to his children, 19.
- ♦ He graciously chooses to become Father to those whom he has chosen to be in Christ through faith, 20. *See Romans 8:15–17 and Ephesians 1:5*.

# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the divine-human Messiah sent by God, 19, 21, 23.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 19, 21, 23.
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh in the flesh, fully God, with all authority and power over the universe and over his people, 23.

## His work

- ♦ He is the mediator and personal conduit of all God's blessings to us, 19.
- ♦ He comes into such an intimate relationship with those who believe in him that they are said to be "in" him, 21.
- ♦ He embodies, purchases, and bestows upon us grace, that is, the love of God subjectively experienced as the gift and presence of the Holy Spirit, 23.

# The People of God

## Their identity

- ♦ In the New Testament, the people of God are the church, those who trust in Christ.
- ♦ They are called saints, that is, they are considered to be holy in God's eyes, positionally, though they are in the process of being sanctified practically, 21, 22. *See 1 Corinthians 1:2.*  
*Note: This fact entirely contradicts the Roman Catholic practice of acknowledging only certain believers as "saints."*
- ♦ They are "in Christ"; that is, they have an intimate ontological union with the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, 21. *See Romans 6:3-11; and Ephesians 1:1, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13; 2:1-10.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Care for missionaries whom we support, 10, 14-16, 18.
- ♦ Be content at all times, regardless of our circumstances, 11-12.
- ♦ Prepare for adversity, which comes to almost everyone at some time, 12.

- ♦ Believe that Christ can strengthen us at all times, 13.
- ♦ Rely on the strength of Christ at all times, 13.
- ♦ See our acts of love and generosity as an offering to God, 18.

# COLOSSIANS

# Colossians 1:1–18

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation came through God's chosen messengers, including the Apostle Paul, 1.

#### Its content and nature

- ♦ The content of Paul's revelation – indeed, of the whole Bible – is the gospel of salvation through God's chosen Messiah, 5.
- ♦ This gospel is a “word,” that is, a message, given in words and sentences that have meaning and can be understood and believed, 5, 6.
- ♦ It is also truth, absolute truth, 5.
- ♦ This gospel has power, and continually increases and grows, in the sense that it is preached to more people and causes more people to be saved through faith, 6. See Colossians 1:10 and Genesis 1:28; 9:1.

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals, God the Father (usually called God), 2–3, 10, 15; God the Son (called “Lord” in the New Testament; also, Jesus Christ), 1–3, 10, 12–13); God the Holy Spirit, 8.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional – not ontological or essential) subordination: God is Father of the Son, 3, 13; the Son is the image of God the Father, revealed to us now in human form, 15.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has a sovereign will over all men, 1.
- ♦ He lives in heaven, that is, he is transcendent, 5.
- ♦ He possesses all power and can give it to his people, 11.
- ♦ He is glorious – splendid, majestic, sovereign, omnipotent, 11.
- ♦ He owns all things and can bestow what he owns to his people, 12.
- ♦ He dwells in inapproachable light, 12. *See 1 Timothy 6:16.*
- ♦ He is King over a kingdom ruled by Christ, 13.

- ♦ He is invisible, 15.
- ♦ He holds authority over all creation, and has given this authority to his Son Jesus, 15.
- ♦ He made all things through his eternal Son, 16.

### His goodness

- ♦ He willed that there be special messengers from Christ to his people, the apostles, 1.
- ♦ He deigns to be known to us as our loving heavenly Father, 2–3.
- ♦ He gives grace and peace to his people, 2.
- ♦ He reveals his will to his people, 9.
- ♦ He allows himself to be known, really and personally known, by his people, 10. *See John 17:3.*
- ♦ He generously gives his people a share in the eternal inheritance, that is, life with him forever, 12.
- ♦ He saves his people from the dominion of darkness, the domain of Satan, 13. *See Ephesians 6:12.*
- ♦ He loves his Son, 13.
- ♦ He forgives the sins of his people, 14.
- ♦ He is eternal, with his Son, 17.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 1–4.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine–human Messiah sent by God to save us from our sins, 1–4, 7.
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, and thus fully divine as well as fully human, 2–3, 10.
- ♦ He is the unique, divine and beloved Son of God the Father, 3, 13.
- ♦ He is omnipotent like God the Father (thus, “glorious power”), 11.
- ♦ He is King over his kingdom, which is also the kingdom given by the Father to him, 13.
- ♦ He is the image of the invisible God, 15. *See 2 Corinthians 4:4; Hebrews 1:3; and John 14:9.*

- ♦ He is the firstborn over all creation, that is, as the only Son of God, he rules over all creation and is heir of the kingdom of God, 15. See Revelation 3:14; and Psalm 89:27.

*Note: This does not mean that he is “first” in a succession or family of other “sons” of God, as Arius proposed. This “first” does not refer to time, but to authority.*

- ♦ He is the one by whom and through whom all things were created by God, 16. See John 1:3 and Hebrews 1:2–3.
- ♦ He is thus ruler over all other authorities, including all spiritual beings, in the universe, 16. See Ephesians 1:20–21; and 1 Peter 3:22.
- ♦ He is the one for whom all things were created; that is, he is the purpose and Lord of all creation, 16.
- ♦ He is the one in and by whom the entire universe holds together and does not fall apart, 17. See Hebrews 1:3.

*Note: Christ’s constant sustaining word and power explain why the atom, for example, does not disintegrate.*

- ♦ He is the head of the Body of Christ, the church, 18. See Colossians 2:19; and Ephesians 1:22; 4:15–16; 5:23–24.
- ♦ He is the beginning of the church, in that he is the first to be raised from the dead, 18, and thus he is the “firstborn” in the sense of being God’s heir and the ruler over all who will be raised from the dead, 18.
- ♦ In all things he has, and should have, preeminence, 18.

### His work

- ♦ He appoints and equips people to serve other believers, 7, 10–15, 17.
- ♦ He rules over his kingdom, 13.
- ♦ He provided redemption for us through the shedding of his blood, 14, 19, 24. See Ephesians 1:7; 2:16; 5:2, 25–28.
- ♦ He created all things, 16–17.
- ♦ He upholds and holds together the entire universe, 17

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the Spirit of God, uniquely, so that he can be called, simply, “the Spirit,” 8.



His work: He sheds God's love abroad into our hearts, and through us loves others, 8.  
*See Romans 5:5; 15:30; and Galatians 5:22.*

## Salvation

### Its recipients

- ◆ Those who have faith (and, perhaps) remain faithful, 2, 4
- ◆ Those who have heard the gospel, 5–7

### Its benefits

- ◆ Being considered saints, those who are separated for God's ownership and use, 2, 12
- ◆ Membership in the family of God, with other believers and brothers, 2
- ◆ Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 2, 6
- ◆ Hope of eternal life with Christ, 5
- ◆ The gift of the Holy Spirit, who transforms us and enables us to love, 8
- ◆ Wisdom and knowledge to lead a God-honoring life, 9–10
- ◆ Empowerment to do God's will, 10–11
- ◆ Joy, 11
- ◆ A share in the eternal inheritance of the saints, 12
- ◆ Entrance into the domain of light through union with Christ, 12–13
- ◆ Deliverance from the domination of darkness, 13
- ◆ Citizenship in the kingdom of Christ, 13
- ◆ Redemption, that is, the forgiveness of sins, 14
- ◆ Membership in the Body of Christ through union with Christ, 18
- ◆ The assurance that we too will be raised from the dead, as Jesus was, 18

## The Church

### Its identity and membership

- ◆ The church is that body of believers who accept the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord and of his apostles, including Paul.
- ◆ The church is a spiritual family of brothers and sisters in Christ, created by God the Father, 1–2.

- ♦ All members of the church – not just some– are “saints, set apart by the Spirit” for God’s ownership and use, 2, 4, 12.
- ♦ The church is composed of people who believe in and faithfully follow Jesus Christ, 1, 4.
- ♦ The church exists as a local congregation, 2.
- ♦ The church is marked by love for all believers everywhere, 4, 8.
- ♦ The church lives by hope in what is prepared for us in heaven, 5, 12.
- ♦ The church is, humanly speaking, created by the proclamation of the gospel, 6–7.
- ♦ The church is a universal community, 6.
- ♦ The church is led and fed by ministers of the gospel, 7.
- ♦ The church is indwelt, individually and corporately, by the Holy Spirit, who binds its members together in love, 8.
- ♦ The church consists of those who are being progressively transformed into the moral image of Christ, that is, into more and more obedience, 10–11.
- ♦ Spiritually speaking, the church is even now part of the kingdom ruled over by the risen Lord Jesus Christ, 13.
- ♦ The church consists of believers in Christ who have been redeemed from the wrath of God and given forgiveness through the work of Christ, 14.
- ♦ The church is the body of Christ, who is its head, 18.

## The Last Things

Christ’s return: When Christ returns

- He will give to his people that which has been reserved for them in heaven, 5. *See Matthew 5:12; Romans 8:18–25; and 1 Peter 1:13.*
- The saints will inherit that which has been promised to them, namely, an eternal dwelling in the light of God’s presence, 12. *See Revelation 21:23–24; 22:5.*

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Read and heed the words written to us by Paul the apostle, since was acting in accordance with the will of God, 1.
- ♦ Daily receive, and rest in, the grace and peace that come to us from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 2.

- ♦ Thank God for other Christians when we pray for them, 3.
- ♦ Set our hope on what is reserved for us in heaven, that we might have love, 5.
- ♦ Share the gospel with everyone we can, since it alone brings a message of truth and hope, 6.
- ♦ Ask God to give us love for others through his Spirit, 8. *See Galatians 5:22.*
- ♦ Pray for other believers, using the words and thought of Scripture, including Paul's marvelous prayers, 9–12. *See Ephesians 1:16–23; 3:14–21; and Philipians 1:9–10.*
- ♦ Give thanks to God often for the blessings he has given us, such as those mentioned in 1:12–14: inheritance, deliverance, redemption, forgiveness.
- ♦ Believe in, worship, and live for Jesus Christ, for whom we were made, 16.
- ♦ Reflect cosmic reality by consciously seeking to make Jesus Christ pre-eminent in all we think and say and do, 18.

# Colossians 1:19–29

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its nature, content, source

- ♦ Biblical revelation is called “the faith,” referring to a fixed body of truth that is appropriated by faith, in the sense that it is not the fruit of man’s reasoning, nor can it be received by reason or experience alone, but only by faith, 23. *See Jude 3.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation, including the Old Testament, is essentially “gospel,” in that it speaks of the redemption brought to us in Christ, 23, 27; *See Luke 24:44–47.*
- ♦ Its content includes the hope that we now have in Christ, that is, the certainty that we will live eternally with him in a renewed creation, 23; *See Romans 8:18–30.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation is universal; that is, it applies to “every creature under heaven”; it is not local or cultural, 23. *See Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:15; 24:47; Acts 1:8; and Romans 1:5.*

*Note: This refutes the notion that the gospel is culturally determined or limited in scope. The core elements of it apply to all nations and cultures.*

- ♦ Biblical revelation, especially the message of the New Testament and particularly the gospel entrusted to Paul, is a “mystery,” that is, a truth or reality hidden from previous generations but now revealed to us through the ministry of the apostles, 26–27. *See Ephesians 3:1–7.*
- ♦ The content of this mystery is that non-Jews who truly believe in Christ become full members of God’s people and of the Body of Christ, in whom Christ dwells, 27. *See Ephesians 3:6.*
- ♦ The message is also a warning, since those who do not believe and obey will suffer judgment, 28.

#### Its messengers

- ♦ The messengers of the gospel included the uniquely authoritative first apostles, including Paul, 24–25. *See Ephesians 2:20.*

- ♦ The messengers of the gospel, and especially Paul, along with all Christians, must suffer; in this way, we “fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for his church,” 24. These sufferings of ours are not atoning as Christ’s was, but they are the continuing participation of Christ in the life of his church, his body, so that when Christians suffer, he somehow suffers, too. *See Acts 9:4 and Philipians 1:19.*
- ♦ The messengers who suffer are thus “fulfilling” the word of God by carrying out the command of the Lord, following his example, provoking the opposition that was prophesied by Christ, and exemplifying the dying life of Christ, 25.
- ♦ The primary method God has chosen for his messengers is to “preach,” that is, to proclaim or announce, the message, 28.
- ♦ They also engaged in warning and in teaching, 28.
- ♦ They also speak to individuals, 28.
- ♦ The messengers of the gospel, especially Paul, work hard at this task, relying on the mighty power of God, 29. *See Ephesians 3:7 and Romans 15:18–19.*

## God

### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called God in the New Testament), Son (usually called Lord, or Christ, or Jesus in the new Testament), and Holy Spirit, 19–20, though all three are sometimes indicated only by the pronoun “he” or “his” or “him,” as in 19–20.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a functional or relational priority and subordination, in which, as here, the Father (implied in this verse and so translated in most versions) was pleased to have all the fullness of deity dwell in the incarnate Son and to reconcile all things to himself through the Son, 19–20.

### His greatness

- ♦ He possesses all the “fullness” of deity and all attributes of deity, 19.  
*Note “the fullness” was a term used in Greek religion and philosophy and in some Christian heresies; here it is applied to God alone.*
- ♦ He holds sovereign sway over “all things” in all parts of the universe, 20.

- ♦ He is sovereign also over his self-revelation and the revelation of each aspect of his saving work in Christ, 26. *See Ephesians 3:9-10.*
- ♦ He is transcendent, dwelling in “heaven” above all the things and beings that he has created, 23.
- ♦ He is eternal, existing before “all ages and generations” of this created order, 26.

### His goodness

- ♦ He reconciled us to himself through the atoning death of his Son, the embodiment of his fullness, 19-22.
- ♦ He chose, appointed, and equipped Paul to be a minister of the gospel to Gentiles, 25.
- ♦ He willed from all time to make known to us the mystery, that is, Christ in us, the hope of glory, 27.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ As the eternal Son and Word of God, Jesus Christ is the embodiment of all the fullness of God, that is, of all God’s divine attributes, 19. *See Colossians 2:9; John 1:1-5, 14-16.*
- ♦ He is a man who was fully human, with “flesh,” so that he could die as a man, shedding his blood out unto death, 20, 22.
- ♦ He now is the Head of his body, which is the church, the congregation of all those who are “in” Christ by faith and the sanctifying work of the Spirit, 24. *See Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; and Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 28-30.*
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine-human Messiah, anointed and sent by God to save us, 28.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 28.

### His work

- ♦ He reconciled “all things” to God through his bodily death on the cross, 20-22. *See Romans 5:10 and Ephesians 2:14-16.*
- ♦ He is “in” his people so intimately that when they suffer, he does too, somehow, 24, 27. *See Acts 9:4.*

- ♦ He empowers his servants who preach the gospel to work hard and long, 29.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: He produces the fruit of love in the born-again people of God, 8. See *Galatians 5:22*.

## Mankind

### Our fallen state

- ♦ In our current fallen state, we are alienated from God in our minds, 21.
- ♦ Doing wicked works, 21

## Salvation

### Its recipients

- ♦ “All things,” 20; that is, God, unfallen angels and human beings who trust in Christ, 20–21

*Note: “All things” does not include Satan, the fallen angels, or unrepentant humans; the emphasis, rather, is upon people of all nations and all spiritual beings who are in a good relationship with God.*

- ♦ People of all sorts, including Jews and Gentiles, 21, 27; see *Ephesians 2:11–19*.

### Its benefits

- ♦ Reconciliation with God, 19, 21; see *Romans 5:10–11; 2 Corinthians 5:18–19; and Ephesians 2:11–19*.

*Note: We were once enemies of God, both subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, in that we were not seeking fellowship with him, objectively, in that he was angry with our sins and could not have fellowship with us.*

- ♦ Reconciliation can also be described as “peace with God,” 20; see *Romans 5:1*.
- ♦ The beginning of the process of sanctification, that is, being made more and more holy, with the assurance that one day we will be fully blameless before God, 22, 28; see *Ephesians 1:4; 5:27*.
- ♦ Hope, sure and certain, of a future with God in a glorified state, 23, 27; see *Colossians 1:5; Romans 5:1–5; 8:18–30; and John 17:22*.

- ♦ The indwelling of Christ in each believer and in all believers together, 27–28; *see Romans 8:10–11; John 15:1–8; 17: and John 17:21–23.*

#### Its source

- ♦ Salvation comes from God through Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, 20–21.
- ♦ Salvation includes reconciliation, which is effected by the atoning, substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross for our benefit, 20, 22, 24.
- ♦ Salvation comes to us through the proclamation of the gospel, 23, 25, 28.

## The Church

#### Its identity

- ♦ The church is the people who have received salvation from God through trust in Christ, 23.
- ♦ The church is marked by constant adherence to, and trust in, the message of the gospel, including the hope of eternal glory with Christ, 23. *See Colossians 2:6.*
- ♦ The church is the spiritual body of Christ, 24. *See Colossians 1:18.*
- ♦ The church is composed of “saints,” that is, all who have trusted in Christ and have been set apart for God’s ownership and use by the Holy Spirit, 26. *See Colossians 1:2, 4, 12.*

*Note: All true believers in Christ are saints, not just some especially Christlike people whom leaders of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox communions designate as “saints.”*

- ♦ The church is founded upon the teaching and ministry of the apostles, including Paul, 24–25, 28–20. *See Ephesians 2:20.*
- ♦ The church includes people of all nations and backgrounds, 27.

## The Last Things

Christ’s return: When Christ returns, he will receive a church for himself which is completely holy and without blame, 22, 28. *See Ephesians 5:25–27.*



# Life

---

## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Believe in Jesus as the incarnation of the Son of God, in whom all the fullness of deity dwells bodily, 19.
- ♦ Thank God for saving us from our bondage to comprehensive sin and wickedness, 21. *See Romans 1:18–32; and Ephesians 2:1–3; 4:17–19.*
- ♦ Nourish our faith and our hope in the gospel, in order that we may be sure of our salvation, 23.
- ♦ Honor the apostles and their teaching, including Paul, 25, 27–29.
- ♦ Be zealous in sharing the gospel to all people, both through our own witness and through prayers and financial support of ministers of the gospel, 28–29.
- ♦ Be willing to suffer anything in order to fulfill the word of God by showing through our actions and our words that we trust in Christ, 24.
- ♦ Be alert to, and rejoice in, the presence of the risen Christ in us individually and as a body through his Spirit, 27.
- ♦ Ask God to use his truth to transform us into holy and blameless people, 28.
- ♦ Ask God to give us and our ministers power to proclaim his truth, 29.

# Colossians 2:1–10

## Truth

---

### Revelation

Its source: Biblical revelation comes from Jesus Christ, through his chosen messengers, including Paul, 1, 3.

#### Its content and nature

- ♦ The content of biblical revelation is the mystery of God, 2, 6, 8.
- ♦ Biblical revelation, even the “mystery” about Christ’s saving work for all peoples, can be fully and surely understood and known, 2.

*Note: The Majority Text of the Greek New Testament reads, “the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,” in which case the mystery concerns the Father’s work in and through Christ to bring Gentiles into the people of God.*

- ♦ This revelation consists of “wisdom and knowledge” of spiritual truths, 3.
- ♦ This revelation is also called “the faith,” referring to a distinct body of teaching, of objective truths, which are to be received by faith; this is not some ineffable, amorphous sense of the divine or of God’s love, but the intelligible teaching in words and meaningful sentences that must be believed, 7.
- ♦ This revelation can be taught to others in meaningful, intelligible words and sentences, 7.

#### Its illumination

- ♦ Full assurance of understanding comes only after we as a group of Christians are knit together in love for each other; that is, we can’t really understand the fullness of the mystery of Christ’s dwelling in all sorts of people without being in a loving fellowship of believers, 2.

*Note: This does not deny the perspicuity (clarity) of Scripture to the ordinary Christian reader, but it does assert that our understanding of the mystery of Christ will not be complete until we search for the truth together with other believers.*

## Its rivals

- ♦ Biblical revelation has always had its rivals. In Colossae, this seems to have been a body of teaching that consisted of ideas (“philosophy”) and Jewish traditions tied to basic principles of this world rather than Christ, 8.

*Note: Scholars differ about the meaning of “philosophy” here; most now believe that it refers not to Hellenistic philosophy, but to a Jewish-Christian heresy that focused on the Mosaic Law and its rules about eating, ritual cleanliness, and special days in the religious year. See Colossians 2:16, 21–23.*

## God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: father (usually called “God” in the New Testament), Son (called “Lord,” “Christ,” “Lord Jesus Christ,” etc., in the New Testament); and Holy Spirit, 2 (if the Majority Text is to be accepted), 9.

His greatness: He is infinitely wise and knowledgeable; he is omniscient, 3.

## His goodness

- ♦ He makes himself known to his people as Father (if the Majority text is correct), 2.
- ♦ He deigns to reveal to us the treasures of his wisdom and knowledge, 2, 8.
- ♦ He is “full” of all that is good and divine, not lacking in anything, infinite in all his attributes, 9.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the divine-human Messiah sent to save us from our sins, 2, 5–6, 8.
- ♦ He is the eternal Son of the Father, 2.
- ♦ He is the personal repository and expression of all God’s fullness of wisdom and knowledge, 3.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 6.
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 6.

*Note: "LORD", Kurios in Greek, was the way the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), rendered the personal divine name Yahweh; its application to Jesus shows that the New Testament writers considered Jesus to be fully divine, to be Yahweh in human flesh.*

- ♦ He is the spiritual "environment" or domain in whom we now live, 6–7.
- ♦ He is the soil of our spiritual life, the foundation of our spiritual building, 7.
- ♦ He is the divine–human embodiment of all the fullness of deity, 9.
- ♦ He is the head – ruler – of all rule and authority in the universe, including all angels, demons, and men, 10.

His work: He has brought his people into such an intimate spiritual union with himself that they are considered to be "in" him, 6–7, 10.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Speaking untruth persuasively in order to deceive, 4, 8
- ♦ Mixing "philosophy" and human tradition, based on certain principles of the universe, with the biblical message of salvation by faith in Christ, 8

*Note: "Philosophy" here probably refers to a Jewish–Hellenistic religious system, but the principle applies to all systems of thought that are not based upon, and in strict conformity to, God's Word as revealed in Scripture and centered upon the saving work of Jesus Christ.*

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who ongoingly trust in Christ, and Christ alone, for salvation, 5, 7

### Its benefits

- ♦ Membership in the loving company of those who trust and follow Christ, 1–2
- ♦ Knowledge of God's previously unrevealed plan to include people of all nations in the benefits of the saving work of Christ, 2
- ♦ Access to the riches of God's wisdom, revealed to us in Christ, 3

*Note: "Philosophy" originally meant, in Greek, "love of wisdom"; Paul here says that believers in Christ have what the philosophers had previously sought in vain, that is, true wisdom.*

- ♦ Stability of mind, purpose, and community with believers, 5, 7
- ♦ New life, a new way of "walking," that is, conducting ourselves, in the life, power, wisdom, love, and presence of the Risen Christ, 6
- ♦ A solid foundation and soil for our lives, especially our thoughts, 7
- ♦ Union with the fullness of God in Christ, 9
- ♦ "Completion," that is, full acceptance with God based on Christ's complete satisfaction of God's law on our behalf, without regard to our ethical conduct or our adherence to Old Testament ceremonial laws, 10; *see Colossians 2:16-23; Romans 3:21-26; 8:1-2; and Galatians 2:19.*
- ♦ Union with Christ in his complete lordship over all worldly authorities of any kind – political, religious, spiritual, 10; *see Ephesians 1:22-23.*

## The Church

### Its identity

- ♦ The church is a community of love among believers in Christ, 2.
- ♦ The church consists of those who continue to believe in Christ, 5.
- ♦ The church acknowledges Jesus Christ, and him alone, as Lord, 6.

*Note: There can be no other "head" of the church than Christ; no political ruler or entity can usurp this role.*

- ♦ The church continues to hold the tradition – the "faith" – as taught by the apostles, 7.
- ♦ The church will always be tempted and threatened by those who want to mix human knowledge and "philosophy" with the gospel of Christ, 8.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Pray for believers in other places, 1-2. *See Ephesians 6:18.*
- ♦ Combine an emphasis on truth with an equal emphasis on love in our teaching and community life, 2.

- ♦ Beware of those who emphasize anything other than the saving work of God in Christ, 4, 8. *See Colossians 1:19-22.*
- ♦ Encourage each other to remain united in our common faith and to persevere under trial, 5.
- ♦ Root and live our life in a conscious trust in Christ and framing all our thoughts around him and his saving work as revealed in Scripture, 6-7.
- ♦ See, and hold on to the truth, that we are religiously “complete” through our union with Christ; we do not need our good works or our religious rituals to come before God with boldness and assurance of access to him, 9-10.

# Colossians 2:11–23

## Truth

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### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: Father (usually called God in the New Testament), 12, 19; Son (called Lord, and Jesus and/or Christ in the New Testament), 11, 17, 20; and Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a functional (not ontological or essential) order and subordination, whereby the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead, 12.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipotent, demonstrating his power by raising Jesus from the dead, 12. *See Ephesians 1:19–22.*
- ♦ He is transcendent, ruling over all spiritual rulers and authorities, 15.
- ♦ He is omnipresent and living, the source of all spiritual power and life, causing the church to grow, 19.

#### His goodness

- ♦ Having completed the atoning work of saving us through the death of Jesus, he raised Jesus up to complete our salvation, 12.
- ♦ He gives new spiritual life to his people, those who are united with Christ by faith, 13.
- ♦ He removed all the accusations of the moral law against us, 14.
- ♦ He works constantly in believers to cause them to grow up individually and corporately as the body of Christ, 19.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is the crucified and then risen Savior of the church, 12.
- ♦ He is the Christ, the anointed Savior sent by God, 11, 17, 20.
- ♦ He is the substance, the true meaning and embodiment, of the righteous typified by the religious regulations of the Mosaic Law, 17.

- ♦ He is the head of his body, the church, 19.
- ♦ He is the “substance,” or real “body” of the realities that were foreshadowed by the festivals in the Old Testament, 17.

### His work

- ♦ He died on the cross for our sins, was buried, then rose again, 11–12, 14.
- ♦ He now rules and nourishes his body, the church, that is, all true believers in him, 12, 19.
- ♦ He wiped out the “handwriting of requirements against us [certificates of debt with us] by fulfilling the law in his person and paying for our failure to fulfill the law by dying in our place on the cross, 14.
- ♦ He disarmed all evil spiritual powers through the work of Jesus on the cross and at the resurrection, 15.

## Spiritual Beings

### Evil and good spiritual beings

- ♦ There are evil spiritual beings whom Paul calls principalities and powers [rulers and authorities], 15. *See Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 6:11–12; and 1 Peter 3:22.*  
  
*Note: Sometimes principalities and powers can be interpreted as good; interpreters differ on these passages; see Ephesians 1:21.*
- ♦ There are also good spiritual beings, called angels, who constantly worship God, 18. *See Revelation 4:4, 8; 5:11–12.*

## Mankind

### Our fallen state: In our current fallen state, we are

- Entangled and trapped in a body that expresses our sinful nature, 11
- Dead in trespasses and sins; that is, alienated from the life of God and unable to change ourselves or give new moral vitality to ourselves; we are also destined for eternal death, 13; *See Colossians 1:21; and Ephesians 2:1–3.*
- Condemned as sinners and thus worthy of punishment by the moral law of God, 14.
- Subject to religious rules and regulations of all sorts, 14, 16.
- Subject to evil spiritual powers working through false religion, 15–21.



- Incapable of overcoming the lusts of the flesh (including the desires of body and mind), 23; *see Ephesians 2:1–3.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Making moral judgments of others on the basis of humanly devised rites, regulations, and rules, 16
- ♦ Falsely claiming to have had religious experiences, like observing, even participating in, the worship that the angels offer to God, 18
- ♦ Not holding onto Jesus Christ as our personal and corporate Head, 19
- ♦ Allowing ourselves to be made subject to extra-biblical religious rules, 20–23

*Note: Even those regulations required of Old Testament believers are no longer binding upon those who follow Christ, as this passage and the others cited above demonstrate.*

## Salvation

Its recipients: Those who believe in Jesus Christ as risen Savior, 12; *see 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; and 1 Peter 1:21.*

### Its benefits

- ♦ “Circumcision,” that is, the complete fulfillment of God’s law by Christ on our behalf, thus making us accounted as members of the people of God, as circumcision did for the Jews of old, 1
- Note: Baptism corresponds to circumcision, that is, a sign of membership in the people of God, only for those who have “faith in the working of God” in raising Jesus from the dead, 11–12; see 1 Peter 1:21; infant baptism, therefore, does not correspond to this circumcision, as Presbyterian and many Reformed theologians teach.*
- ♦ Somehow delivering us from the “body of sins” through the work of Christ; that is, freeing us from bondage to the sinful nature that is connected to our current bodily state (though not implying that the body itself is evil), 11; *see Romans 6:5–6, 11–14.*
  - ♦ Causing us to be buried spiritually with Christ through baptism, 12; *see Romans 6:4, 6.*
  - ♦ Being raised up again spiritually in Christ into the presence of God, 12; *see Romans 6:11; and Ephesians 2:5–6.*

- ♦ New spiritual life in Christ, 13; *see Romans 6:11; and Ephesians 2:5.*
- ♦ Forgiveness of all our trespasses, 13; *see Colossians 1:14; and Ephesians 1:7; 5:32.*
- ♦ Removal of all the charges of the moral law against us, 14
- ♦ Freedom from all Old Testament regulations about ritual purity and observance of special days, 16, 20–23
- ♦ The reward of eternal life through faith in Christ, 18
- ♦ Death to the power of the elemental principles of the universe, 20

## The Church

### Its identity

- ♦ The church – that is, the company of those who trust and follow Jesus Christ – is the body of Christ, of which he is the unique head, 19.
- ♦ This living spiritual body grows numerically and spiritually through the working of God among those who hold fast to Jesus Christ as head, 19. *See Ephesians 4:11–16.*
- ♦ For the proper growth of the church, each member, that is, each believer, must be holding fast to Christ and making its own unique contribution, 19. *See Romans 12:3–18; 1 Corinthians 12:4–31; Ephesians 4:11–16; and 1 Peter 4:10–11.*

### Its ordinances (sacraments)

- ♦ Baptism is one of two ordinances, sometimes called sacraments, instituted by Christ for perpetual observance in the church, 11–12. *See Matthew 28:18–20; and Acts 2:35.*
- ♦ As noted above, baptism is for those who have shown repentance and faith, 12. *See Mark 16:16–17; Acts 2:37–41; 16:14–15, 30–33; 10:44–48; and 1 Peter 3:21.*

*Note: So-called “household baptisms” recorded in Acts were always of those who had believed, as the contexts show; infants are not mentioned or implied in these passages. Even Acts 2:39, referring to “your children,” is set within 2:38 and 41, which explicitly mention repentance and faith. Households normally included adult children and servants or slaves, as well as little children. The contexts show that the adults are the ones who were baptized.*

- ♦ Other religious rites, ceremonies, and regulations, such as observing special days other than the Lord's Day, are clearly declared to be not only unnecessary but actually contrary to the gospel by Paul, 16–23. *See Galatians 4:10.*

*Note: The panoply of extra-biblical rites, ceremonies, and regulations required by the Roman Catholics are, therefore, not only not necessary aspects of the life of the church but distracting and potentially harmful.*

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will bring to us the new moral life and the relationship with God to which the Old Testament ordinances pointed, 17.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for making us “complete,” that is, fully justified and considered righteous in the sight of God, through the saving work of Christ on the cross and at the resurrection, 11–14. *See Colossians 1:10; Romans 3:21–16; Hebrews 10:13.*
- ♦ Thank God for giving us new spiritual life in Christ, 12–13.
- ♦ Thank God for the forgiveness of our sins, 13.
- ♦ Thank God for saving us from the multitude of religious regulations of the Old Testament law and of ceremonial religion (such as the many regulations of Roman Catholicism), 16–18.
- ♦ Beware of those who claim special religious revelations and special holiness, but who do not preach or practice a faith this is centered on Christ, 18–23.
- ♦ Hold fast to Jesus Christ as our Savior and life, 19. *See Colossians 3:4.*
- ♦ Thank God for placing us into the living mystical body of Christ, the church, 19.

# Colossians 3:1–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its literary structure: Like several of Paul's letters, Colossians is divided into what might be called a "doctrinal" section and an "ethical," or paraenetic, section. The transition is usually marked by a word such as "then," or "therefore," or "since," 1. The ethical teaching builds upon the theological truths enunciated by the apostle, because our conduct as Christians can only be motivated by, and patterned after, the actions and attitudes of God and Christ toward us.

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: Father (usually called God in the New Testament), 1, 3, 6; Son (called Lord, Christ, Jesus Christ, etc.), 1, 3; and Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a functional (not essential or ontological) subordination, whereby the Father sits on his throne as King over all, and the Son sits at his right hand, 1. *See Ephesians 1:20; and Revelation 22:1.*

*Note: The Son and the Father sit on the same throne, Revelation 22:1, indicating their equality of deity.*

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is transcendent, dwelling in heaven, far above us, not in space, but in a spiritual state, 1, 2,
- ♦ He is omnipotent, as seen in his raising Jesus from the dead, 1.
- ♦ God rules as sovereign king over all the universe, seated on his heavenly throne, 1. *See Revelation 4:2–6.*
- ♦ He is the center and source of all life, 3.
- ♦ He, Christ, and our spiritual life are "hidden" from our perception now; that is, they are beyond our understanding and experience as earthly beings, 3.
- ♦ He is glorious, that is, inconceivably beautiful, resplendent, majestic, 4. *See Revelation 4:3, 6.*

### His goodness

- ♦ In keeping with his prophecies and promises, he raised Jesus from the dead, 1.
- ♦ He has caused believers in Christ to be spiritually resurrected to new life, 1, 3–4.
- ♦ He is holy and hates sin, promising to punish unrepentant sinners with his wrath, 5–6. *See Romans 2:5–6, 8–9; 5:9; and Ephesians 5:3–6.*
- ♦ He created mankind, 10.

*Note: This verse may also refer to Christ.*

- ♦ He has called people of all races, tongues, nations, cultures, to become his people through faith in Christ, 11. *See Genesis 12:3.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is now the risen Christ, 1.
- ♦ He is the co-ruler of all with God the Father, 1.
- ♦ He is the source and center of all life, 3. *See John 1:4; 11:25.*
- ♦ He is omnipresent, dwelling in all his saints, 11.

### His work

- ♦ After dying for our sins, he rose for our justification and new life, 1.
- ♦ He now is our life – the spiritual environment in whom we live, move, and have our being; our spiritual food and drink, energy, strength, and wisdom; he joins us to the Father, the source of all life, the essence of which is light and love; he is our sure and certain hope of eternal life with God in the new earth, 4.
- ♦ He now serves as our King and High Priest in heaven, 1.
- ♦ He has become life to his people, 4.
- ♦ He is our “all” – that is, all our life, present and future, 11.
- ♦ He dwells within his people, 11.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Fornication, that is, any sexual activity outside of the marriage of one man and one woman for life, 5
- ♦ Uncleaness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness; that is, all thoughts and desires for sexual intimacy or emotional intimacy with someone who is not our spouse, 5

*Note: Many interpreters believe that “covetousness” refers to covetousness of all sorts, that is, wanting what we don’t have or being discontent with what we do have; other interpreters believe that it refers especially to sexual passion, including sexual addiction.*

- ♦ Idolatry, that is, making anything or anyone more important to us than God; seeking “life” in all its forms from this thing or person; focusing our attention on it inordinately, enjoying it inordinately, being unduly sad when it is not ours, 5; *see Ephesians 5:1–5; Romans 1:18–27; and 1 John 2:15–17; 5:21.*
- ♦ Disobedience to God’s known will as revealed in Scripture, 6; *see 1 John 3:4.*
- ♦ Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, 8; in contrast to verse 5, this list of sins moves from the inward attitude to the outward expression. Anger towards another will engender an increasingly evil and harmful response in us. See Ephesians 4:26, 29–31, where, aside from the verse about stealing, Paul follows the same progression from the inward attitude to the outward manifestation.
- ♦ Lying, 9; *see Ephesians 4:25.*

#### Its penalty

- ♦ Alienation from God; that is, being called “sons [children] of disobedience rather than children of God, 6; *see Ephesians 5:1; and 1 John 3:1.*
- ♦ The wrath of God, experienced even now in various ways but ultimately as endless separation from God and suffering in hell, 6; *see Romans 1:18–32; and 2 Thessalonians 1:6–8.*

## Salvation

#### Its benefits

- ♦ Being raised spiritually with Christ, 1
- ♦ Dying to the sins that formerly held us in bondage, 3, 7; *see Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3–11; and Galatians 2:19–20.*

- ♦ Having new life, a life that is hidden – that is, kept and preserved for us – in Christ in heaven, 3–4
- ♦ Freedom from the wrath of God, 6
- ♦ Deliverance from the “old man” of sin and its deeds, 9
- ♦ Being given a “new man,” who is being renewed unto the knowledge of Christ, 10
- ♦ Knowing Christ, 10
- ♦ Membership in the corporate “new man,” that is, the Body of Christ, the company of all who trust in Christ, 11

## The Church

### Its identity

- ♦ The church consists of all those who, by faith, have put on the “new man” individually and have been joined to the “new man” corporately, 10.
- ♦ The church is the corporate body of believers from all races, tongues, nations, 11.

## The Last Things

### The present age: We live in the “already” and the “not yet”:

- ♦ Even now, God’s wrath is coming in a preliminary way upon “sons of disobedience,” that is, people who refuse to repent, trust in Christ, and follow him, 6.
- ♦ We have already put off the old man and have put on the new man, but we are daily being renewed unto a greater knowledge of God in Christ and being remade into the moral likeness of Christ, 10. *See 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Ephesians 4:17–24.*

Christ’s return: When Christ returns, he will complete the moral renovation he has begun, bring us to a full knowledge of, and conformity to, himself, and punish those who are destined to suffer God’s wrath, 6, 10. *See Ephesians 4:12–16; and 1 John 3:2–3.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Seek, pursue, and contemplate heavenly realities at all times, 1–2.

*Note: The things that are “above” include: God, his Son, and the Spirit as the bond of love between them; divine love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness; justice, holiness, purity, righteousness; wisdom (centered in and expressed by Christ); beauty, majesty, glory; incorruption, life; the souls of departed saints; Christ as our High Priest, interceding for us; rewards that are promised to those who faithfully follow Christ, even unto death; our own coming praise, glory, honor, and vindication from God; myriads of angels praising God; and much more!*

- ♦ Recognize, and live out our lives on the basis of, our new status and moral constitution as those who have put on the “new man,” 5, 8–9.
- ♦ Eagerly await the return of Christ and our transformation into glorious renovation, 4. *See Romans 8:18–25, 30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–43, 52–54; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; and 1 Peter 1:7.*
- ♦ Daily put to death the sins that marked our old manner of life, 5, 8–9.
- ♦ Seriously warn professing Christians to live according to their profession of faith, 5–10.



# Colossians 3:12–4:1

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its nature and means

- ♦ Biblical revelation is “the word of Christ,” that is, it is the gospel about Jesus Christ, communicated to us by Christ through the Old Testament Scriptures and the New Testament apostles and prophets, including Paul, in words that we can understand and share, 16.
- ♦ Biblical revelation includes the Psalms of the Old Testament, 16.
- ♦ The word of Christ can come to us through singing songs that convey biblical truth, 16.
- ♦ That is, believers can communicate the word of Christ to each other; this privilege is not restricted to ordained ministers of the gospel, 16. *See Ephesians 5:19–20.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation was meant to be read aloud in gatherings of Christians, 16. *See 1 Timothy 4:13; and Revelation 22:18.*
- ♦ Biblical revelation applies to all Christians everywhere, except when the message is clearly limited to a particular occasion or persons, 16–17.

### God

#### His Triune nature

- ♦ God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (often called God in the New Testament), 12, 15, 17, 22; Son (called Lord, Christ, Jesus Christ in the New Testament), 13, 16–18, 20, 23–24; and Holy Spirit. *See Colossians 1:8; and 2 Corinthians 13:14.*
- ♦ Within this Trinity of equals, there is a kind of functional (not ontological or essential) subordination, implied by the relational terms “Father” and Son, 17. *See Colossians 1:12–13.*

#### His greatness

- ♦ He possesses all sovereignty over the destiny of all people, including the right to choose some for eternal salvation, 12.

- ♦ He is far above us, holy and just, and thus deserving of our reverence and awe, even godly (not craven) fear, 22.
- ♦ He is far above us, dwelling in heaven, 4:1.

### His goodness

- ♦ He has chosen us to be his beloved children forever, 12. *See Ephesians 1:4; 5:1.*
- ♦ He is holy, and has called us to become holy like himself, 12. *See Colossians 1:22; and 1 Peter 1:15.*
- ♦ He is loving, 12.
- ♦ He gives peace to his people, both peace with himself and peace with other believers, 15. *See Colossians 1:19–20; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14–22; and Philippians 4:6–7.*
- ♦ He has effectually called those whom he has chosen for salvation, 15. *See Romans 8:20.*
- ♦ He has graciously revealed his word, the gospel of Christ, to us, 16.
- ♦ He deigns to be called Father by his children in Christ, 17. *See Romans 8:14–17; Ephesians 5:1; and 1 John 3:1–2.*
- ♦ He has promised the reward of an eternal inheritance to his people, 24. *See Romans 8:16–17; and Ephesians 6:9.*
- ♦ He is just, and will repay each person according to his conduct, 25. *See Ephesians 6:19; and Romans 2:5–10.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Christ, the Spirit–Anointed, divine–human Savior sent to deliver us from our sins, 12, 16, 24, 4:1. *See Matthew 3:16–17.*
- ♦ He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, fully divine, 17, 20, 23–24.
- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 17.
- ♦ He is our Master in heaven, 4:1.

### His work

- ♦ He forgave our sins, both in his ministry on earth (see Matthew 9:2) and provided the way for our sins to be forgiven by dying for us on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice, 13. *See Colossians 1:21–22; 2:14; and 1 John 2:1–2.*
- ♦ He embodied, proclaimed, and committed to his chosen messengers the “word of Christ,” the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ, 16.
- ♦ He accepts our worship now, 16.
- ♦ He is the one through whom, by faith in his name (that is, his person and saving work), we are now able to approach God the Father, 17. *See Hebrews 4:14–16; 10:21–22.*
- ♦ He accepts our works of obedience and service to others, 20, 23–24.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Failure to obey the divinely authorized instructions of the apostle, as contained in this passage. Specifically, not:
  - Acting with tender compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness [meekness], and patience [longsuffering]
  - Bearing with others’ faults and failings, and not forgiving those who hurt or offend us
  - Being loving, especially
  - Allowing the peace of God rule in our hearts
  - Being thankful and grateful to God
  - Filling our conversation with the word of Christ and not singing to him often
  - Submitting to husbands
  - Loving wives but being harsh toward them
  - Obeying our parents when we are young
  - Treating our children with kindness, patience, gentleness, and understanding, or spending enough time with them
  - Serving our “masters” (teachers, bosses, elders, etc.) well
  - Treating our subordinates fairly and kindly

Its consequences: Just recompense from Christ when he returns, 25

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Election unto all the benefits of Christ's saving work, including transformation into the moral likeness of Christ, 12; *see Ephesians 1:4; Romans 11:5; and 1 Peter 1:2.*
- ♦ Being considered holy – saints – even now by God, that is, set apart by the Holy Spirit for God's ownership and use, 12; *see Ephesians 5:25–26; and 1 Peter 1:2.*
- ♦ Being dearly loved by God, 12; *see Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4, 3:19; 5:2, 25; and 1 John 3:1.*
- ♦ Forgiveness of sins, 13; *see Ephesians 1:7; 4:32.*
- ♦ Having peace with God, 15; *see Colossians 1:20–21; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14–18; and thus, the capacity to have peace within ourselves, see John 14:27; and peace with each other; see Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:3.*
- ♦ Membership in the universal body of Christ, 15; *see Colossians 1:18; 2:19; and Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:4, 12–16.*
- ♦ The gift of the word of Christ known by us individually and shared with other believers corporately, 16
- ♦ Access to God the Father through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, 17
- ♦ The promise of a reward for all our good deeds done by faith in Christ, namely, the inheritance of God's kingdom, 24; *see Ephesians 1:11, 14 (even 1:11 is interpreted as the inheritance promised to us by God); Romans 8:17; and 1 Peter 1:3–4.*

## The Church

Its identity: The church is composed of people of both sexes, all ages, all classes of people.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will

- ♦ Grant an inheritance of the new earth to all his faithful followers, 24; *see Ephesians 6:8.*
- ♦ Punish those who have done wrong on earth, 25

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Reflect often on God's fatherly love toward us, 12, and reflect that love to others, 14.
- ◆ Think often about the forgiveness given to us in and through Jesus Christ, 13.
- ◆ Read and reflect often on this passage and similar ones, asking God to give us the grace to obey these commands by the power of the Spirit.
- ◆ Remember God's many benefits to us, and be thankful, 15, 17. *See Colossians 4:2.*
- ◆ Read, memorize, and meditate upon the Word of God in Scripture, 16.
- ◆ Put God at the center of our life; do all in the "name" of Jesus, that is, according to his example and teaching, and through the privilege we have of access to God through him, as well as to his greater glory, 17.
- ◆ Pattern our family and relations at work on the instructions of the apostle, 3:1–4:1.
- ◆ Think often on God's holiness, justice, and coming judgment, and conduct ourselves with awe and reverence, even godly fear, towards him, 22. *See 1 Peter 1:17.*
- ◆ See Jesus as our true Master in heaven and fulfill our responsibilities to others as if we are serving Christ, 23; 4:1.
- ◆ Think often on the coming rewards of eternal life, 24.

# Colossians 4:2–18

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation comes to us from God through his chosen messengers, including Paul and others who preach the gospel, 2.
- ♦ Biblical revelation is called “the word,” meaning that it is a message from God communicated in words chosen by God; it is primarily verbal, not visual or intuitive, though much of it consists of narratives of events and persons that could be seen, and some of it is beyond our full understanding, 3. *See Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:2; and Romans 10:8, 17.*
- ♦ The content of Paul’s message included the “mystery” – that is, the previously not fully-revealed truth that God would include Gentiles among his people through faith in the saving work of Christ, 3. *See Colossians 1:25–27; and Ephesians 3:2–12.*
- ♦ This revelation can be communicated clearly, so that hearers and readers can understand it; it is not some hidden, esoteric message only for the spiritual elite, 4.

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of equals: Father (usually called God in the New Testament), 3, 11–12; Son (called Lord, Christ, Lord Jesus Christ), 3, 7, 12, 17; and Holy Spirit. *See Colossians 1:8.*

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, hearing the prayers of his people everywhere, 2.
- ♦ He is sovereign over events and people, opening doors for the communication of his word through his messengers, 3.
- ♦ He rules as sovereign King over all the universe; in a narrower sense, he is saving King of those who trust and serve him, 11.

- ♦ He has a moral will for his people, which he has revealed to us in Scripture, as he illumines our hearts to understand them and their application to our life, 12. *See Colossians 1:9; Ephesians 5:17; and 1 Thessalonians 5:18.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He invites our prayers, hears them, and answers them, 2–3. *See Ephesians 6:18–20; and Philippians 4:6–7.*
- ♦ He has given us his word of salvation in Christ, 3.
- ♦ He has graciously chosen to include believing Gentiles in his saving plan, 3.
- ♦ He raised up chosen messengers, including Paul, to communicate his gospel message to his people, 3–4, 7, 11.

*Note: Mark was also used by God to write the Gospel bearing his name, and Luke to write Luke and Acts, 10, 14.*

- ♦ He opens “doors” for the preaching of the gospel, that is, he softens hearts to receive the message, and he gives opportunities for proclaiming Christ, 3. *See 1 Corinthians 16:9.*
- ♦ He rules graciously over his spiritual kingdom and calls his people into it by faith and regeneration, 11. *See Colossians 1:13, 16; Ephesians 5:5; Acts 28:31; and John 3:3, 5.*
- ♦ He kindly reveals to us his will for us, 12.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah, sent to save us from our sins, 3, 12.
- ♦ He is the Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, fully God, 17. *See Colossians 1:19; 2:9.*

His work: He supplies people to serve his church, the Body of Christ, 7–12, 14, 17. *See Ephesians 4:11–12.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Constant access to God the Father through prayer, 2–3; *see Ephesians 6:17; Romans 12:12; and Hebrews 4:16; 10:21–22.*

- ♦ The knowledge that we can give thanks to God for all things, because he is governing all things for our good and his glory, 2; *see Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; and Romans 8:28.*
- ♦ Knowledge of the “mystery of Christ,” that he has incorporated us into his universal Body, 3
- ♦ Wisdom from God, 5; *see Colossians 1:9; 2:3.*
- ♦ Being on the “inside,” that is, among those who are “in Christ,” 5; *see Colossians 1:2–4; 2:6, 11–13; 3:3, 18.*
- ♦ Incorporation into the Body of Christ, which is a fellowship and family of love, 7, 9, 14
- ♦ A “second chance” to serve God after we have failed, as happened with Mark, 10; *see Acts 13:13; 15:36–41; and 2 Timothy 4:11.*
- ♦ The privilege of working with other believers to advance the kingdom of God, 11
- ♦ God’s constant and unfailing grace towards us in Christ, 18; *see Colossians 1:2.*

## The Church

### Its identity

- ♦ The church is composed of people of all sorts, from all sorts of backgrounds, 7, 9, 10–15, 17.
- ♦ The church is a family of brothers and sisters in Christ, 7, 9, 15.
- ♦ The church is served by several sorts of “ministers,” 7, 11–12, 17. *See Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:5; and 1 Peter 4:10.*
- ♦ The church should meet in homes, 15–16. *See Romans 16:5, 23; and Acts 20:20; [A Theology for House Church | Wright Doyle – Academia.edu](#).*
- ♦ The church should expect persecution, 3, 10. *See Ephesians 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:12; and 1 Peter 4:12–13.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Pray constantly, 2–3.
- ♦ Give thanks often, 2.
- ♦ Pray for preachers and missionaries, 3.
- ♦ Ask for wisdom in our dealings with non-Christians, 5.
- ♦ Ask for God to use our speech to convey truth effectively, 6.



- ♦ Read prayer letters by missionaries to learn how to pray for them, 7–9.
- ♦ See prayer as “work” and labor in it to bring blessing to others, 12.
- ♦ Maintain contact with believers in other places, 14–15.
- ♦ Read Paul’s letters often in our meetings to learn how to live in these evil days, 16.
- ♦ Ask God for the grace to understand and “fulfill” the particular ministry God has given to us, 17.
- ♦ Remember to pray for Christians who are suffering for their faith, 18.

# 1 THESSALONIANS

# 1 Thessalonians 1

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through messengers chosen by God, including the Apostle Paul, 1.

*Note: It is not clear what roles Silas and Timothy played in the composition of this letter, but the primary authority of Paul is clear.*

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 1, 3, 6, 9–10.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omniscient and omnipresent, 3.
- ♦ He is the only true God, as distinct from idols, who are falsely worshiped as “gods,” 9.
- ♦ He is eternally living and the source of all life, 9.
- ♦ He is omnipotent, as his raising Jesus from the dead demonstrates, 10.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He called some people to belong to his church, 1.
- ♦ He gives grace and peace to his people, 1.
- ♦ He is our loving Father, 1, 3.
- ♦ He chose some to be saved through faith in Christ, 4.
- ♦ He is true, authentic, really God, 9.
- ♦ He calls people into his liberating service, from their bondage to idols, 9.
- ♦ He will, in his holiness, inflict wrath on all unrepentant sinners, 10. *See 1 Thessalonians 2:16.*

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, that is, the Old Testament Yahweh in the flesh, fully God, 1.
- ♦ He is equal with the Father, and with the Father is the source of all grace and peace, that is, salvation, 1.

- ♦ He is Jesus, the man, 1, 2.
- ♦ He is Christ, the divine-human anointed Messiah who saves us, 1, 3, 10.
- ♦ He is God's eternal Son, who became man for us, 10.

### His work

- ♦ He died for our sins, 10.
- ♦ He is now in heaven at God's right hand, 10.
- ♦ He will come again in glory to judge all people, 10.
- ♦ He delivers us from God's coming wrath, by his atoning death and resurrection life, 10.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is the one by whose indwelling presence we are "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," 1. *See Romans 8:1, 9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; and Ephesians 2:18, 22.*
- ♦ He is the one through whom grace and peace come to us from the Father and the Son, 1.

### His work

- ♦ He is the one who makes the gospel powerful in the lives of the elect, that is, those who believe, 5.
- ♦ He gives joy to those who receive, believe, and obey the gospel, and who suffer for the sake of the gospel, 6.

## Salvation

### Its recipients

- ♦ Have been chosen by God, 4
- ♦ Hear and receive the gospel with faith, 5, 8

### Its benefits

- ♦ Membership in the church of God, 1

- ◆ Being “in,” that is, in the closest possible communion with, God the Father and God the Son
- ◆ Grace (that is, God’s unmerited favor), 1
- ◆ Peace with God and with each other, and therefore in our hearts, 1
- ◆ Infusion of faith, hope, and love in us, 3
- ◆ The transforming power of the Holy Spirit, 5
- ◆ Assurance of salvation, 5
- ◆ Deliverance from service to idols, 9
- ◆ Deliverance from God’s wrath at the time of the Last Judgment, 10

## The People of God

Its identity: The people of God—that is, the church—are those whose lives are marked by

- ◆ Faith that leads to good works, 4
- ◆ Love that produces labor for God and his people, 3
- ◆ Hope that leads to patience under affliction, 3
- ◆ The desire and the ability to follow Jesus and his suffering servants, 6
- ◆ Joy engendered by the indwelling Holy Spirit, 6
- ◆ Sharing the gospel with others, 8
- ◆ Turning from idols to serve the living and true God, 9
- ◆ Waiting eagerly for the return of Christ, 10

## The Last Things

The final judgment

- ◆ Jesus Christ will come from heaven to deliver his people, 10.
- ◆ God will pour out his wrath on all unrepentant and unbelieving sinners, 10.

## Life

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Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for the grace and peace that come to you.
- ◆ Give thanks for the transformed lives of other believers.
- ◆ Pray for other Christians.
- ◆ Expect true faith to lead to good works and to attitudes of love and hope.
- ◆ Follow Jesus Christ, even if it means you must suffer.
- ◆ Share the gospel with everyone you can, near and far.

- ◆ Daily turn from idols to serve God alone.
- ◆ Set your hope and expectation on the return of Jesus.

# 1 Thessalonians 2

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its roots in history: Biblical revelation is set within history. Paul preached the gospel to the people in Thessalonica after he had been badly treated in Philippi, 1–2.

#### Its content

- ♦ The New Testament message is called the “gospel” because it brings the Good News of reconciliation to God through the person and work of his Son Jesus Christ, 2, 4, 8–9.
- ♦ At the same time, biblical revelation includes exhortations, commands, consolation, and warnings, 3, 11.

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation came through chosen messengers of God, including Paul the Apostle, whose preached and written words are not only the words of men but the gospel of God and the very Word of God, 2, 4, 6, 8–9, 13.
- ♦ Old Testament revelation came through the prophets, 15.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, knowing the hearts of all people, 4, 5, 10.
- ♦ He is the universal King, 12.
- ♦ He possesses unique glory (splendor, majesty, beauty, holiness), 12.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He gives boldness to his messengers to keep preaching the gospel even though it entails suffering for them, 2.
- ♦ He confirms the testimony of his faithful people that they acted with good motives, 10.
- ♦ He calls many people to become partakers of his own kingdom and glory, 12.
- ♦ He inflicts his holy wrath upon those who persecute his people, 16.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, that is the Yahweh of the Old Testament, fully God (though Jesus is not the same as God the father, the name “Lord” applied to him in the New Testament points back to Yahweh in the Old Testament, thus confirming that he is fully God), 15.
- ♦ He is Christ, that is, God’s anointed Messiah, the descendant of David who came to save his people from their sins, 14, 19.
- ♦ He is the man Jesus, 14, 19.

## Spiritual Beings

Satan: Though under the sovereign control of God, Satan has some limited power to oppose God’s people and hinder their plans, 18.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Impure motives and conduct, 3
- ♦ Seeking to please men rather than God, 4
- ♦ Flattery, 5
- ♦ Covetousness and greed, 5
- ♦ Seeking glory and honor from men and not God, 6
- ♦ Persecuting the messengers of God, 14
- ♦ Preventing people from sharing the gospel of God, 16

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ It includes deliverance from the wrath of God, 16.
- ♦ It includes being in the presence of Christ when he returns, 19.

Its conveyance: It comes through hearing and believing the gospel of Christ, 16.



## The People of God

### The Church

- ♦ The church is created by the gospel, as it is received with faith by the power of the Holy Spirit, 13–14.
- ♦ The church is built on the foundation of the teachings of the apostles, who possess unique authority from Christ, 6.
- ♦ The church is God’s church, created, nourished, protected, and finally glorified by him, 14.
- ♦ There are “churches” of God in many locations, 14.
- ♦ The church dwells in intimate communion with Christ Jesus, by the work of the Holy Spirit, 14.
- ♦ The church will suffer persecution for its faith in Christ, 14.
- ♦ The church includes believing Jews and Gentiles, 14–15.

## The Last Things

### The end of the age

- ♦ God’s elect will someday enter his eternal kingdom and share his own glory (without becoming God), 12.
- ♦ Jesus Christ will come again for his people, 19.

## Life

---

### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Ministers of the gospel should behave with all humility and gentleness.
- ♦ Ministers of the gospel should behave with all holiness and purity of motive and action.
- ♦ When you share the gospel with others, be willing to share with them your life also.
- ♦ Work hard and earn money so that you won’t be a burden to other Christians.
- ♦ Seek to walk worthily of the Lord, 12. *See Colossians 1:10.*
- ♦ Thank God when you hear that others have received the gospel as the very Word of God.
- ♦ Be prepared to suffer for the gospel.
- ♦ Rejoice when you see the work of God in the lives of other believers.

# 1 Thessalonians 3

## Truth

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### Revelation

Special revelation: New Testament revelation is the “gospel of Christ,” in that it speaks of the saving person and work of Jesus Christ, 2.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 11-13.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is God, 9-10.
- ♦ He is omnipresent and sees our joy, 9.
- ♦ He governs the affairs of all people, 11.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He sends ministers to strengthen and build up his church with the Word of God, 2.
- ♦ He is our loving heavenly Father, 11, 13.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, that is, Yahweh come in the flesh, 11.
- ♦ He is the man Jesus, 11.
- ♦ He is the Christ, God’s anointed Messiah, the divine-human Savior sent to deliver us from our sins and the consequences of them, 11.

His work: He will come again on the last day with all his holy ones (who could either be all Christians who have already died or all angels), 13.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: If he is the “Lord” to whom Paul refers in verse 12–13 (*see 2 Corinthians 3:17*), then

- ♦ He causes Christians to grow in love for each other.
- ♦ He works progressive holiness in God’s people, 13.

## Spiritual Beings

Satan: He tempts people to disbelieve and disobey God’s Word, 5.

## The People of God

### The Church

- ♦ The church is composed of brothers and sisters in Christ, 2.
- ♦ The church is served by ministers (of the Word) of God, 2.
- ♦ Ministers are those who labor in the preaching and teaching of the gospel of Christ, 2.
- ♦ The goal of ministers is to establish and encourage believers in the faith, 2.
- ♦ Christians are appointed for suffering and especially for persecution, 3–4.
- ♦ Christians are marked by faith in God and love for God and for each other, 6.
- ♦ Christians naturally have strong affection for each other, 2, 5, 6–8.
- ♦ Ministers of the gospel naturally care for the spiritual welfare of their people, 1–13.
- ♦ Christians naturally love each other and grow in their love for each other, 12.

## The Last Things

### The end of the age

- ♦ Jesus Christ will return with all his “saints” (see above), 13.
- ♦ At that time, God’s people will have become, or will become, “blameless in holiness” in God’s sight by the internal working of the Spirit, 13.

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for sending ministers of the gospel to us.
- ◆ If you are a minister, ask God to give you sincere and burning love for your people.
- ◆ Communicate often with other believers to see how they are doing, 1–6.
- ◆ Remind other believers that trouble and suffer are normal for us in this life, 4.
- ◆ Pray constantly for those under your spiritual care, 10.
- ◆ Commit your plans to God and pray for him to enable you to help other believers, 11.
- ◆ Pray for yourself and other believers, that all may grow in love and in holiness, and live a life consecrated to God and free from things that could be blamed.
- ◆ Eagerly await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

# 1 Thessalonians 4

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its content

- ♦ Biblical revelation includes exhortations, 1, which amount to commands from Jesus, 2.
- ♦ Biblical revelation also contains solemn warnings, 6.

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation comes through chosen messengers sent by God, including the Apostle Paul, who spoke “through the Lord Jesus,” with words that carry the authority of Christ and of God, 2, 8.
- ♦ Biblical revelation came through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, whom God gave to the apostles, 8 (if this verse refers primarily to Paul and not primarily to all believers).

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of Father (usually called “God”), Son (Jesus Christ, usually called “Lord” in the New Testament), and Holy Spirit, 1–2, 5, 7–9, 14, 16–17.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omniscient and omnipresent and thus knows the thoughts and actions of all individuals, 1.
- ♦ He has the authority to issue commands through his chosen messengers, 2.
- ♦ He has the authority and power to avenge all evil deeds, 6.
- ♦ He has the power to raise Jesus from the dead, and he has the power to bring him and the dead in Christ back to this world at the Second Coming, 14.
- ♦ He dwells in “heaven,” a term referring to his infinite transcendence, 16.
- ♦ He has the power to raise his people from death, 16.
- ♦ He is eternal, 17.

### His goodness

- ♦ He has revealed his will and his ways to us through the writers of Scripture, 1–3.
- ♦ He is holy and demands holiness from his people, 3, 7.
- ♦ He allows his people to know him in a way that transforms their life, 5.
- ♦ He will avenge all who commit sexual sin (or any other sin), 6.
- ♦ He has given his Holy Spirit to his people that they might obey him, 8.
- ♦ He teaches his people inwardly (by the Holy Spirit) how they should love each other, 9.

## Christ

### His work

- ♦ He died and rose again, 14.
- ♦ God will bring him back to his people at the Second Coming, 15.
- ♦ He will descend with visible and audible signs, 16.

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is given by God to all true believers, including the Apostles who revealed God's will in Scripture, 8.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ All sexual immorality, that is, all sexual relations outside the lifelong marriage of one man and one woman, 3
- ♦ Indulging lustful passions, 5
- ♦ Taking advantage of or defrauding another Christian by engaging in sexual immorality, 6
- ♦ All moral uncleanness of thought and action, 7
- ♦ Rejecting God's clear commands as revealed in Scripture, 8

## The Last Things

The final judgment: At the last judgment, God will avenge all evildoers who have not repented, 6.

### Christ's Return

- ◆ When Christ returns, he will bring with him those believers who have already died, 14–15.
- ◆ At that time, believers who are still alive will be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, 17.
- ◆ After that, we shall always be with the Lord Jesus in the new heavens and new earth, 17.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Live entirely to please God, 1.
- ◆ Abstain from all sexual immorality of thought and action, 1–7.
- ◆ Love other believers as Christ has loved us, 1. *See Matthew 22:39; John 13:34–35; and Ephesians 5:1–2.*
- ◆ Lead a quiet life, minding your own business and working for a living, 11.
- ◆ Do not grieve excessively when a fellow believer dies, for we have hope, 13.
- ◆ Comfort those who are grieving with the hope that we have in Christ, 18.

# 1 Thessalonians 5

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative nature: The Bible is a coherent whole, with later passages referring to, and building upon, earlier ones.

- ♦ We don't know the times and seasons of the Lord's return, 1. *See Matthew 24:3; and Acts 1:7.*
- ♦ The Lord will return suddenly and unexpectedly, like a thief, 2–3. *See Matthew 24:42–44; Luke 12:39–40; 21:34; 2 Peter 3:10; and Revelation 3:3; 16:15.*
- ♦ Christians are not of the darkness, but of the light, 4–5. *See Romans 13:12; and Ephesians 5:8–9.*
- ♦ "Let us not sleep," 6. *See Matthew 25:5; and Ephesians 5:14.*
- ♦ "Be sober," that is, clear-headed and alert, 8. *See Titus 2:12; and 1 Peter 5:8.*
- ♦ The breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of the hope of salvation, 8; *see Isaiah 59:17; and Ephesians 6:14, 17.*
- ♦ "God did not appoint us to wrath," 9. *See 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:14; and Romans 9:22.*
- ♦ Living for Christ, who died for us, 10; *see Romans 14:8–9; and 2 Corinthians 5:15.*
- ♦ "Edify" (that is, build up in the faith), each other, 11. *See Ephesians 4:29.*
- ♦ Honor and esteem ministers of the gospel and church leaders, 12–13. *See 1 Corinthians 16:18; and 1 Timothy 5:17.*
- ♦ "Be at peace among yourselves," 13. *See Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:15; and Mark 9:50.*
- ♦ "Warn those who are unruly," or, disorderly, 14. *See 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11, 15.*
- ♦ "Work in quietness, 12. *See Ephesians 4:28.*
- ♦ "Be patient with all," 14. *See Galatians 5:22; and Colossians 3:12–13.*
- ♦ Do not return evil with evil, 15. *See Proverbs 20:22; Matthew 5:43–48; Romans 12:17; and 1 Peter 3:9.*
- ♦ "Rejoice always," 16. *See Philippians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 6:10; and Psalm 33:1.*
- ♦ "Pray without ceasing," 17. *See Ephesians 6:18; and Luke 18:1.*



- ♦ “In everything give thanks,” 18. *See Ephesians 5:20; 34:1.*
- Note: In Ephesians, Paul takes the exhortation further, from “in everything,” to “for everything.”*
- ♦ “The will of God for you,” 18; *see 1 Thessalonians 4:3; and Ephesians 5:15–16.*
  - ♦ “Do not despise prophecies,” 20; *see 1 Corinthians 14:1, 31.*
  - ♦ “Test all things,” 21; *see 1 John 4:1.*
  - ♦ “The God of peace,” 23; *see Romans 15:33; 16:20; 1 Corinthians 14:33; and Philippians 4:9.*
  - ♦ Total sanctification at the final day, 23; *see Ephesians 1:4; 5:26–27; and Hebrews 13:20–21.*
  - ♦ “He who called you is faithful,” 24; *see 1 Corinthians 10:13.*
  - ♦ “Pray for us,” 25; *see 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Ephesians 6:19–20; Colossians 4:3.*
  - ♦ Greet others in the church, 26; *see Romans 16:3–16.*
  - ♦ “A holy kiss,” 26; *see Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; and 2 Corinthians 13:12.*
  - ♦ Command to read this letter to others, 27; *see Colossians 4:16.*

Its limited nature: Not all revelation is contained in the Scriptures; some was communicated orally to people by the prophets and apostles, who refer to it in their writings, 1.

Its intended audience: The Holy Scriptures, especially Paul’s epistles, were mostly directed to God’s people and were meant for “all” of them, not just leaders, 27.

*Note: This conviction fueled the Reformers’ insistence that the Bible be translated into vernacular languages, so that all people could read it, not just the educated priests.*

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of Father (usually called “God”), Son (Jesus Christ, usually called “Lord” in the New Testament), and Holy Spirit, 9, 18–19, 28–29.

His greatness

- ♦ He rules all time and times, even the Last Day of final reckoning, the day of the Lord, 2, 4. *See Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:7; and 2 Peter 3:10, 12.*

*Note: Every day is the “day that the Lord has made,” Psalm 118:24, but especially the final day.*

- ♦ He has the authority and power to predestine some to wrath and some to salvation, 9.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is light; his people, therefore, are “sons of light,” 4. *See 1 Timothy 6:16; and 1 John 1:5.*
- ♦ He appoints his elect people to obtain eternal salvation in Christ, 9. *See 2 Thessalonians 2:13; and Romans 8:29–20.*
- ♦ He wills for his people to become holy and loving and happy in him, 18. *See Ephesians 1:4; 5:8–17.*
- ♦ He creates peace between himself and his people, and among his people with each other, 23. *See 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Romans 5:1; and Ephesians 2:14–18.*
- ♦ He sanctifies his people through the work of the Holy Spirit, 23.

## Christ

### His person

- He is Lord, Yahweh come in the flesh, 2, 9, 23, 28.
- He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, whose name means “Yahweh saves/is salvation,” 9, 23, 28.
- He is the Christ, the divine–human savior who was anointed with the Holy Spirit to bring salvation to his people, 9, 18, 23, 28.

### His work

- He now lives “in” his people, that is, in an intimate spiritual union with their spirits, 5.
- He brings salvation to his people, 9.
- He died for us as a propitiatory sacrifice, 10. *See Romans 5:6, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:5; and Ephesians 5:2, 25.*
- He rose again and conveys this resurrection life with his people, 10. *See Romans 6:4–11; and Ephesians 2:5.*

- He is so close to his people that they live and work “in” him, 12.
- He enjoys an infinitely close relationship to the Father, and identifies himself, and joins himself in an intimate union with his people, so that God’s will is done “in him” and “for” us, 18.
- He embodies, and communicates to his people, the grace of God, 28.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- He is an equal member of the Trinity, with the Father and the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, 14. *See Matthew 28:19.*
- Being God, he is uniquely holy, 14. *See Leviticus 11:44–45; 19:2; and 1 Peter 1:16.*
- Being God, he is a Spirit, indeed, *the Spirit*, the Spirit of God himself, both of the Father and of the Son, 14. *See John 4:14; 20:22.*

### His work

- ♦ He mediates the grace of Christ and the love of the Father to believers, 14.
- ♦ He creates communion between us and our God, and among believers, 14.

## Sin

It includes: Doing anything “against,” that is, in opposition to, God’s revealed truth, 8

## Salvation

Its beneficiaries: All those who are “in the faith,” that is, who sincerely trust in Christ and accept the truths of the Christian faith, 5.

### Its benefits

- Being spiritually alive in Christ, 4; or, perhaps, enjoying eternal life with him
- Having Christ live in us, 5
- Being members of the family of God, “brethren,” spiritual brothers and sisters, 11
- The presence of the God of love and peace in our hearts and in our midst, 11

- Being considered “saints,” that is, positionally holy in God’s eyes, 13; *see 1 Thessalonians 1:1; and Ephesians 1:1.*
- God’s grace – unmerited favor to sinners; his love; the presence and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, 14

## The People of God

### The Church

Its membership: See “beneficiaries” of salvation, above.

### Its governance

- The church is governed by the teachings of the original, foundational apostles, including Paul, 3, 6, 10. *See Ephesians 2:20.*
- Under the authority of the apostolic writings, other men labor in, and lead the church, 12–13.

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- We do not know when Christ will return, 1–3.
- He will come suddenly and unexpectedly, 2–3. *See Matthew 24:36–44; and 2 Peter 3:10.*
- When he comes, he will bring the wrath of God upon all who willfully disbelieve and disobey him, 9. *See Romans 2:3–10; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 6; 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10; 2:5–10; and Revelation 6:9–11; 19:11–21; 20:7–10.*

*Note: It seems that there will be only one “coming” or “appearing” of the Son of God, at the end of the world. A quiet, secret “rapture” does not seem to be indicated in Scripture.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- Be prepared for the Lord to return at any time by remaining spiritually alert and watching for his coming eagerly, 1–11. *See Matthew 24:36–51; and 2 Peter 3:1–15.*

- Arm ourselves with faith, love, and the hope of salvation, 8. *See Ephesians 6:10–17.*
- Comfort other believers with the knowledge that the Lord will return soon and build each other up in the faith with good words, 11. *See 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17; and Ephesians 4:29.*
- Honor and submit to spiritual leaders in the church, 12–13. *See 1 Corinthians 16:18; and 1 Peter 5:5.*
- Speak appropriate words to those in different spiritual conditions, 14.
- Return evil with good, 15.
- Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, 16–18.
- Do not quench the Holy Spirit by despising prophesyings, 19–20.
- But test all prophets and prophecies carefully, 21. *See 1 John 4:1.*
- Abstain from all sorts of evil, 22.
- Seek complete sanctification, 23.
- Look to the return of Christ, 23.
- Pray for church leaders and all ministers of the gospel, 25.
- Greet one another warmly, but with holiness, 26.
- Make sure that the Bible is read in gatherings of the believers, 27.
- Abide in the grace of God, and bless others with Paul’s words, 28.

# **2 THESSALONIANS** *(currently unavailable)*

# **1 & 2 TIMOTHY** *(currently unavailable)*

**TITUS** *(currently unavailable)*



# PHILEMON

# Truth

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## Revelation

### Its content

- ◆ Personal greetings and letters, like this one, remind us that to God, individuals and their relationships with each other are vitally important.
- ◆ Examples and principles are contained here which implicitly lead thoughtful Christians to challenge social customs and even legal institutions. For example, this letter, though not labeling slavery as an evil institution, implicitly challenges it at the core and was ultimately used to abolish slavery.

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as Trinity, including God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (as well as the Spirit), 3.

### His greatness

- ◆ He is the source and grantor of all grace and peace, 3.
- ◆ He is the source of all love and faith in born again believers and thus deserving of thanksgiving for these virtues which we see in others, 4-5.

## Christ

### His person and work

- ◆ He is equal with the Father, 3, 25.
  - His title, “Lord,” is the Greek Old Testament’s translation of the Hebrew name “Yahweh.”
  - He is the co-source of all grace and peace to Christians.
- ◆ He allows, and even causes, his people to suffer for the sake of the gospel, so that Paul, though incarcerated by the Romans, could call himself a prisoner of Christ Jesus, 1, 9, 23.
- ◆ He holds all authority and gave this authority to his chosen apostles, 8.

# The Church

## Its characteristics

- ♦ It is composed of all those who have become children of God by adoption through faith in Christ and who are now “brothers” (and sisters) in Christ, 7, and often here.
- ♦ It is ruled by the apostles, now through their writings to us, 8.
- ♦ It contains people of all sorts, including those from different social and economic backgrounds, like Philemon the wealthy slave owner and Onesimus his slave, 16.
- ♦ It met in homes in New Testament times, 2. *See Acts 12:13; 16:15, 40; 17:5-6; Romans 16:3, 5, 23; 1 Corinthians 16:19; and Colossians 4:15.*
- ♦ It is marked by a shared faith in Christ that leads to sincere love for each other, 5-7.

# Salvation

## Its substance

- ♦ Grace and peace from God, 3
- ♦ Moral transformation, evidenced by faith in Christ and love toward other believers, 5, to the extent of making Onesimus willing to return to his former master, despite the real threat of severe punishment, 12

## Its benefits

- ♦ It confers the status of being positionally “holy” (saints) before God, 5, 7.
- ♦ It brings other “good things,” i.e., spiritual blessings, 6.
- ♦ It incorporates us into a new family, the family of God, 1-2, 7, 16, 20, 23-24.
- ♦ It moves people to serve each other, even at personal sacrifice, 11, 13.
- ♦ It transforms human relations, so that former social and even legal distinctions are, at least spiritually and relationally, overcome by full spiritual equality in Christ as members of the same family, 16.

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Thank God constantly for what he has done in other believers and tell them so.
- ♦ Willingly serve other brothers and sisters in Christ, even to the point of great personal sacrifice.
- ♦ Be willing to suffer for Christ.
- ♦ Hold church meetings in homes, rather than in church buildings.
- ♦ Repay any debts you owe to others.
- ♦ Forgive and receive into fellowship those who have truly repented of their sins.
- ♦ Oppose all forms of prejudice, pride, and class distinctions within the church, yet honor and obey customs and laws in society (while seeking to transform them).

# **HEBREWS** *(currently unavailable)*

**JAMES**

# James 1:1–18

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ New Testament revelation comes to us through apostles and prophets, who laid the foundation for the later church and who possessed unique and unrepeatable authority from God. *See Ephesians 2:20.*
- ♦ Apostles wrote Matthew, John, the Pauline letters, 1–2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, the Revelation of John; prophets wrote Mark, Luke, Acts, James, and Jude.

### God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament) and Son (the Lord Jesus Christ, usually called “Lord” in the New Testament), 1. Other passages of the New Testament teach that the Holy Spirit is also God, the third member of the Trinity. *See Matthew 28:19 and Romans 8:9–11.*

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is great, infinitely wise, and intelligent, 5.
- ♦ He has the power to raise up and take down, 9–11.
- ♦ He has the power to give good gifts, 17.
- ♦ He is unchanging in his character, 17.
- ♦ He created the “lights” of the world, including sun, moon, stars, and light itself, 17. *See Genesis 1:3, 14–18.*
- ♦ He does all according to his will, saving some by his sovereign grace and the power of his Word (and Spirit) to cause sinners to be born again to new life, 18. *See John 1:12–13; 3–8; and Ephesians 1:11.*
- ♦ He cannot be tempted by evil and does not tempt anyone to do wrong, 13.
- ♦ He dwells in light and creates light, both physical and moral, 17. *See also 1 John 1:5.*

#### His goodness

- ♦ He is generous; he gives wisdom to those who ask, 5.

- ♦ He raises up the weak, humble, meek, and poor who trust in him, 9. *See also James 2:5.*
- ♦ He rewards those who love him enough to endure trials with a crown of life (that is, eternal life and glory), 12.
- ♦ He is holy and wants us to be perfected in faith, hope, and love, and therefore sends trials to his people to test and increase their faith, 2–4.
- ♦ He brings down the proud and powerful, 10–11. *See also Isaiah 40:6–7.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is equal with God the Father and fully divine, as the phrase, “bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” shows, 1.
- ♦ Since “Lord” was the Greek translation of the Hebrew name Yahweh in the Greek Old Testament, its constant use to denote Jesus demonstrates that the New Testament writers considered Jesus to be Yahweh in the flesh, 1.
- ♦ He is therefore for the absolute Master of the universe (with God the Father) and Lord over all who trust in him, 1.
- ♦ He is fully human, with a man’s name, “Jesus,” 1.
- ♦ As the God–man, he is the anointed Christ, the Messiah, the fulfillment of the Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king, the one sent to save his people from their sins, 1. *See Matthew 1:21.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Unbelief, or half–hearted faith in God’s willingness and power to give wisdom and other good gifts, 6–8
- ♦ Accusing God of being the source of temptation to sin, 13
- ♦ Giving in to sinful desires and allowing these desires to grow and fester and produce sinful actions, 14–15

## Salvation

Its conveyance: It comes to us through Jesus Christ, 1.



### It includes

- ◆ Power to endure trials and overcome them by faith and even to rejoice in them because they promote our growth towards spiritual maturity, 2–4, 12
- ◆ Wisdom to know how to endure and overcome trials, 5
- ◆ The ability to rejoice when we are stripped of wealth and prosperity, 10
- ◆ Eternal life, 12
- ◆ The power to love God, 12
- ◆ “Every good gift” that God can bestow, which would include all that we need to know and serve him, 17
- ◆ Regeneration by the Word of God, 18; *see 1 Peter 1:3.*

*Note: Personal regeneration and faith are evidenced by all the above qualities, especially love for God above all else, love that will endure suffering rather than commit sin, 12.*

## **Life**

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Rejoice in all troubles, knowing that these promote our growth in faith, hope, and love.
- ◆ Ask God for wisdom when we are in trouble.
- ◆ Rejoice when we prosper and when we are deprived of earthly comforts.
- ◆ Do not allow evil desires to come to fruition in overt sins but resist them from the beginning.
- ◆ Look to God for all good gifts and trust that all he gives us, including trials, are “good” for us.
- ◆ Love God above all else and eagerly wait for our heavenly reward after death.

# James 1:19–27

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its purpose

- ♦ The Word of God, contained in the Scriptures, once implanted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit as we receive it by faith and are thus born again (James 1:18), is able to save our souls, 21.
- ♦ It is meant to be listened to, studied carefully, and then practiced; otherwise, it will not be useful to us, 23–24.

Its content: It Includes a “perfect law of liberty,” which probably refers to the two great commandments spoken by Jesus (i.e., to love God and love your neighbor), the power of the Holy Spirit to set us free to keep these commands, and the freedom from sin, selfishness, and the seductions of the world that knowledge of and obedience to this law bring, 25.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is righteous, 20.
- ♦ He speaks to us by his Word, which came by the prophets and apostles and was then deposited for us in the Scriptures, 21.

His goodness: He cares for the weak and powerless in society, such as widows and orphans, 27; as both God (transcendent) and Father (immanent and tender in his love), 27.

### Sin

#### It includes

- ♦ Speaking too much and too soon
- ♦ Not listening enough or long enough
- ♦ Becoming angry and irritated quickly, 19–20

- ♦ Moral filthiness (probably referring to sexual immorality) and active wickedness, 21
- ♦ Hearing the Word of God but not heeding it or putting it into practice, 21
- ♦ Not bridling our tongue, 26
- ♦ Self-deception about the state of our souls, 26
- ♦ Allowing oneself to be stained and corrupted by the sins of this world, 27

## Salvation

### Its conveyance

- ♦ It comes to us through humbly receiving God's Word with faith, 21. *See James 1:18.*
- ♦ It first comes to the soul by giving us a new relationship to God as Father, 21, 27 (and then later as the resurrection of the body and its reuniting with the soul when Christ returns).

Its benefits: It includes membership in a new family of God, in which we are all "brothers" (and sisters), and which is marked by mutual love and care, 19.

## The Church

Its membership: The church is the new family of God (see above), comprised of those who have been born again by receiving the Word of God by faith and who habitually receive and act upon the word which was implanted in them by the Spirit when they were born again, 21, and who put into practice the commands of God, 25–26.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Be very, very slow to speak. Most of us talk too much!
- ♦ Be very, very quick to listen, and listen patiently and long; first, to God's Word (by reading, listening to recordings of it, listening to good preaching, listening to Christian music) and then to our neighbor.
- ♦ Be very, very slow to express anger.
- ♦ Do all we can to put away evil thoughts, to avoid listening to or watching unhealthy and ungodly media material, and to reject expressions of the evil that is in our hearts.
- ♦ Ask God for grace to act upon his word.

- ♦ Look long and often, at the commands of God given to us by Christ and the apostles.
- ♦ Beware of self-deception about the state of our souls and use our care for the needy around us as one measure of whether we know and love God.
- ♦ Care especially for widows and orphans in our midst, especially in the church.

# James 2:1–13

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Special revelation

- ♦ It is addressed primarily to Christians, addressed here as “brothers” (i.e., brothers and sisters), though non-Christians should attend to it also, and repent and believe, 1.
- ♦ It is contained in Old Testament and New Testament “Scripture,” 8, through which he personally spoke, 11.

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ James quotes the Old Testament Law, 8, 11. *See Leviticus 19:18 and Exodus 20:13–14.*
- ♦ The moral commands of the Old Testament are repeated (except the Fourth Commandment on the Sabbath) in the New Testament, as here, 8, 11.
- ♦ James’s teaching on the duty to honor the poor and his castigation of favoritism towards the rich as well as the oppressive exploitation of the poor by the rich builds on similar prophetic passages in the Old Testament, 1–7. *See Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 16:19; Job 34:19; Amos 4:1; Habakkuk 1:4; and Malachi 3:5.*

Its purpose: God’s revelation of his will in the law is meant to give true liberty, that is, to set us free from the deceptions and bondage of sin, 12.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He exercises sovereign grace in choosing to save whom he wills, regardless of social status or religious performance, 5. *See also James 1:18.*
- ♦ As King, he has given a “royal law” to all mankind, 5.
- ♦ As King, will judge all men on the basis of their response to his revealed word, 12.
- ♦ He has promised his kingdom to those who love him, 5.

# Christ

## His person

- ♦ He is Lord (see on 1:1).
- ♦ He is Jesus, the man.
- ♦ He is Christ the anointed Messiah who has come to save us, 1.
- ♦ He is equal with God, he is Lord of glory, a title that puts him on the same level as the Old Testament Yahweh, who possesses glory and manifested his glory to his people, 1. *See Psalm 24:8; 63:2; Isaiah 42:8; 1 Peter 4:11; and Revelation 4:11.*
- ♦ As King, he repeated the Old Testament law of love, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” 8, as well as those against adultery and murder, 11. *See Matthew 22:39; 5:21, 27.*

# Sin

## It includes

- ♦ All partiality based on outward appearance, wealth, or social standing, 9
- ♦ Judging the value of others, especially their value in the Christian assembly, in our hearts, and having unloving thoughts towards them, 4
- ♦ Dishonoring the poor, 6
- ♦ Exploiting the poor, 6
- ♦ Breaking any one of the commands of God constitutes us sinners, 10
- ♦ Adultery, 11
- ♦ Murder, 11
- ♦ Lack of mercy towards sinners and towards those with fewer resources than we have, 13

# The Last Things

## The end of the age

- ♦ God will give his kingdom to those who have loved him above all, 5.
- ♦ He will also judge all men according to their conduct, 12.

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Do not treat people more or less favorably based on their outward appearance (including beauty, body build, dress), and especially not in the church.
- ♦ Love God and seek his kingdom above all else.
- ♦ Love others as we do ourselves.
- ♦ Seek to do all we can to relieve the needs of the poor, especially poor Christians.
- ♦ Speak and act as those who will later be judged by God's law.
- ♦ Show mercy to people who are in any way needy or unattractive.

# James 2:14–26

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is coherent and cumulative, even within a single book of the Bible, like James.

- ♦ The letter highlights several major themes: Faith, Responding in faith, and Taming the tongue.
  - Faith
    - ♦ Faith is tested and proven genuine by trials; we must ask for wisdom with faith, 1:6.
    - ♦ Faith comes from the Word of God, 1:18, 21.
    - ♦ It must not co-exist with partiality, 2:1.
    - ♦ God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, 2:5.
    - ♦ True faith will produce, and is shown to be genuine by, works of obedience to God; otherwise, it is a false faith – dead, empty, and unable to save, 2:14, 17, 22–23.
    - ♦ Mere mental or even verbal assent to biblical truth is not saving faith, or the demons, who believe in God, would be saved, 19; the efficacy of prayer coming from true faith, 5:15.
  - Responding in faith
    - ♦ There is a necessity to respond to God’s Word with a faith that shows itself in works of obedience, 1:22–27.
    - ♦ There is the danger of self-deception based on mere mental assent or verbal profession of faith, 1:13, 16.
    - ♦ There is a requirement that professing believers observe God’s moral law, 2:6–12.
    - ♦ Works of righteousness and peace demonstrate the true wisdom that comes from faith, 3:13–15; *see James 1:5*.
  - Taming the tongue
    - ♦ There are instructions throughout this passage and others in James on taming the tongue, 1:13, 19, 26; 2:12, 14; 3:1–12; 4:11, 13–16; 5:9, 12, 13.



Its content: The coherence of all Scripture is seen in the fact that the passage in James that is often cited as contradictory to the teaching of Paul on justification by faith is not actually contradictory.

Its interpretation: Biblical revelation must be interpreted according to each specific context. See below on salvation.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He is one, 2:19.
- ♦ He justifies those who have true faith, a faith expressed by obedience to his revealed will, 2:23.

His goodness: He makes friends with those who trust in him, 2:23.

## Spiritual Beings

Satan and the demons: They believe in God, but not so as to be saved; instead, they tremble before him in fear, knowing that they will suffer eternal hell, 2:19.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ False profession of faith that is not evidenced by works of obedience to God's will, 2:14–16
- ♦ Not sharing our wealth with fellow Christians who lack the basic necessities of life, 2:15–16
- ♦ "Believing" in God without trusting, loving, and serving him, 2:19

## Salvation

Its conveyance: It comes to those who receive God's word (see 1:21) with faith, a faith that shows that they have been born again to be children of God (1:18) by actions that reflect a heart of obedience to God and show forth the character of God, 2:14–26.

*Note: This does not disagree with Paul's insistence on "justification by faith alone," for Paul and James were combating two different errors. Paul faced Jewish Christians who insisted that Gentile Christians obey the whole Law of Moses in order to be justified (similarly to the official teaching of Rome); James faced Jewish Christians who held a very superficial view of "faith," a view that confined faith to mere mental assent and verbal profession but did not come from a*

*heart of trust in God and love towards God. Paul also said, “No fornicator, nor unclean [that is sexually immoral in any way] person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (Ephesians 5:5). For Paul faith unites us to Christ, who gives us the indwelling Holy Spirit, who produces the fruit of good attitudes and actions. See Galatians 5:22–23.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ◆ Do not imagine that a person who has “prayed to receive Christ” or made some other profession of faith, but whose life has not changed in a way that shows he really trusts, loves, and fears God, is a true believer in Christ. That person’s “faith” is little better than that of demons.
- ◆ Preach the gospel in a way that shows how true faith is a response from the heart to God’s Word; that it constantly “receives” the Word of God that has been implanted in the heart; and that it will show itself by good works. We should not deceive people into thinking that simply saying a “prayer to receive Christ” will save them.
- ◆ Trust God to supply all our material needs and be generous to fellow believers who are in need.
- ◆ Like Abraham, we should be willing to offer our most precious thing, our “Isaac,” on the altar if God requires us to do so.
- ◆ Like Rahab, we should welcome needy Christians into our homes in times of persecution, and thus identify ourselves with the people of God rather than with our pagan neighbors, even if to do so means danger for us.

# James 3

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is coherent and cumulative, even within a single book of the Bible, like James.

- ♦ Teachers in the church, 1; *see Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:8; 14:26, 29; and Ephesians 4:11.*
- ♦ Taming the tongue, 1–12; *see James 1:13, 19, 26; 2:12, 14; 3:1–12; 4:11, 13–16; 5:9, 12, 13; and Ephesians 4:29.*
- ♦ “We all stumble in many things,” 2; *see James 2:10; 1 Kings 8:46; and Romans 3:9–20.*  
*Note: This statement is all-inclusive, and includes Mary, the mother of Jesus.*
- ♦ The power of the tongue, 3–5; *see Proverbs 18:21.*
- ♦ The importance of controlling the tongue, 2–6; *see Proverbs 21:23.*
- ♦ “The tongue is a fire,” 6; *see Proverbs 16:27.*
- ♦ The tongue – that is, our speech – can defile the whole body, 6; *see Matthew 12:36; 15:11, 18.*
- ♦ “We bless our God and Father,” 9; *see 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; and 1 Peter 1:3.*
- ♦ Trees bear fruit according to their kind, 12; *see Genesis 1:11; Matthew 7:16–20; and Galatians 5:22.*
- ♦ Wisdom and understanding, 13; *see Colossians 1:9.*
- ♦ Teaching that comes from demons, 15; *see 1 Timothy 4:1.*
- ♦ “The wisdom that comes from above,” 17; *see James 1:5, 17; Proverbs 2:6; and Colossians 1:9.*
- ♦ “Full of . . . good fruits,” 17; *see Matthew 7:15–20 and Galatians 5:22–23.*
- ♦ “Without partiality,” 17; *see James 2:1–11.*
- ♦ “Without hypocrisy,” 18; *see Romans 12:9.*
- ♦ “The fruit [product] of righteousness,” 18; *see Proverbs 11:18.*
- ♦ Peacemakers, 18; *see Matthew 5:9 and Ephesians 2:14–15; 4:3.*

## God

His greatness: He is the almighty Creator, 9.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is our God and, in Christ, our heavenly Father, 9; *see Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:15; and Ephesians 1:3.*
- ♦ He made us in his own image and likeness, 9; *see Genesis 1:26.*
- ♦ He gives wisdom, 17; *see James 1:5, 17.*

## Spiritual Beings

Demons: There are demons, who are evil spirits; they can work in people's minds, even the minds of professing Christians, to suggest thoughts that pose as wisdom but are of the devil, 15; *see Ephesians 6:10–17.*

## Mankind

### Our created nature

- ♦ We are made in the image of God, 9; *see Genesis 1:26; 5:1; 9:6.*
- ♦ God made us so that, as with him, our words are an integral part of our being and form a major aspect of our doing. As such, the tongue has great power to affect our thinking and our impact on others, for good or ill, 2–12.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Rashly presuming to teach others before we are qualified, 1
- ♦ Boasting, 5, 14
- ♦ Poisonous words, 8
- ♦ Cursing others; cursing includes any kind of speech about another that is unhelpfully negative, being motivated not by love but by self-interest or, worse, malice, 9, 10
- ♦ Envy, 14; *see Matthew 27:18; Mark 7:22; 15:10; and Romans 1:29; 13:13.*
- ♦ Self-seeking, 14, 16; *see 1 Corinthians 13:5; Philippians 2:3–4, 21; Titus 3:3; and 1 Peter 2:1.*
- ♦ Any form of “lying,” that is, any speech that does not accord with the truth, 14

- ♦ Partiality, 17
- ♦ Hypocrisy, 17; *see Romans 12:9 and 1 Peter 2:1.*

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Be slow to offer ourselves as teachers in the church, 1.
- ♦ Ask God to give us control over our speech at all times; remember that self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit. *See Galatians 5:22-23.*
- ♦ Bless and praise God often, 9.
- ♦ Trust God as our loving heavenly Father, 9.
- ♦ Bless other people, too, by saying words that build them up and encourage them. *See Ephesians 4:29.*
- ♦ Ask God to give us the wisdom that comes from above, especially when we speak to others, 17. *See James 1:5.*
- ♦ Especially ask God to cleanse our hearts of impure motives before we counsel others, 17.
- ♦ Advise others in a way that is gentle, humble, willing to yield to another's point of view, full of compassion, fair, sincere, 17.
- ♦ Ask God to make us rich in good deeds, partly so that our words will have greater persuasive power, 17.
- ♦ Seek peace and pursue it; avoid stirring up conflicts, especially when we advise others, 18. *See Ephesians 4:3 and 1 Peter 3:11.*
- ♦ Read the Bible often, especially Proverbs and the New Testament epistles, so that we may gain a heart and mind full of God's wisdom.

# James 4:1–10

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is coherent and cumulative, even within a single book of the Bible, like James.

- ♦ Conflicts between Christians, 1; *see James 3:9–11; 5:9; and 1 Corinthians 6:1–11.*
- ♦ Conflicting desires for pleasure within ourselves, especially our bodily members, 1; *see Romans 7:23 and Galatians 5:16.*
- ♦ The intimate connection between inner thoughts/desires/emotions and outward action, 2; *see Matthew 5:21–28.*
- ♦ “You do not have because you do not ask,” 2; *see Matthew 7:7–11 and John 15:7; 16:24.*
- ♦ “You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss,” 3; *see Psalm 66:18; Matthew 20:20–24; and Acts 8:18–23.*
- ♦ Living for our pleasures and desires, 3; *see Philippians 3:18–19.*
- ♦ Spiritual adultery, 4; *see Isaiah 57:3; Jeremiah 3:20; Ezekiel 16:38; 23:45; and Hosea 2:5–7.*
- ♦ Friendship with the world vs. friendship with God, 4; *see 1 John 2:15.*
- ♦ “The Spirit Who dwells in us yearns jealously,” 5; *see Genesis 6:5.*  
*Note: This passage has been variously interpreted, but this translation is perhaps the best one, and conveys the idea that God’s Spirit within Christians yearns for us to be fully devoted to the Lord.*
- ♦ “He gives more grace,” 6; *see James 2:13 and Romans 5:20–21.*
- ♦ “God resists [is opposed] to the proud, but gives grace to the humble,” 6; *see Proverbs 3:34 and 1 Peter 5:5.*
- ♦ “Resist the devil and he will flee from you,” 7; *see Ephesians 4:27; 6:10–11; and 1 Peter 5:8–9.*
- ♦ “Submit to God,” 7; *see Ephesians 5:24 and 1 Peter 5:6.*
- ♦ “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you,” 8; *see 2 Chronicles 15:2; and Hebrews 7:19; 10:22.*
- ♦ “Cleanse [wash] your hands,” 8; *see Exodus 30:17–21; Isaiah 1:16.*

*Note: This refers to spiritual cleansing, though it is based on the Mosaic laws of ritual cleansing.*

- ♦ “Purify your hearts,” 8; *see Psalm 24:4 and 1 Peter 1:22.*
- ♦ “You double-minded,” 8; *see James 1:6–8.*
- ♦ “Lament and mourn and weep!” 9; *see Joel 2:12; Matthew 5:4; and 1 Corinthians 5:2.*
- ♦ “Humble yourselves,” 10; *see James 4:7; Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; and 1 Peter 5:6.*
- ♦ “He will lift you up,” 10; *see previously cited verses.*

Its roots in history: Biblical revelation was written within, and spoke to, particular times and conditions in history.

- ♦ James wrote at a time when factional infighting among Jews in Judea and Jerusalem often resulted in personal or communal violence, 1–2; *see James 5:1–6.*
- ♦ Chronic inequities between rich and poor also led to conflict; *see James 5:1–6.*
- ♦ If the letter was written to Christian Jews who had fled Israel and now lived in Gentile countries, the stresses of their tenuous situation could also have tempted them to mutual dislike, and even hatred and violence; *see James 1:1.*

Its divine origin and nature: When Scripture “speaks,” it is God speaking to us through the words he revealed to his chosen messengers, 5.

## God

His Triune nature: If the translation in the New King James Version is correct and refers to God’s Spirit, this verse alludes to God’s being as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 5.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is our Creator and King and thus deserves our total submission, worship, and obedience, 7.
- ♦ He is our exalted Lord, 10.
- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, seeing into the hearts of all mankind, 10.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is willing to give what we ask, on certain conditions, 2–3.

- ♦ He is holy and just and will not give us anything that is not good for us or for his glory, 3.
- ♦ He is our heavenly Husband, and desires are complete love and loyalty, 4; *see John 3:29; Ephesians 5:22–33; and Scriptures cited above about spiritual adultery.*
- ♦ He yearns jealously for our wholehearted devotion and love, 5.
- ♦ He is willing to be our friend, 4; *see James 2:23 and 2 Chronicles 20:7.*
- ♦ He actively opposes proud people, 6.
- ♦ He gives greater grace to those who humble themselves before him, 6.
- ♦ He condescends to draw near to those who seek to draw near to him, 8; *see Psalm 73:28.*
- ♦ He will exalt, that is, give his intimacy and honor to, those who humble themselves before him, 10. *See Scriptures cited above.*

## Christ

His person: Christ is prefigured here as

- ♦ The heavenly Bridegroom, 4; *see John 3:29 and Scriptures cited above.*
- ♦ The divine Friend, 4; *see Matthew 11:19 and John 11:11; 15:15.*
- ♦ The one who humbled himself even unto death and was highly exalted by God the Father, 10; *see Philippians 2:5–11.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person and work: The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of those who trust and follow Jesus, 5. *See Romans 8:9, 11.*

## Spiritual Beings

Satan: Also called the devil, that is, the slanderer, he is constantly seeking to tempt us to sin, but his power is limited; those with faith in Christ can resist his wiles, 7; *see Ephesians 4:27; 6:10–20; and 1 Peter 5:8–9.*



## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Inciting, and participating in, unnecessary conflicts, 2–1
- ♦ Being driven by selfish desire for pleasure, 1, 3; *see James 1:14–15; Luke 8:14; Philippians 3:19; 2 Timothy 3:4; Titus 3:3; and 2 Peter 2:13.*
- ♦ Lust, including sexual lust and all other inordinate desires
- ♦ Murder, and malice leading to murder, 2
- ♦ Covetousness, 2; *see Exodus 20:17; Romans 7:7; and Ephesians 5:3.*
- ♦ Not trusting God enough to ask in faith for what we need, 2
- ♦ Asking God for things that will only feed our pleasures, 3
- ♦ Loving the world more than loving God, 4; *see 1 John 2:15.*
- ♦ Double-mindedness towards God, 8; *see James 1:6–8.*
- ♦ Any form of pride, 10

### Its consequences

- ♦ Conflict with others, 1
- ♦ Failure to get what we want, 2
- ♦ God's enmity and hostility, 4; *see Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:21.*
- ♦ God's active opposition, 6

## Salvation

### Its source

- ♦ Salvation comes entirely from God's grace, that is, his unmerited favor, 6. *See Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8–9.*
- ♦ Intimacy with God, 8.
- ♦ Eventual exaltation by God, 10.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Ask God to give us a heart to renounce self-serving pleasures and desires.
- ♦ Ask God to give us what we really need.
- ♦ Renounce the desire to be friends with this sinful world.

*Note: This does not mean that we should be unfriendly to nonbelievers, only that we should not adopt their worldview and value system or imitate their attitudes and actions.*

- ♦ Thank God for his abundant grace.
- ♦ Submit our lives entirely to God each day, 7. *See Romans 6:13–14; 12:1–2.*
- ♦ Ask God to give us great sorrow for our sins.
- ♦ Constantly humble ourselves before God in repentance and faith.

# James 4:11–17

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ Doers of the law, 11; *see James 1:22 and Matthew 7:21–28.*
- ♦ Our life is like a vapor or breath of air, 14; *see Job 7:7 and Psalm 39:5; 62:9.*

Its divine origin and nature: The laws in Scripture, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, come from God, the Lawgiver, 12.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ As the Creator and Ruler of the universe and as the Savior of his people, he has the authority to issue commands that are binding upon us, 12. *See Genesis 2:16–17; 9:3–7; Exodus 20:1–17; and Matthew 5:21–48; 20:18–19.*
- ♦ He has the power to save us from physical and spiritual death, and he has the power to destroy us, 12. *See Matthew 10:28.*
- ♦ He has authority over all that happens and all that we do, and his sovereign plans will be fulfilled on earth, regardless of our plans, 15. *See Proverbs 16:4, 9, 33; 19:21.*

#### His goodness

- ♦ He graciously revealed his will and his ways to Israel and the prophets and then through Christ and the apostles to his church, 12.
- ♦ He has a good plan for us, and wants us to seek it and follow it, 15.

### Christ

His person: He is the Lord, and thus equal with God the Father, 15; *see James 1:1, 12; 2:1; 4:10.*

*Note: In the New Testament, “Lord” commonly refers to Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God who became the man Jesus. “God” usually refers to God the Father.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Speaking evil of another person, either in unfounded gossip or in unwarranted hostility, 11; this sin is also called “blasphemy” in the New Testament. See *Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8; and 1 Peter 2:1*.  
*Note: This prohibition does not forbid rebuking others in love for their sins, as James does throughout this letter; see James 4:1–6; 5:1–6; Matthew 18:15–17. Nor does it prohibit warning believers against false Christians; see 2 Timothy 4:14–15.*
- ♦ Self-righteous judgment of a brother in Christ, 11–12; see *Matthew 7:1–5*.
- ♦ Judging another as if we were God, 12; see *Romans 14:4, 10–13*.
- ♦ Making plans for the future as if we knew what is going to happen and as if we were sure of God’s will, 13–15; see *Proverbs 27:1 and Luke 12:16–20*.
- ♦ Arrogance, over-confidence in ourselves, and boasting, 16
- ♦ Imagining that we will live forever, 14–15
- ♦ Setting our hearts on profit rather than on the kingdom of God, 13; see *Matthew 6:19–24; and Luke 12:16–20*.
- ♦ Failure to do what we know is right, 17; see *Luke 12:47*.

Its consequences: Eternal destruction from God, 12; see *James 5:1–6*.

## Salvation

Its source: Salvation comes from God alone, 12.

## Life

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### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Refrain from speaking ill of others behind their back, 11.
- ♦ Beware of self-righteous judgment of others, especially Christians, 11–12.
- ♦ Avoid making plans for the future without humbly waiting upon God for him to reveal his will for us, 15. See *Acts 18:21 and Romans 15:32*.
- ♦ Remember that our life is very short and could end suddenly.
- ♦ Do what we know we should without delay.

# James 5:1–12

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is coherent and cumulative, even within a single book of the Bible, like James.

- ♦ “Weep and howl,” 1; *see Isaiah 13:6 and Joel 1:8.*
- ♦ Woe to the rich, 1–6; *see James 1:10–11; 2:6; Matthew 19:16–24; Luke 1:52; 6:24; 16:19–31; and 1 Timothy 6:9, 17–18.*
- ♦ “You have heaped up treasure,” 3; *see Matthew 6:19–21 and Romans 2:5.*
- ♦ The wages of a day-laborer, 4; *see Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:15; and Malachi 3:5.*
- ♦ “The wages. . . cry out,” 4; *see Genesis 4:10; Leviticus 19:13; and Isaiah 5:9.*
- ♦ “You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury [indulgence],” 5; *see James 4:1, 3; Ezekiel 16:49; and Luke 16:19–31.*
- ♦ “You have fattened your hearts, as in a day of slaughter,” 5; *see Jeremiah 12:3 and Isaiah 30:25. The “slaughter” is that of the wicked themselves.*
- ♦ “You have murdered,” 6; *see James 4:2 and Genesis 4:8–10.*
- ♦ “The patience [perseverance] of Job,” 11; *see Job 1:21; 2:10.*
- ♦ “The end [intended by] the Lord,” 11; *see Job 42:5–6.*  
*Note: This “end” could be either God’s intention to refine Job or to his intention to restore Job’s earlier prosperity.*
- ♦ “Do not swear, either by heaven or by earth . . . ,” 12; *see Matthew 5:34–37.*

Its roots in history: Biblical revelation was written within, and spoke to, particular times and conditions in history.

- ♦ James wrote in a time when the income gap between rich and poor was very great and the rich often oppressed the poor, 1–6. *See James 2:6–7.*
- ♦ His denunciation of the rich finally led to his being murdered by the High Priest Ananias in AD 62.

Its divine origin and nature: The Old Testament prophets, including Moses and the writers of the Psalms and other poetical writings, spoke in God's name, that is, they spoke his words with his authority, 10.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, hearing the cry of the oppressed wherever they are, 4.
- ♦ He is the Lord of Hosts, the heavenly armies of angels who do his will; he is omnipotent, 4.

His goodness: He is very compassionate and merciful, 11. *See Exodus 34:6, 7; Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:15; 103:7-10; 145:8; Joel 2:13; and Jonah 4:2.*

## Christ

His person: He is the coming Judge, both human and divine, 9. *See John 5:30; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8 (where "Lord" probably refers to Jesus, as in most of the New Testament).*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Storing up treasures on earth rather than in heaven, 1-3
- ♦ Defrauding others of what we owe them, 4
- ♦ Self-indulgent living, 5
- ♦ Unjust judgments, 6
- ♦ Murder, 6
- ♦ Complaining against others, 9
- ♦ Swearing oaths, 12

### Its consequences

- ♦ Miseries of all sorts from God, 1
- ♦ Loss of all that we have stored up for ourselves, 2-3
- ♦ God's judgment, 9

## Salvation

Its benefits: Just judgment and recompense from God when Christ returns, 7–11

### The Last Things

#### The last days

- ♦ These are the last days, in that Jesus could come at any time to complete the coming of his kingdom begun when he entered his ministry, 3. *See Hebrews 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:1 (where the last days also describe this evil age); and 1 John 2:18.*
- ♦ Alternatively, this verse could refer to the “treasure” of God’s wrath that the unrepentant rich are storing up for themselves now, 3. *See Romans 3:5 and John 6:44; 11:24; 12:48.*
- ♦ At the last day, Jesus will come, that is, return, as Judge and Savior, 7–8. *See Matthew 24:27, 30, 37, 39; 26:64; Luke 12:40; Acts 7:52; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 2:8; Hebrews 10:37; 2 Peter 3:4; 1 John 2:28; and Revelation 1:7; 3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20. Note, in the Bible there is only one “coming” of the Lord Jesus, not two or three, as some claim.*
- ♦ Jesus will come soon and suddenly, 7, 8, 9. *See Philipians 4:5.*

## Life

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#### Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Seek to earn what we need; live frugally.
- ♦ Give to others what we owe them.
- ♦ Avoid self-indulgence.
- ♦ Be patient when we are exploited and mistreated by others, 7.
- ♦ Read the Old Testament and the New Testament for examples of people who have trusted God and followed him faithfully.
- ♦ Ask God for the gift of endurance under trials, 11. *See James 1:12 and Matthew 10:22.*
- ♦ Establish our hearts firmly with the hope of the Lord’s return, 8.

# James 5:13-20

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is coherent and cumulative, even within a single book of the Bible, like James.

- ♦ “Is anyone . . . suffering?” 13; *see James 1:2, 12; 2:6 –7; 4:2; 5:1, 7–8; and 1 Peter 1:6; 4:12.*
- ♦ “Is anyone . . . sick?” 14; *see 1 Corinthians 11:30 and Philippians 2:25–26.*
- ♦ The elders of the church, 14; *see Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4; 16:4; 20:17–18; Titus 1:5; and 1 Peter 5:1.*  
*Note: Elders are the same men as pastors and overseers (bishops); see Acts 20:28.*
- ♦ Anointing the sick with oil, 14; *see Isaiah 1:6.*
- ♦ “In the name of the Lord” Jesus, 14; *see John 14:13; 16:24; and Acts 3:6, 16.*
- ♦ “The prayer of faith,” 15; *see Matthew 8:10; 9:2, 22, 29; 15:28; Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; Acts 3:16; 14:9; and Hebrews 11:6.*
- ♦ “And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven,” 15; *see Luke 24:27; John 20:23; and 1 John 1:9–10.*
- ♦ “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly,” 17; *see 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1, 42.*
- ♦ Turning a sinning Christian back to God, 19–20; *see Matthew 18:15–20; Galatians 6:1; and 1 John 5:16.*
- ♦ “Cover a multitude of sins,” 20; *see Proverbs 10:12 and 1 Peter 4:8.*

Its roots in history: Biblical revelation was written within, and spoke to, particular times and conditions in history.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is omnipresent and omniscient, and thus can hear the prayers of his people wherever they are, 15, 17–18.
- ♦ He has the power to heal people in answer to prayer, 15–16.
- ♦ He has the power to control rainfall and crops in answer to prayer, 17–18.



### His goodness

- ♦ He often heals people in answer to believing prayer, 14–16.
- ♦ He is righteous and rewards the righteous [by faith], 16.
- ♦ He graciously answers the prayers of his people, 15–18. *See Psalm 34:6, 15, 17. Note: God also reserves the right to withhold things for which we ask, if they are not according to his will; see James 4:3.*
- ♦ He forgives the sins of those who repent and return to him, 15, 19–20.
- ♦ He disciplines his people severely when they sin, as happened when he withheld rain from idolatrous Israel under wicked King Ahab, 17.
- ♦ He is true and revealed his truth to his people through the prophets and apostles and supremely in Jesus Christ, 19. *See John 14:6 and Ephesians 1:13; 4:14, 21.*

## Christ

His person and work: He is the Lord who will raise up the sick, in anticipation of raising the dead on the last day, 15. *See John 6:40.*

## Sin

It includes: Wandering from the truth, that is, the will of God as revealed in Scripture, either by unbelief or by disobedience of clear commands, 19; *see John 8:32–33; Ephesians 4:14–15, 17–25; 6:14; and 2 John 9.*

Its consequences: The eternal death of the soul, 20; *see Matthew 10:28.*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Forgiveness of sins, 15, 20; *see Ephesians 1:7 and 1 John 2:8–9.*
- ♦ Salvation of the soul from eternal death, 20; *see 1 Peter 1:8–9.*

## The Church

Its government: Churches are to be ruled by a group of elders in every congregation, 14. *See Acts 20:17 and 1 Peter 5:1.*

# Life

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## Ethical imperatives

- ♦ Pray to God in times of suffering and need, 13. *See Psalm 50:14; Philippians 4:6–7; and 1 Peter 5:7.*
- ♦ “Sing psalms” when we are cheerful; these include the Psalms as well as other songs of joy, 13. *See Ephesians 5:19.*
- ♦ Call the elders of the church to pray for us and anoint us with oil when we are sick, 14. *See Mark 6:13; 16:18.*
- ♦ Believe that God can heal even the worst illnesses through prayer, 15.
- ♦ Confess our sins to each other, 16.

*Note: Confession of sins to other Christians should be limited to (1) sins we have committed against that person or (2) sins we have committed publicly, so that all the congregation knows about them.*

*Note: This practice of confession is not meant to (1) limit the ones who hear confession to priests; (2) bestow power on a select group of clergy; (3) serve as an excuse to “confess” the sins of others against us; see Matthew 18:15–20; (4) become a legalistic rule forcing people to reveal their innermost thoughts to others.*

- ♦ Pray for each other, for healing and for deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, believing that god can answer prayer, 16–18.
- ♦ Ask God to give us a relatively righteous life, so that our prayers will not be hindered, 16. *See James 4:2–3.*
- ♦ Seek to bring other believers back to belief in, and obedience to, the truth, after praying for them, 19–20.

# 1 PETER

# 1 Peter 1:1–12

## Truth

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*Note: This short passage is full of weighty doctrine.*

### Revelation

Its source: God has revealed his truth through chosen messengers, the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament.

### God

His greatness: God exists in three persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, 2.

His goodness: God's first words to his people are "grace" and "peace." These come to us through Jesus.

### The Church

#### Its members

- ♦ He has chosen people to become his people through faith in Jesus, just as he chose Israel to be his special people in the Old Testament, 2.
- ♦ He "knew" them from all eternity, that is, he decided to enter an intimate relationship with them. In the Bible, especially the Old Testament, "know" carries this meaning. Adam "knew" Eve and she bore a son. Mary did not "know" a man when the angel said she would have a son, 2.
- ♦ The Spirit sets people apart for God's possession and for conformity to his holy character, 2.
- ♦ The gift of the Spirit comes because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, which purifies from sin, 2.
- ♦ Christians are aliens and exiles in this world, without a permanent home, 1.

# Salvation

## Its benefits

- ◆ Through God's mercy and through the power of the resurrection of Jesus, believers in Christ are made sons and heirs of God, 3.
- ◆ Believers are "born again"—given new life by the Spirit and made children of God. This is not the Buddhist reincarnation idea, 3.
- ◆ Christians will receive a permanent inheritance in the new heaven and new earth when Christ returns, 4.
- ◆ This aspect of salvation is future and includes the resurrection of the body, 5.
- ◆ God's chosen people are kept by his power until the time when Christ returns and they receive their place in the new heaven and new earth, 5.
- ◆ Our present salvation, which comes to us through faith, consists in the salvation of our souls—not yet our bodies, 9.
- ◆ The blessings of the new covenant were vaguely known and prophesied by the Old Testament prophets, to whom the Spirit revealed both their life and the way it would come—the suffering and subsequent glory of Christ. The redemptive work of Christ is the central theme of the Old Testament, as it is of the New Testament, 10-12.
- ◆ Christians will suffer in this life; this is normal, 6.
- ◆ We experience joy that comes as we believe in Christ and love him, though we have not seen him, 8.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Expect to suffer with and for Christ.
- ◆ Assume that God loves us and intends to give us grace, peace, and joy.
- ◆ Set our hope fully on what will come to us when Christ returns and not complain about present sufferings.
- ◆ Our faith and hope should be built on what the Bible says, not on our current circumstances.

- ♦ Meditate on God's saving work in Christ, rely on the Spirit to change us into his moral likeness, and rejoice in our future salvation.
- ♦ Christians may rejoice because they know this suffering is meant to test and demonstrate their faith (and will result in eternal honor and glory when Jesus returns), 7.

## 1 Peter 1:13–2:3

### Truth

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#### God

##### His greatness

- ♦ He is holy, 1:15–16.
- ♦ He judges all men impartially according to their deeds, 1:17.

#### Christ

##### His person

- ♦ He was the innocent “Lamb of God” who died to redeem his people, 1:19.
- ♦ He was foreknown by God from all eternity, revealed in these last days as Savior and Son, 1:20.

##### His work

- ♦ He will return, 1:13.
- ♦ He rose from the dead and received glory again from the Father, 1:21.

#### The Holy Spirit

His work: He works in believers to cleanse their heart from sin, 1:22.

#### Mankind

##### Our fallen state

- ♦ We are enslaved to lusts that derive from spiritual ignorance, 1:14.
- ♦ We are captive to futile traditions inherited from forefathers, 1:18.
- ♦ We are impure in soul, 1:22.
- ♦ We are subject to decay and dissolution, 1:24.

- ♦ We are filled with malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander, 2:1.

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ It will conclude with grace to be brought to us when Christ is revealed, 1:13.
- ♦ We are children of God the Father now, 1:14, 17.
- ♦ We are redeemed by the blood of Christ from the power of sin, 1:18–19.
- ♦ We have hope because of the resurrection of Christ, 1:21.
- ♦ We are souls are purified by the Holy Spirit through faith in God's Word, 1:22.
- ♦ We are born again by faith in the Word of God, 1:23.
- ♦ We have tasted the goodness of the Lord, 2:3.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Prepare our minds; be constantly alert; rest our hope fully on the grace to be brought to us when Christ returns, 1:13.
- ♦ Do not be conformed to past patterns of desire, 1:14.
- ♦ Pursue holiness, 1:15–16.
- ♦ Trust and hope in God and in the risen and returning Christ, 1:21.
- ♦ Love each other fervently from the heart, 1:22.
- ♦ Lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and slander, 2:1.
- ♦ Eagerly desire the milk of God's Word, 2:2.

# 1 Peter 2:4–17

## Truth

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### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He chose Jesus Christ to be the Savior of his people, 4.
- ♦ He expects worship from us and accepts spiritual sacrifices offered by his people, 5.
- ♦ He is excellent and worthy of praise, 9.
- ♦ He is light and dwells in light, 9.
- ♦ He will someday “visit” this world in judgment, through Christ, 12.
- ♦ He is king of the universe and appoints humans to rule in his place on earth, 13–16.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ As resurrected Lord, Jesus is a living stone; he also gives life to those who trust in him, 4.
- ♦ As our priest and Savior, he mediates our prayers and worship to God the Father, 5.
- ♦ God, through Christ, dwells among his people, as he once did in the Hebrew temple, 5.
- ♦ He is the decisive stone for all—a stone bringing honor to those who believe and base their lives on him; a stone of offense and stumbling for those who reject him, 6–8.

### The Church

Its substance: The church—all who believe in Christ—now replaces Israel as God’s temple (dwelling place), priesthood, God’s chosen nation, and people belonging especially to him, 2–10.



## Salvation

Its conveyance: All this comes through God's free mercy in Christ, 9–10.

## Life

---

### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Come continually to Christ by faith, 4.
- ♦ Abstain from fleshly passion, as aliens and temporary residents in this world, for these passions wage war on our souls, 11.
- ♦ Live honorably among non-Christians, that they may eventually glorify God, 12.
- ♦ Expect slander and false accusations in this life, 12, 15–16.
- ♦ Submit to evil rulers, for the Lord's sake, as he submitted to evil rulers (*see 1 Peter 2:18–25*).

# 1 Peter 2:18–3:12

## Truth

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### God

His greatness: As King, God has appointed earthly rulers to exercise authority under his overall authority. These include masters (employers, teachers, etc.) and husbands, 2:18, 3:1, 5, 6.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is now Shepherd and overseer of our souls, 2:25.
- ♦ His pattern of innocent suffering is our example, 2:21–23; 3:1.

#### His work

- ♦ He died for us as a sacrifice for sin, 2:21, 24.
- ♦ His death also provided spiritual healing for us, 2:24; sometimes this is shown in physical healing also. *See Matthew 8:17.*

### Mankind

#### Our attributes

- ♦ True beauty consists in a meek and gentle spirit. This is like the spirit of Jesus, 3:4. *See Matthew 11:29.*
- ♦ Men and women are equal spiritually, 3:7.
- ♦ In some sense—including probably a greater tendency to fear (3:6)—women are weaker than men, 3:7.

## Life

---

#### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Obey our wicked master, as Jesus obeyed wicked men.
- ♦ Prepare to suffer innocently and be criticized even for our righteousness, as Jesus suffered innocently.

## The Christian Life

- ♦ Wives should submit to their husbands, even if the men are non-Christians.
- ♦ If they are to be won over to Christ, men will be persuaded by good behavior and a meek, submissive spirit, not by words—either words of cajoling or words of criticism, 3:1–2.
- ♦ Women should focus more on interior beauty than excessive and expensive external adornment, such as jewelry and fancy hairstyles.
- ♦ Men should love their wives and live with them according to understanding of their wives' feminine nature; they should also honor their wives, as equal heirs of the grace of God.
- ♦ If husbands do not treat their wives well, their own prayers will be somehow hindered.

# 1 Peter 3:8–12

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ Verses 10–12 are quoted from Psalm 34:12–16.

### God

His greatness: God sees both evil and good people, 12.

### His goodness

- ♦ He calls (that is, chooses and elects, then effectually summons through the preaching of the gospel) some people to know him and be blessed, 9. *See 1 Peter 1:15; 2:9; 2:21; 5:10; Matthew 25:34; and 2 Peter 1:3, 10.*
- ♦ He will reward the good and punish the evil, 12.

### The Church

Its membership: Christians are members of the same family, brothers and sisters, 3:8.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Seek to be of one mind, compassionate, tenderhearted, and courteous. This would apply within marriage, too, 8–9.
- ♦ Turn from evil and seek good, knowing that God will reward us, 10–12.

# 1 Peter 3:13–4:6

## Truth

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### God

His greatness: He sometimes wills that we suffer for doing good, 3:17.

### Christ

#### His work

- ♦ He suffered once for sins, in our place, so that he might bring us to God, 3:18.
- ♦ He rose again, 3:21.
- ♦ He now sits at God's right hand, with all sovereignty over all created authorities, 3:22.
- ♦ Christ, by his Spirit and through Noah, preached to the previous generation of sinners, who are now in the prison of hell, 3:19–20.
- ♦ He suffered in the flesh, 4:1.
- ♦ He (or God) will judge the living and the dead, 4:5.

### Mankind

Our human nature: Like everyone else, Christians will suffer death, 4:6.

### Salvation

#### Its content

- ♦ Baptism into water symbolizes death to sin and life (now) in the presence of God, through faith in Christ, and a good conscience, the knowledge that our sins are forgiven. This is possible only to those who believe, 1:21–22; 3:13–21.
- ♦ Christians, who now have access to God (3:18), have hope in life after death in their spirits, like God, who is a living spirit (4:6); and, of course, of everlasting life later in a new heaven and new earth. *See 2 Peter 3:13.*

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Prepare to suffer for doing what is right, 3:13–17.
- ◆ Do not be afraid of suffering, or of what other people fear, 3:14.
- ◆ Always acknowledge in our hearts God (or Christ) as Lord, 3:15.
- ◆ Prepare to answer those who ask why we have hope, 3:15.
- ◆ Share our hope with nonbelievers with meekness and gentleness, when we have the opportunity to do so, 3:15.
- ◆ Prepare to suffer as Christ did; this will bring a kind of victory over sin, 4:1.
- ◆ Avoid all the evil conduct which is typical of non-Christians, even if others criticize us for this different lifestyle, 4:2–4.

# 1 Peter 4:7–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ “The end of all things is at hand,” 7; *see Romans 13:11 and Philipians 4:5.*
- ♦ “Be serious [sober] and watchful in your prayers,” 7; *see Ephesians 6:18.*
- ♦ “Above all things, have fervent love for one another,” 8; *see Colossians 3:14.*
- ♦ “Love covers a multitude of sins,” 8; *see Proverbs 10:12.*
- ♦ “Be hospitable,” 9; *see Hebrews 13:2.*
- ♦ “Without grumbling,” 9; *see 2 Corinthians 9:7 and Philipians 2:14.*
- ♦ “As each one has received a [spiritual] gift,” 10; *see Romans 12:6 and 1 Corinthians 12:7–11.*
- ♦ “That in all things God may be glorified,” 11; *see 1 Corinthians 10:31.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He possesses infinite resources of abilities that he can dispense to his people, 10.
- ♦ He possesses infinite glory, that is, transcendent “weight” and immensity, 11.
- ♦ He holds universal and unlimited authority and power over all things, 11.
- ♦ He is eternal, 11.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He hears and answers prayer, 7.
- ♦ He gives spiritual abilities to his people to serve each other, 10, 11.
- ♦ He can speak through his people to each other as they listen to him and submit their speech to him, 11.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is equal with God the Father, deserving to be gloried as well, 11.
- ♦ He, too, has all dominion and power, 11.

# The Last Things

## The last days

- ♦ The “last days” began when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came and began to inaugurate the kingdom of God by his teaching, healing, and casting out demons.
- ♦ History entered a new phase when Jesus rose from the dead and poured out his Spirit on his disciples.
- ♦ We are now living in the “end times,” in the sense that Jesus could return at any moment, 7. *See Romans 13:12; Hebrews 10:25; and Revelation 22:20.*

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Live as if Christ could return at any time, 7. *See Matthew 24:44; 25:15; and 2 Peter 3:11–12.*
- ♦ Stay alert, sane, and sober, with our minds clear of addictions and distractions, 7.
- ♦ Be constantly in prayer, or ready to pray, 7. *See 1 Thessalonians 5:17.*
- ♦ Love other believers fervently from the heart, 8. *See 1 Peter 1:22 and John 15:34–35.*
- ♦ Ask God to help us discern our spiritual gift(s) and use it or them to build others up.

*Note: Peter writes of two kinds of gifts: those involving speaking and those involving other forms of ministry, such as leading and helping, 11.*

- ♦ When speaking, ask God to give us his wisdom and his words, based on our knowledge of Scripture, 11.
- ♦ When serving, ask God for strength and ability, 11.
- ♦ In all cases, seek to glorify the Father and the Son, not ourselves, 11.



# 1 Peter 4:12–19

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ “If the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?” 18; *see Proverbs 11:31*.
- ♦ New Testament revelation focus on the “gospel of God” about Jesus Christ, 17.

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal trinity of Father, Son (Christ), and Holy Spirit, 14.

#### His greatness

- ♦ He deserves all glory and honor and praise at all times, 16.
- ♦ He has the authority to judge all people, 17.
- ♦ He governs all events and has the authority to allow suffering to come to anyone, including his people, 19.
- ♦ He is Creator of the entire universe, including mankind, 19. *See Genesis 1:1 and 2 Peter 3:5.*

#### His goodness

- ♦ He gives the Holy Spirit to those who repent of their sins and trust in Christ, 14. *See Acts 2:38; 10:47; 11:15–17; Romans 5:5; and Titus 3:5.*
- ♦ He dwells among his people as in a family or household, 17. *See 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 and 1 Timothy 3:15.*
- ♦ He sent his gospel through chosen messengers so that we might trust in Christ and know God, 17. *See 1 Peter 1:12 and Colossians 1:5–7.*
- ♦ He will one day judge all people according to his righteousness, 17. *See 2 Peter 3:10–13.*
- ♦ He is faithful to all his promises, to protect his people in times of trial, 19. *See 1 Peter 1:6–7 and 1 Corinthians 10:13.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He was a true man and was liable to bodily and mental torture, 13. *See Hebrews 2:10-14; 4:15; 5:7-8.*
- ♦ He shares the glory of God the Father, 13. *See 1 Peter 1:11; 5:1, 10.*

His work: He suffered on our behalf as a propitiatory sacrifice, 13. *See 1 Peter 1:2, 11, 19; 2:21-24; 5:1.*

## The People of God

### Their marks

- ♦ Trials and troubles for the sake of their faith, 12-14, 16; *see 1 Peter 1:6 and Matthew 5:11-12.*
- ♦ The presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, 14; *see Romans 8:9-10.*
- ♦ Giving glory to God even when they are suffering, 14, 16
- ♦ Holiness and righteousness of life, 15, 18; *see 1 Peter 1:15-16.*
- ♦ Being “Christian,” that is, believing in Christ, associating with other believers in Christ, and acting like Christ, 16
- ♦ Doing good, 19; *see Matthew 2:11-12; 3:3-17; 5:16.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Murder, 15
- ♦ Stealing, 15
- ♦ Doing any kind of evil, 15
- ♦ Meddling in the affairs of others, 15
- ♦ Not obeying the gospel of God, 17; *see 2 Thessalonians 1:8.*
- ♦ Ungodliness, that is, not being oriented toward God and not believing or fearing him, 18; *see Romans 1:18*
- ♦ Committing sins of any kind, that is, breaking the laws of God, 18; *see 1 John 3:4.*

Its consequences: The consequences of sin include judgment from God, 17-18.

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Eternal joy, 13.
- ♦ Receiving the Spirit of God, 14.
- ♦ The hope of glory, 14; *see Romans 5:3*.
- ♦ Salvation from the judgment of God, 17–18
- ♦ Salvation of our souls, 19; *1 Peter 1:9*.

### Its recipients

- ♦ Those who, believing in Christ, are willing to suffer for his name, 13, 16; *see 1:6–9; Romans 8:17*.
- ♦ Those who have obeyed, that is, believed and followed, the gospel of God, 17; *see Romans 1:5, 16, 19; and Ephesians 1:13; 2:10*.

## The Last Things

### The end of the age

- ♦ Christ will return in great glory, 13. *See Matthew 25:31*.
- ♦ His faithful followers will be “glad with exceeding joy,” 13. *See 1 Peter 1:7 and Romans 2:7*.
- ♦ Christ will judge the world, 17–18. *See Matthew 25:31–46*.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Expect to suffer simply because we believe in and follow Jesus Christ.
- ♦ Rejoice when we share in his sufferings, knowing that we will have greater joy later.
- ♦ Call on God to give us the supply of his Spirit when we suffer, 14.
- ♦ Avoid all forms of evil and ungodliness.
- ♦ Glorify God by the manner in which we suffer.
- ♦ See our sufferings partly as the judgment of God upon us; or, rather, the chastening of a loving Father. *See 1 Corinthians 11:3–32 and Hebrews 12:3–11*.
- ♦ When suffering, imitate Jesus, who committed his soul to his Father, 19. *See Luke 23:46*.
- ♦ Trust our faithful Creator to give us all that we need when we suffer, out of his infinite wisdom, power, and riches.

# 1 Peter 5:1–14

## Truth

---

### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble,” 5; *see Proverbs 3:34 and James 4:6.*

Its source: Biblical revelation came from God to and through his chosen messengers.

- ♦ Peter, like the other eleven original apostles, was an eyewitness of Jesus’ sufferings and resurrection, 1. *See Acts 1:21–22.*
- ♦ The writers of the New Testament sometimes used amanuenses, like Silvanus, 12. *See Romans 16:22.*
  - These men conveyed the message of the apostles but in their own style.
  - This practice probably explains why 1 Peter, unlike 2 Peter, is written in such elegant Greek.
  - It may also account for the excellent Greek of the Letter to the Hebrews, which earlier generations believed was authored (though not written down) by Paul.

Its content: Though the Bible speaks often of judgment, its principal message is “the true grace of God,” 12.

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has, and is jealous of, all authority, and actively resists those who challenge his authority in any way, even in their hearts, 5.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing the hearts of all people, and can thus discern the inner motives of a proud person, 5.
- ♦ He is mighty – almighty, in fact, 6.
- ♦ He is eternal, 10, 11.
- ♦ He is glorious, possessed of divine “weight” (the original meaning of the Hebrew word for glory) and immensity, as well as beauty and transcendence, 10, 11. *See Exodus 40:34–35 and 2 Chronicles 7:1–2.*
- ♦ He has the power to uphold and strengthen his people, 10.

- ♦ He exercises absolute, total, and ultimate sovereignty and rule over all creation, 11.

### His goodness

- ♦ He sent Jesus to suffer for our redemption, 1. *See John 3:16.*
- ♦ He raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory, 1. *See 1 Peter 3:21–22.*
- ♦ He gives elders to the church to serve as pastors who take care of the people of God, 1–4. *See Acts 20:17, 28.*

*Note: In the New Testament, elders and pastors [shepherds] are the same men, referred to differently by their status (generally older or more experienced) and function (those who care for God’s people). These men are also called “bishops,” that is, overseers. See 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. There is no biblical warrant for a separate “order” of bishops who rule over elders and deacons.*

- ♦ He has chosen his people to be his “flock,” the sheep for whom he cares, 2. *See Psalms 23; 100:3.*
- ♦ He gives grace, especially to the humble, 5, 10, 12.
- ♦ He called – that is, chose and then effectually called through the gospel – many people to share in his eternal glory, 10. *See Romans 8:30.*
- ♦ He will eventually perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle believers who have passed through suffering, 10.
- ♦ Meanwhile, he has communicated his will and ways to his people through his chosen messengers, 12.
- ♦ He has chosen many for salvation, 13. *See 1 Peter 1:2.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He was truly and fully man, so that he was liable to all kinds of suffering, including death, 1. *See 1 Peter 2:21–24; 3:18; 4:13.*
- ♦ He now enjoys infinite and endless joy in the presence of God the Father, 1.
- ♦ He is the Chief Shepherd of his people, the church, 4. *See 1 Peter 2:25; Psalm 23:1; John 10:11, 14; and Hebrews 13:20.*
- ♦ He now dwells in glory with the Father, 4, 10–11.
- ♦ He is Christ, the anointed Messiah, the Savior whom God sent to save his people from their sins, 14. *See Luke 2:11.*
- ♦ He is Jesus, the son of Mary, bearing the name that means “Yahweh is salvation,” 14. *See Matthew 1:21.*

### His work

- ♦ He suffered on our behalf as a vicarious, propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, 1. *See 1 Peter 1:2, 19; 2:21–25; 3:18.*
- ♦ He rose from the dead into a state of endless glory in heaven, 1. *See 1 Peter 1:3, 11, 21; 3:18, 21–22; 4:11.*

## Spiritual Beings

Satan: Also called the devil, he is a constant enemy of God and his people, working chiefly by deceit and guile, 8. *See Genesis 3:1–6 and Ephesians 2:2; 6:10–20.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Serving God grudgingly rather than willingly, 2; *see 2 Corinthians 9:7.*
- ♦ Serving God, especially as a leader, out of a desire for money or gain, 2; *see Acts 8:14–23 and 1 Thessalonians 2:5.*
- ♦ Using one's authority to dominate others in the church (or anywhere else), 3; *see Matthew 20:25–28.*
- ♦ Pride in any form, 5; *see 1 Corinthians 13:4 and Ephesians 4:2 (as a contrast).*

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Rewards when Christ returns, 4
- ♦ Continued grace from God, 5, 10, 12
- ♦ Eventual exaltation when Christ returns, 6
- ♦ Access to God in prayer, 7
- ♦ Strength to overcome Satan, 8–9
- ♦ Perseverance under trials until we die, or they end, 10
- ♦ Being “in Christ” by faith, 14; *see 1 Peter 1:21; Ephesians 1:1; 2:9.*

Its recipients: Salvation comes to those who are humble and manifest humility by trust in God and submission to him, 6.

## The People of God

### Their identity

- ♦ Members of God's flock, 2–3
- ♦ Brothers (and sisters) in Christ, 9, 12

- ♦ “In Christ,” 14

### Their marks

- ♦ Membership in and fellowship with the “flock” of God, that is, fellow believers, 2
- ♦ Humility, 5
- ♦ Constant danger from Satan’s attacks, 8
- ♦ Resistance to Satan, 9
- ♦ Suffering, 10
- ♦ Love for other believers, 14

## The Last Things

### The end of the age

- ♦ Christ will return in glory for his people, 4. *See 1 Peter 3:13; 5:1.*
- ♦ He will at that time appear to his people – indeed, to all people – as the risen and glorified Lord, 4. *See 1 Peter 1:13.*
- ♦ He will give to his faithful followers a crown of glory that will not, like victors’ laurel wreaths in ancient Olympic games, fade away, 4. *See 1 Peter 1:7, 13.*

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Lead others in the church as humble servants, 1–4.
- ♦ Submit to godly church leadership, 5.
- ♦ Be humble toward all other believers, 6.
- ♦ Cast all our cares upon God, knowing that he cares for us, 7.
- ♦ Be constantly vigilant and alert to Satan’s attacks, 8.
- ♦ Resist Satan by faith, 9; *see James 4:7.*
- ♦ Expect to suffer for being a Christian, 9–10.
- ♦ Trust in God’s support and help, 10.
- ♦ Give glory to God at all times and in all ways, 11; *see 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 1:12; and Colossians 3:17.*
- ♦ Read the words of the apostles often, 12.
- ♦ Stand firm in the grace of God, that is, his unconditional and unchanging love to us in Christ, 12.

# 2 PETER



# 2 Peter 1:1–11

## Truth

---

### Revelation

Its source: It comes to us through the writings of the apostles.

- ♦ They were chosen by Jesus for unique experiences with him (including seeing his resurrection), unique knowledge, and unique authority to communicate his words to us, 1.
- ♦ We must listen to their words as to the words of Christ.

The source of this letter

- ♦ Some scholars have doubted that Peter wrote this letter, but internal evidence and church tradition are convincing proofs that Peter is the author, 1, 16–19; 3:1.
- ♦ The style differs from that of 1 Peter, but the former letter may have been written by an amanuensis at Peter's direction. *See 1 Peter 5:12.*

Its benefits: The immediate goal of revelation is to evoke true faith in us, leading to true knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 1–2.

Its content

- ♦ True knowledge is
  - Intellectual assent and full, heartfelt acceptance of the truth
  - “An intimate, informed relationship resulting from conversion and growth,” (*ZNIVSB*)
- ♦ Results of true knowledge are
  - Grace and peace from God, 2
  - “All things that pertain to life and godliness,” 3
  - Participation in God's nature by receiving the Holy Spirit and being born again, 4
  - Deliverance from the deadly “corruption that is in the world through lust [sinful desires],” 4
  - Growing conformity to the likeness of Christ in our mind and actions, 5–7
  - A fruitful life in this world, 8

- A warm welcome into the eternal kingdom of God and of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, 11

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of God the Father, God the Son (our Lord Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit, 1-2.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is divine, that is, transcendent to the world and to us in every way, 3.
- ♦ He is almighty, 3.
- ♦ He is the author of life, 3.
- ♦ He is incorruptible, 4.
- ♦ He is king over the universe, 11.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is righteous, 1.
- ♦ He is glorious, 3.
- ♦ He is filled with every moral excellence, 3.
- ♦ He is our Savior, 1.
- ♦ He is willing to impart knowledge of himself to us, 2-3.
- ♦ He is the giver of promises that deliver us from corruption and death, 4.
- ♦ He forgives us our sins, 9.
- ♦ He called ["effectively summoned," *ZNVSB*] and chose us from before all time, 10.
- ♦ He is eternal, 11.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is both man—Jesus—and God, 1-2.
- ♦ He is God's anointed Messiah and Savior for mankind, 1-2.
- ♦ He is our Lord, [i.e., Old Testament Yahweh], the one true and living God, 2, 8.
- ♦ He is king over an eternal kingdom, 11.

## Mankind

### Our fallen state

- ◆ We are subject to ignorance of God and all that pertains to life and godliness, and therefore need God's revelation, 3.
- ◆ We are subject to sinful desires [lusts] and therefore liable to corruption and death, 4.
- ◆ We are in need of constant growth in every sort of moral excellence [virtue], 5-7.
- ◆ We are sinful, 9.
- ◆ We are prone to forget former experiences of God's grace, 9.

## Salvation

### Its source

- ◆ It comes to us through faith in Jesus Christ, which grants us the righteousness of God, 1.
- ◆ It flows from God's grace [unmerited favor] and issues peace with God and inner tranquility, 2.

### Its benefits

- ◆ It produces spiritual life and increasing godliness, 3.
- ◆ It involves the knowledge of God, 3.
- ◆ It brings participation in the moral nature of God, 4.
- ◆ It brings deliverance from the corruption that is in the world through lust, 4.
- ◆ It will be evidenced by constant growth in moral character, 5-7.
- ◆ It will show itself in bearing spiritual fruit, 8.
- ◆ It includes forgiveness of sins, 9.
- ◆ It results from God's call and election (i.e., from his sovereign grace).
- ◆ It will lead to entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ, 11.

## The Church

### Its characteristics

- ♦ All who truly believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and whose lives are being transformed by God, share equal standing in the church of God, even though some, like the apostles, have more authority than others.
- ♦ All are spiritually equal, 1.
- ♦ Likewise, all are equally “servants,” or even “slaves,” of Jesus Christ, 1.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Rest in God’s grace and peace, 1-2.
- ♦ Think often on the promises of God, so that you can overcome the passions of this world.
- ♦ Make it your highest priority in life to grow in Christ-likeness, seeking a well-rounded character marked by faith, virtue, knowledge (of God), self-control, perseverance in following Christ despite trials and temptations, godliness, love for other believers, and love for God and all men.
- ♦ Ponder often how God has graciously forgiven your sins, so that you might live before him and to his glory.
- ♦ Do not believe that anyone is truly a Christian unless you see both sincere faith and steady moral and spiritual growth in that person.
- ♦ Seek above all to gain entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ.

## 2 Peter 1:12–21

### Truth

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#### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages building upon and referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ It moves from the Old Testament, through the incarnation and career of Jesus Christ, to the apostles.
- ♦ All parts are related to each other, and often refer to each other.
  - Peter refers to the Transfiguration, 16–18.
  - Peter used Old Testament terms like “Morning Star” to refer to Jesus, and “day” to refer to the day of Jesus’ coming to judge the world, 19. *See Numbers 24:17 and Revelation 2:28; 22:16.*
  - Peter refers to his experience, recorded elsewhere by Mark, his “interpreter” (according to early church tradition), 16–18. *See Mark 9:1–8 and Matthew 17:1–5.*

#### Its source

- ♦ It comes supremely through the incarnation, life, teachings, death, resurrection, and visible ascension of his eternal Son, who became the man Jesus, the one who is Christ our Lord, both God and man, 17.
- ♦ It is rooted in history and has come in and through historical persons and events, including the incarnation, the eyewitness experience of the apostles, and their writings to particular people, 12–18.
- ♦ It also came through the Old Testament, referred to here as the “prophets,” who would include Moses, the authors of the historical books, David and the Psalms, Solomon and his writings, and the writing prophets, 19–21.
- ♦ The Bible, including the Old Testament, is not of merely human origin, but comes from God himself through his chosen human instruments, 20.
- ♦ Old Testament prophets wrote as men who were “carried along” by the Holy Spirit, who used their individual personalities, minds, and experiences to record God’s own words for us, 20–21.

## God

### His Triune nature: God exists as three persons

- ♦ Father, 17
- ♦ His Son, Jesus Christ, 16
- ♦ Holy Spirit, 21

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules sovereignly over our lives, even determining when we shall die, 14.
- ♦ He possesses power, majesty, excellence, and glory, 16–17.
- ♦ He dwells in heaven, meaning he is transcendent to us, 18.

### His goodness

- ♦ He has given us his self-revelation through the apostles, like Peter, 12–18.
- ♦ He has also revealed himself through his Son, Jesus, 16–18.

## Christ

### His person and work

- ♦ Jesus Christ is fully man, known as such by his disciples, 16–18.
- ♦ He is also fully God, as “Lord” (i.e., Old Testament “Yahweh,” 16.
- ♦ He is the unique and beloved Son of God, thus sharing in God’s power, honor, and glory, 16–17.
- ♦ He came once in the incarnation, 16, and will return in glory at the end of time, 19.
- ♦ Of this return, the Transfiguration was a preview, 16–17.

## Mankind

### Our mortality

- ♦ As fallen sinners, we are destined to die, 13–15.
- ♦ We live in a body, which is our temporary dwelling, like a tent or tabernacle, 13.  
*See 2 Corinthians 5:1–5.*

## Salvation

### Its source and conveyance

- ♦ It comes to us now through knowing Jesus Christ our Lord, who is also our Savior, 1, 8, 16–18.
- ♦ It will come fully and finally the “day” of his return, 19.

## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ Those who know and believe the apostles’ message belong to the church.
- ♦ They are marked by firm faith and constant growth, which comes by repeated exposure to the written Word of God, 12–15, 19.

## The Last Things

### The Kingdom of God

- ♦ Jesus Christ has already inaugurated his kingdom by his first coming.
- ♦ He will establish it fully and finally on a new earth when he returns, bringing unending light and gladness, 16–19.

### Christ’s return

- ♦ Peter—and the whole Bible—refer to the coming of Christ as “the day,” 19.
- ♦ Therefore, we assume that Jesus will come back only once, at the end of all history, and not several times (e.g., as some say, first secretly at the Rapture for his church, then visibly to rule an earthly kingdom for 1,000 years from Jerusalem, and finally to judge the whole world).

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Pore over and carefully ponder the Scriptures as the very words of God.
- ♦ Hold fast to the promises in the Bible, especially those concerning the return of Christ to establish his eternal kingdom on earth.
- ♦ Remind each other of the witness of the apostles and of the prophets.

- ♦ Honor and love Jesus Christ as God's beloved Son and the one who will give us light and salvation.
- ♦ Use your limited time on this earth well to remind others of the truth of God's Word.



# 2 Peter 2:1–10

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Peter here refers to accounts of Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah, 5–8.
- ♦ The reference to the fall of evil angels does not come from the Old Testament, but their fall is assumed in the New Testament by the presence of evil spirits.

### False revelation

- ♦ God's revelation has always been counterfeited and perverted by evil men who claim to be teachers of the truth but are really false – including false prophets in Old Testament and New Testament.
- ♦ They deceive many, so believers must be constantly warned against them, 1–3.  
*See Matthew 24:4–5, 11; Acts 20:29–30; Galatians 1:6–9; Philipians 3:2; Colossians 2:4, 8, 18, 20–23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–3; 1 Timothy 1:3–7; 4:1–3; 2 Timothy 3:1–8; 2 John 2:18–19, 22–23; 3 John 3–11; and Jude 3–4.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He has power over angels, both good and evil, 4.
- ♦ His power extends over the entire created order, including entire cities as well as individuals like Noah and Lot, 5–7.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He justly punishes all evil, whether committed by angels or men, 3–6, 9–10.
- ♦ He preserves the lives and souls of those who trust and follow him, 5, 7, 9.

## Christ

### His person and work

- ♦ He is Lord, fully divine and fully human, 1.
- ♦ He “bought” (redeemed) repentant sinners from God’s wrath and eternal hell, 1.

## Spiritual Beings

### Angels

- ♦ They are mighty in power, 11.
- ♦ Some have fallen and are not kept in a place of preliminary punishment, 4, 9.

## Mankind

### Our fallen state

- ♦ We are prone to deception by false teachers, 2.
- ♦ We are destined for death and then judgment, 1, 3, 6, 9.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Teaching false doctrine, 1, 3
- ♦ Denying Christ after having professed faith in him, 1
- ♦ Following false teachings, 2
- ♦ Covetousness, 3
- ♦ Ungodliness, 6
- ♦ Sexual sins, including all sexual activity outside marriage between one man and one woman, 7
- ♦ Lawlessness, 8
- ♦ Sexual perversion, such as homosexual activity, 10
- ♦ Despising authority, both earthly and heavenly, 10-11

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ◆ After we die, we shall be preliminarily judged, and those who have disobeyed God without repentance will be kept in penal confinement until the final judgment, 9.
- ◆ When Christ returns, he will fully and finally judge the world, including the dead, and he will punish those angels and men who in this life did not follow him, 3-4, 9.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Heed the warnings in Scripture against false teachers, who will be marked both by their wrong doctrine and by their bad conduct, especially greed and sexual immorality.
- ◆ Do not fret because of the temporary success of wicked men and false teachers, for their judgment will come.
- ◆ Do not be surprised when many professing Christians are deceived by false teachers.
- ◆ Trust God to preserve you from temptation and bring you to his eternal kingdom.

# 2 Peter 2:11–22

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Peter here refers to the story of Balaam, 15–16. *See Numbers 22:5, 7.*
- ♦ He also quotes a proverb of Solomon, 22. *See Proverbs 26:11.*

### Its interpretation

- ♦ Biblical revelation contains some passages that are particularly difficult to understand, with godly interpreters holding different views.
- ♦ Some believe that verses 20–21 refer to true believers who fall away from Christ after having been born again.
- ♦ Others hold that it refers to those who have only had a shallow experience with the gospel, possess no deep root of repentance and faith wrought by the Holy Spirit, and are still captive to their passions.

### Its benefits

- ♦ God’s revelation is knowledge of the “way of righteousness.”
- ♦ It always leads to righteous conduct in those who truly receive it, 15, 21.

*Note: The Bible draws upon the created order to express spiritual truths, showing the basic unity of all forms of revelation, 12, 17.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is God: “Lord” is Old Testament “Yahweh.”
- ♦ He is Savior, as God alone can be, 20.
- ♦ He is also truly man, the man Jesus, 20.
- ♦ He is the “Christ,” i.e., Old Testament “Messiah”: God’s anointed servant come to deliver his people from their sins, 20.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Living for the pleasures of the moment, like animals, 12
- ♦ Speaking evil of things we don't understand, 12
- ♦ Partying in the daytime (and in excess at any time), 13
- ♦ Deceiving Christians, 13
- ♦ Pretending to be a follower of Christ when really following evil, 13
- ♦ Constantly looking upon others to lust after them or constantly seeing other people's wives as possible sexual partners, 14
- ♦ Being unstable in our allegiance to God, 14
- ♦ Covetousness, especially when it becomes a habit of the heart, 14
- ♦ Loving profit from unrighteousness, 15
- ♦ Promising to give what we do not have, 17
- ♦ Boasting, 18
- ♦ Lewdness and lasciviousness, 18
- ♦ Living in error, 18
- ♦ Promising liberty from God's law while we are slaves of our own sins, 19
- ♦ Repeating foolish mistakes, 21-22

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ Fellowship with other believers in righteous feasting, along with the Lord's Supper, 13
- ♦ Escaping from the company and habits of those who live in error, 18
- ♦ Truly knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, 20

*Note: Given other passages of the Bible, such as John 10:28-32 and Romans 8:28-30, it is likely that the people referred to in verses 20-22 are professing Christians who have had some experience of God and his truth, associate with other Christians, and deceive many into thinking that they are followers of Christ, but who have no root in themselves and quickly fall back into error. See also Matthew 13:20-22.*

- ♦ Knowing the way of righteousness, 21

## The Last Things

The final judgment: Those who have falsely professed to be followers of Christ, and especially those who deceive Christians by their false teaching, will be punished on the last day, 12, 14, 17.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Beware of false teachers in the church, who speak great things but are in fact empty.
- ◆ Beware of teachers in the church whose lives are marked by covetousness, lust, and self-indulgence.
- ◆ Beware of those who promise freedom from God's law, in the sense of freedom from the requirement to obey God's holy commands.
- ◆ Guard your own hearts against corruption, sexual lust, adultery, self-indulgence, unrestrained partying, and all the sins listed above.
- ◆ Test Christian teachers and their doctrine by whether they show godliness in their own lives and by whether those who hear them show transformed moral character.

# 2 Peter 3

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Peter refers to the accounts of creation and the Flood in Genesis, 5-6.
- ♦ He speaks of the “day of the Lord,” a common prophetic term, 10.
- ♦ He mentions Isaiah’s new heaven and new earth, 13. *See Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; and Revelation 21:1.*

### Its content

- ♦ The entire Old Testament, including the prophets and Genesis, 2, 5-7, 13
- ♦ The New Testament, including the letters of the apostles, like those of Peter and Paul, 1-2, 15-16

### Its interpretation

- ♦ Scripture contains some passages that are hard to understand, like some in Paul’s letters, 16.
- ♦ This does not mean that they are impossible to understand, but “untaught” (i.e., ignorant) and “unstable” people often twist these to suit their own thoughts, 16.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He created the world by his spoken word, 5. *See Genesis 1:3-27.*
- ♦ He destroyed all things living by the Flood, 6. *See Genesis 6-9.*
- ♦ He will again destroy the world as it is now constituted and create a new or (more likely) renewed heaven and earth, 7, 10-13.
- ♦ He is eternal, existing before creation and living to all eternity, 5, 18.

### His goodness

- ♦ He revealed himself to his people through the prophets and apostles, 2.

- ♦ He is patient towards his people, giving them the opportunity to repent before he judges the world, 9, 15.
- ♦ He is holy and requires that we be holy also, 11.
- ♦ He is righteous and will create a new world in which righteousness dwells, 13.
- ♦ He is willing to be at peace with his repentant people, 14.
- ♦ He is Savior of his people, 15.
- ♦ He is gracious and merciful to us, 18.

*Note: "God is not willing that any should perish" refers to his giving his people time to repent of their sins, not to his intention to save everyone born onto the earth. This is made clear by the statement, "but [he] is longsuffering toward us" (or, as some manuscripts read, "you"), referring to the recipients of Peter's letter, who are believers in Christ. See 2 Peter 1:1; 3:17-18.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is referred to obliquely here as "without spot and blemish," 14. *See 1 Peter 1:19.*
- ♦ He is Lord and Savior, and thus God, equal with the Father and the Spirit, 18.
- ♦ He is also fully man, Jesus, the anointed one from God, 18.

## The Last Things

### The new creation

- ♦ When Christ returns, this world will be destroyed by fire and be either completely annihilated, as some believe, or radically transformed and then renewed, as is more likely, 7, 10-11, 13. *See Romans 8:20-21.*
- ♦ A new heaven and new earth will fulfill all the prophetic promises of a perfect environment in which God rules his people justly and in perpetual peace, 13.

### Christ's second coming

- ♦ There will be only one return of Christ, not three, as some maintain: once in secret for the saints; once to establish the so-called "millennial kingdom" on earth; and one last time to judge the world and usher in a new age.
- ♦ It will be sudden and catch many by surprise, 10.



# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Do not believe those who doubt that the Lord Jesus will return to judge the world, renew it, and save his people.
- ◆ Do not doubt that God created the world by his word and destroyed it in a cataclysmic flood.
- ◆ Believe all the words of the prophets (Old Testament) and apostles (New Testament), including parts that are “hard to understand” or that we just don’t like.
- ◆ Take this opportunity to repent of our sins, and repent daily, that we might be ready when Christ returns.
- ◆ Seek to live holy and blameless lives.
- ◆ Seek to be at peace with all men, especially believers.
- ◆ Beware of false teachers.
- ◆ “Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” that we may glorify his name, now and forever.

**1, 2, & 3 JOHN** *(currently unavailable)*

**JUDE**

# Jude 1–16

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its cumulative fullness

- ♦ Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.
  - The death of Israelites in the wilderness after the Exodus, 5; *see Numbers 14:29–30 and Deuteronomy 1:32–26.*
  - The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and surrounding towns, 7; *see Genesis 19.*
  - The archangel Michael, 9; *see Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; and Revelation 12:7.*
  - Cain, 11; *see Genesis 4.*
  - Balaam, 11; *see Numbers 22–24.*
  - The rebellion of Korah against Moses, 11; *see Numbers 16:1–35; 26:9–10.*
  - Second Peter draws heavily upon Jude.
- ♦ These examples and references show that God’s ways of dealing with mankind do not change, as his character does not change and as fallen human nature has not changed.

#### Its source

- ♦ It comes to us through the writings of the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament “apostles and prophets.” *See Ephesians 2:20.* The New Testament “prophets” probably include Mark, Luke, James the brother of Jesus, and Jude, also the brother of Jesus (possibly also the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, if he was not Paul). Their writings are authoritative for us.
- ♦ New Testament writers sometimes also refer to extra-biblical, and thus non-authoritative, writings, as Jude does in verse 9 and possibly also verse 6, where passages from the Apocrypha are drawn upon. *See also Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:33; and Titus 1:12.* This does not imply that Jude considered these writings Scripture, since he does not call them “Scripture,” but only that he found them useful as examples that his readers would recognize.

Its authority: Biblical revelation records “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints,” and is thus final, 3. There can be no further authoritative revelation, despite claims by Muslims, Roman Catholics, and Mormons that they have received additional revelation from God.

## God

His Triune nature: God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 1, 20.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is able to preserve his people unto salvation, 1.
- ♦ He is able to punish men and angels, 5–6.
- ♦ Being holy, he judges and punishes all unrepentant evildoers, both human and angelic, 5–6, 13.

### His goodness

- ♦ He calls us to salvation, sanctifies us, and keeps us safe in Christ, 1.
- ♦ He grants mercy, peace with himself, and love to us, 2.

## Christ

His person: Jesus Christ is man, the man Jesus, and also fully God, the Lord, 4.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Ungodliness, as the spring of all its manifestations, 4
- ♦ Using God’s grace as an excuse for sexual indulgence, 4
- ♦ Denying Jesus Christ as Lord, 4
- ♦ Unbelief, 5
- ♦ Rebellion against God, especially against God’s arrangement of our situation in life, 6
- ♦ Sexual immorality, including homosexual behavior, 7
- ♦ Relying too much on subjective experiences for guidance, 8
- ♦ Rejecting authority, 8
- ♦ Speaking evil of human and angelic beings, 8
- ♦ Speaking evil of things and people that we don’t really know very well, 10

- ♦ Following only our animal desires and passions, 10
- ♦ Envyng others and even killing them, 11
- ♦ Perverting God’s word and will for the sake of gain, 11
- ♦ Rebellion against God’s appointed spiritual and political authorities, 11
- ♦ Pretending to be Christians but not really being followers of Christ, 12
- ♦ “Feeding” oneself rather than caring for God’s people, 12
- ♦ Perpetual instability of life, teaching, and morals, without bearing the fruit of good works and true doctrine, 13

## Salvation

### Its conveyance

- ♦ It comes to us from God, through Christ, as effectual summons to faith (“calling”), positionally and practically sanctified (i.e., consecrated to God for his ownership and use, and gradually changed into his moral likeness), and preservation of our souls by God, 1
- ♦ It comes to us as the revelation of God’s will to us through the Bible, 3
- ♦ It comes to us as deliverance from the power of Satan and evil, 5.
- ♦ It comes to us as fellowship with other believers, including holy feasting and the Lord’s Supper, 12.

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ When he returns, he will judge the world, rewarding those who trust in and follow him and punishing in eternal hell both men and angels who do not, 4, 6, 13.
- ♦ Punishment in the darkness of hell will be unending, 13.

## Life

---

### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for calling us to be saved through Jesus Christ.
- ♦ Beware of those who introduce false teachings into the church. These include teachers of the “Prosperity Gospel,” theological liberals, extreme charismatics, those who promote “free grace” to the degree that they do not insist upon holy

living, and official Roman Catholic teachers (who add to God's faith "once delivered to the saints").

*Note: Roman Catholicism includes many sincere believers in Jesus Christ; we are referring here only to their official teachings and the teachers who promote official Roman Catholic doctrine and practice.*

- ◆ Earnestly contend for the faith that was given once for all to the apostles and prophets of New Testament times.
- ◆ Avoid the sins mentioned above.

# Jude 17–25

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is cumulative, with later passages referring to earlier ones.

- ♦ The “apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 17; *see Matthew 10:1–4; Galatians 1:1; and Ephesians 2:20.*
- ♦ Warnings of coming apostates, 17–19; *see Acts 20:29; 1 Timothy 4:1; and 2 Timothy 3:1–5.*
- ♦ “Praying in the Holy Spirit,” 20; *see Ephesians 6:18.*
- ♦ “Pulling them out of the fire,” 23; *see Amos 4:11.*
- ♦ “Garments defiled by the flesh,” 23; *see Zechariah 3:4.*

Its source: Biblical revelation came through the words of God’s chosen spokesmen; in the New Testament, these included “apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 17.

Its content: Biblical revelation includes predictive prophecy, 18–19.

### God

His Triune nature: God exists as an eternal Trinity of Father (usually called “God” in the New Testament), Son (the Lord Jesus Christ, equal with God the Father), and Holy Spirit, 17, 19, 20, 25. *See Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14.*

His greatness

- ♦ He governs all events and can therefore predict the future, 18.
- ♦ He is eternal, 21, 25.
- ♦ He is omnipotent, 24–25.
- ♦ He is transcendent and yet omnipresent, with a “presence” that penetrates all existence, 24.
- ♦ He is glorious, that is, “heavy,” immense beyond measure, 24–25.
- ♦ He is unique, 25.
- ♦ He possesses all wisdom, knowledge, and intelligence; he is omniscient, 25.



- ♦ He holds all authority and dominion in all the universe; he is the sovereign King and Ruler of all, 25.
- ♦ He is majestic in divine and royal excellence, grandeur, nobility, splendor, and magnificence, 25.

### His goodness

- ♦ He revealed his will and his ways, including the future, to his people through the teaching and writing of the apostles, 17.
- ♦ He sent his eternal Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us, choose and teach apostles, and give them authority to reveal truth to others, 17, 21.
- ♦ He has given all true believers himself in the person of the Holy Spirit, 20. *See Titus 3:5.*
- ♦ He is holy, as the name “Holy Spirit” indicates, 20, 24.
- ♦ He is full of love for his people, and he fills them with love for himself, 21.
- ♦ He is merciful, 21.
- ♦ He is righteous and just and will therefore punish unrepentant sinners, 22.
- ♦ He keeps his people from falling into irrevocable error and sin, 24.
- ♦ He welcomes his people into his heavenly presence, 24.
- ♦ He is beautiful – another meaning of the word “glory,” 24.
- ♦ He is joyful and gives joy to his people, 24.
- ♦ He saves his people from their sins and the consequences of the Fall, 25.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, that is Yahweh in the flesh, 17, 21.

*Note: “Lord” in the New Testament when used with Jesus refers to the Old Testament name Yahweh, which was translated as “Kurios” = “Lord” in the Greek version.*

- ♦ He is Jesus, the fully human son of Mary, 17, 21. *See Matthew 1:1, 18, 21, 25.*
- ♦ He is the Christ, the divine–human Messiah, anointed by God to save his people from their sins, 17, 21. *See Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18.*

### His work

- ♦ He chose, instructed, commissioned, and then revealed God’s truth through his apostles, 17.

- ♦ He embodied the mercy of God, gives mercy now to his people, and will finally show mercy to them at the last day, 21. *See Hebrews 4:16.*
- ♦ He conveys eternal life to all who trust and follow him, 21. *See John 10:28.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Mocking God, his revelation, and his messengers, 18
- ♦ Giving in to our ungodly desires, 18
- ♦ Being sensual, dominated by this world and its values and passions, 19
- ♦ Causing divisions among God's people, 19

## Salvation

### Its benefits

- ♦ Being loved by God and by his people, 17, 20
- ♦ Receiving the revelation of God, 17
- ♦ Having the Spirit of God, 19; *see Romans 8:9–11.*
- ♦ Having unhindered access to God in prayer, 20
- ♦ Receiving mercy from God, now and forever, 21
- ♦ Receiving eternal life, 21
- ♦ Being kept by God for final salvation, 24
- ♦ Having the certain prospect of seeing God, 24
- ♦ Being changed gradually into holy people, 24

## The Last Things

### The last days

- ♦ Before Christ returns, scoffers will arise among professing Christians, 18–19.
- ♦ When Christ returns, God will complete the work of sanctification and present us to himself without fault, 24. *See Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; and Colossians 1:22.*
- ♦ God's people will dwell in his presence forever, 24. *See Revelation 21:31; 22:4.*
- ♦ God's people will experience unalloyed and everlasting joy, 24.

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Read and meditate upon the words of the apostles as recorded in the New Testament, 17.
- ♦ Expect to see ungodly people causing divisions in the church, 18–19.
- ♦ Keep building ourselves up on the foundation of the faith, that is, the doctrine, delivered to us from the apostles to this day, 20. *See Colossians 1:23.*
- ♦ Pray in the Spirit, that is, according to the leading and inner empowerment of the Spirit, 20.
- ♦ Continually meditate upon God’s love for us in Christ and keep ourselves in the conscious awareness of his love by obeying his commands to love others, 21. *See John 15:9–10.*
- ♦ Set our hopes fully on the grace and mercy to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 21. *See 1 Peter 1:13.*
- ♦ Be compassionate toward erring Christians who repent, 22. *See Galatians 6:1.*
- ♦ Be careful not to allow ourselves to fall into sin with believers who are still wandering from God’s ways, 23.
- ♦ Constantly give praise to God, 25–25. *See Ephesians 1:3–14, especially 6, 12, 14; 3:20–21; 5:20; and 1 Peter 2:10.*

# REVELATION

# Revelation 1:1–8

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its roots in history

- ♦ The contents of this book were revealed to the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, probably towards the end of the first century, 4.
- ♦ It was addressed to seven historical churches in the Roman province of Asia Minor, 4.
- ♦ It pertained to things which must “shortly” take place, meaning that at least some of the events prophesied in Revelation would come to pass within a few years of its writing, 1–2.

Its content: Biblical revelation is not only from Jesus Christ, but also, as the Greek shows, *about* Jesus Christ. The entire Scriptures speak of Christ, 1. *See also Luke 24:26–27.*

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation was written down by authorized messengers of God, 3.
- ♦ The writing was the final stage in a process of revelation from God, which came through Jesus Christ and sometimes also through angels sent by Christ, 1.
- ♦ This written revelation is the “word of God,” and not just the words of those men who were commissioned by God to record his word, 2.

#### Its literary forms

- ♦ Biblical revelation was given in various forms, or genres. The book of Revelation belongs to three genres.
  - Revelation, or apocalyptic writings, 1
  - Prophecy, 3
  - Letters to the churches, 4
- ♦ It shares characteristics of all three genres.
  - Apocalyptic writings—for example, Isaiah 13 and the visions of Daniel—contain symbolic visions whose interpretations are provided by angels.

- Prophetic writings contain rebuke (based on the Old Testament law), prophecies concerning the future, and comfort and encouragement to believers facing trouble.

### Its effects

- ♦ God's revelation is meant to bring blessing to those who read it, either silently, or as was common in the New Testament period, aloud. It also brings blessing to those who hear and heed it, 3.
- ♦ It is intended to be received by faith and actions flowing from that faith, 3.

## God

### His Triune nature

- ♦ He is the Father in the Trinity (usually called "God" in the New Testament), 6.
- ♦ Jesus Christ is his Son in the Trinity (usually called "Lord" in the New Testament).
- ♦ The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity (called "Ghost" in earlier English translations, after the German word *Geist*, meaning "Spirit"); here, he is described as "the seven Spirits of God," indicating his fullness of being and activity, 4-7.

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules the universe as King on his throne and knows all that will take place under his divine sovereignty, which is why he can give revelation of things to come, 1, 3-4.
- ♦ He is eternal, existing from eternity past, living now, and living unto eternity future, 1.
- ♦ He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, 8.
- ♦ He is almighty, 8.

### His goodness

- ♦ He revealed his will to chosen messengers so that believers may be blessed, 1, 3.
- ♦ He sends grace and truth to his followers, 4.
- ♦ He sent Jesus to deliver us from our sins and to make us into a people for his glory, 5-6.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the man, Jesus, 1.
- ♦ He is the anointed Messiah, Christ, 1.
- ♦ He is the unique recipient and source of knowledge about God and his will and ways, 1.
- ♦ As the God–man on earth, he was the “faithful witness” of God’s truth, 5.

### His work

- ♦ As the first to rise from the dead, he is “firstborn” among men and therefore ruler of all kings, 5.
- ♦ He loved (some manuscripts read “loves”) his people and died to cleanse (some manuscripts read “loose”) them from their sins by shedding his blood, 5.
- ♦ He has constituted his followers as kings and priests (or a kingdom of priests) to serve God forever, 6.
- ♦ He possesses all–surpassing glory and dominion forever, thus indicating that he is fully equal with God the Father in dignity, honor, eternity, and glory, 6.
- ♦ He will come again in visible glory and power, 7.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person: “Seven spirits”

- ♦ Represented here as such, the Holy Spirit lives in the throne–room of heaven with God the Father and God the Son in eternal glory and mutual love, 4.
- ♦ The number seven represents fullness, plenitude, completeness, and perfection. Here it may also refer to the Spirit’s full deity; his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence; and the variety, efficacy, and universal scope of his works among men.

## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ Servants of the King, 1
- ♦ Those who read and heed the Word of God written by the apostles, 3
- ♦ Members of local churches, 4

- ◆ Those who are loved by Jesus and cleansed from the guilt of their sins through faith in him, 6
- ◆ Citizens of his kingdom and priests with direct access to God in prayer, 6
- ◆ People of all nations, 7

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ◆ Knowledge of God's will and ways, acquired from the written Word and through the testimony of the apostles to the saving work of Jesus, 1-3
- ◆ Knowledge of the love of Christ for us, 5
- ◆ Washing from the guilt of sin through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, 5
- ◆ Membership among the people of God, a kingdom of priests with access to God the Father through the Spirit, 6

Its source: Salvation comes to us from God the Trinity, 4-5.

### Its conveyance

- ◆ It comes as grace—the unmerited favor and love of God towards us, 4-5.
- ◆ It comes as peace, which is peace with God, with other believers, and within ourselves, 4-5.

## The Last Things

### Their stages

- ◆ The last days, or last times, began with the first coming of Christ and were advanced by his death, resurrection, ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ They continued in the days of the early church with the spread of the gospel and persecution. In that sense, what John wrote concerned things that would “soon” take place, 3.
- ◆ In another sense, the visible return of Jesus in glory will take place at some time in the future, at the end of the “last days,” and after the things to be recorded in John's book.

### Christ's return

- ◆ He will come again in visible glory, so that all mankind will see him, 7.



- ♦ His coming will cause those who “pierced him” to mourn for their sins. This may refer to those who, having heard of his death for them, mourn in repentance for their sins. It may also refer to those who at his return—too late—will be overcome with grief for their rejection of Christ’s gospel and thus participation in his slaying.
- ♦ The return of Christ will be followed by eternal worship of him by his redeemed followers, 6.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Read God’s revelation, including the book of Revelation, often, both silently and aloud in the company of other believers.
- ♦ Believe and follow the teachings of the Apostles, for their words were given to them by Christ himself.
- ♦ Trust that you stand in God’s grace and have peace with him through Christ.
- ♦ Worship Christ as King of the universe and as loving Savior who delivered you from your sins.
- ♦ Use your access to God as royal priests to praise and pray to him at all times.
- ♦ Trust in God as Ruler of the world, even when the whole world seems to be falling apart.
- ♦ Eagerly await the coming of Jesus.
- ♦ Take the gospel to “all the tribes of the earth,” so that they too may believe and be saved before the Lord returns.
- ♦ Make God “Alpha and Omega,” the first and the last, in all aspects of your life, and worship him as the Supreme Good.

# Revelation 1:9–20

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its cumulative fullness

- ♦ Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to earlier ones, either directly or indirectly.
- ♦ This passage contains allusions to both the Old Testament and the New Testament
  - The prophet's experience of seeing a vision; *see Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12, 14, 24; 11:1; 43:5.*
  - A great voice like a trumpet, 10; *see Exodus 19:16, 19–20.*
  - The charge to write the revelation in a book, 11; *see Exodus 17:14; Isaiah 30:8; and Jeremiah 37:2.*
  - “Seeing” a vice, 12; *see Ezekiel 3:12–13 and Daniel 7:11 (Septuagint).*
  - Golden lampstands in the Old Testament temple, 13; *see Exodus 25; 37; Numbers 8; and especially Zechariah 4:2, 10.*
  - One like the Son of Man, 13; *see Daniel 7, 10.*
  - The dress and hair of one like the Son of Man, recalling the vision of Yahweh, 14; *see Daniel 7:9.*
  - A sharp, two-edged sword, 16; *see Isaiah 11:4; 49:2.*
  - “The first and the last,” 17; *see Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12.*
  - The transfiguration of Christ; *see Matthew 17:2.*
  - The command to write things which are, and which will take place later, 19; *see Daniel 2.*

#### Its source

- ♦ Biblical revelation came directly from Jesus Christ (the Word of God), through the Spirit of God, to chosen messengers like John, who were commanded to write what they had heard and seen, 10–11.
- ♦ Sometimes it came to the prophets in visions, some of which were interpreted by God or his angel, 12–20.

### Its occasion

- ♦ Most of biblical revelation was composed during times of trouble and danger and was written by men who were suffering, or had suffered, for their faith in God, 9.
- ♦ Biblical revelation was written to specific people in particular situations, but it also applies to later generations of believers, 11.

## God

His greatness: Aspects of his greatness are revealed in the description of the “one like the Son of Man,” that is, Christ.

His goodness: He reveals his Word to chosen servants to communicate to his people, 9.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is Lord of all time, including the first day of the week, 10.
- ♦ He is utterly pure, as seen in his white hair, 14.
- ♦ He is omniscient and judging, with eyes like a flame of fire, 14.
- ♦ He is powerful, with a voice like many waters, 15.
- ♦ He is sovereign over the churches, which are in his right hand, 16.
- ♦ He is victorious over all enemies, with his two-edged sword indicating the power of his Word, 16.
- ♦ He is brilliant and glorious, shining like the sun, 16.
- ♦ He is eternal, the First and the Last, the one who always has lived and always will live, 17-18.
- ♦ He is ruler over death and hell, 18.
- ♦ As God-man and our great High Priest, he is clothed with priestly garments, 13.

His work: He died as a sin offering for us, 18.

## Holy Spirit

His work: He enables God’s chosen messengers to see visions and hear voices from God and to write them down in inspired Scriptures, 10.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: Though created in God's image, we are yet finite and now fallen. In the presence of the risen Christ, who is God, even the apostle John fell down as if dead, overwhelmed by the transcendent glory of his divine nature, 17.

## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ They are brothers and sisters in Christ through faith in him, 9.
- ♦ Thus, they are "brothers" of Jesus and children of God, 9. *See Matthew 12:48-49 and Romans 8:14-17, 29.*
- ♦ They share in the kingdom of God, to which they are devoted, so they also share in tribulation and persecution by earthly kings, 9.
- ♦ They demonstrate their faith and love towards God by their perseverance and patience under trial, the kind of patience that Jesus demonstrated when he suffered, 9. *See 1 Peter 2:21-25; 4:1, 12-14.*

Its leader: The risen Lord Jesus holds these churches in his right hand of power, walks among them, and speaks to them through his Scriptures, 13, 16, 19-20.

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ The knowledge of Christ as God and Savior, 9, 12, 17
- ♦ The presence of Christ in our midst by his Spirit, 9, 13
- ♦ The possession of the Holy Spirit, 10; *see John 7:37-39.*
- ♦ Membership in the church of Christ, 9, 20

Its source: Salvation comes to us through the now-risen Lord Jesus Christ, who raises us from spiritual death to life in this age and to eternal life in the age to come, 17-18. *See John 10:32.*

## The Last Things

Christ's return: He will finally raise us up by his hand of power unto eternal life with himself, for he has the power over death and Hades, 17-18.

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Ask God to fill you with his Spirit, so that you may pray aright and have intimate fellowship with him. *See Ephesians 5:18-20.*
- ♦ Read and reread this passage's description of the glorified Christ, so that you may understand just who he is now, his divine power and majesty, and his saving presence among his people.
- ♦ Bow in humble adoration before Christ, your divine-human Savior and Lord.
- ♦ Long for the day when, purified like him, you shall see him as he is. *See 1 John 3:1-2.*
- ♦ Read the Holy Scriptures, including the Book of Revelation, so that you might understand the past, present, and—to some degree—the future.
- ♦ Take comfort in the knowledge that Jesus holds the churches in his hand and walks among them. He is with you always, even to the end of the age. *See Matthew 28:20.*

# Revelation 2:1–7

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its source

- ♦ The Christ, the eternal Logos (Word) of God, speaks by the Holy Spirit to the churches through his chosen apostles and prophets. John was one of these.
- ♦ The words of Scripture are the words of Christ and about Christ, given through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, 1, 7.

#### Its relevance

- ♦ Biblical revelation, though given to specific people at specific times in history, applies to all people throughout the ages, and especially to all believers.
- ♦ Thus, what is said to each church in chapters 2–3 is said to “the churches,” meaning to all other churches as well, 7.
- ♦ Biblical revelation was given to the “churches,” that is, to the people of God. They are to guard what is written, so that the church throughout the ages may be guided and governed by the Word of God, 1.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is omnipotent, holding the messengers of the churches in his right hand of power, 1.
- ♦ He is omnipresent, for he walks among the churches in every place, 1.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing both the actions and the hearts of all people, including professing believers, 2–4.
- ♦ He is just and fair, taking note of and commending our good works, 2–3, 7.
- ♦ He is the judge of his people, 4–7.
- ♦ He is the divine lover of his bride, the church, and expects us to love him in return, 4. *See also John 21:15–17; Romans 7:4; and Ephesians 5:22–33; 6:24.*
- ♦ He is the sovereign Lord of the church, commanding us with divine authority and able to remove a church that has fallen too far away, 5, 7.

# The Church

## Its characteristics

- ◆ A true church of God is marked by belief and by behavior.
  - Belief in the truth leads to intolerance of false teachers, 2.
  - Behavior includes working for the Lord, patience under affliction, perseverance, and a hatred of evil, 2-3, 6.
- ◆ There is no use of the word “church” in the New Testament that warrants regional, national, or international organizations. Churches are always local, though they are bound by a common adherence to the revelation given to the Apostles, 1, 7.

# Sin

## It includes

- ◆ Spreading false teaching, especially doing so in the name of God, 2
- ◆ Lying, 2
- ◆ Working hard for Christ without doing so from a heart of love to him, 4
- ◆ Failure to continue in the first fire of devotion to Christ, 5
- ◆ Failure to repent when we are rebuked by Christ, 5

# Salvation

## Its substance

- ◆ Membership in the church of Christ, 1-2
- ◆ Knowledge of the will of God through the Scripture, 1, 7
- ◆ The presence of Christ among us, 1
- ◆ Awareness that he knows our works and our troubles, 2-3
- ◆ Eternal life, 7

# The Last Things

Christ's return: When Christ returns, he will restore the paradise that was lost when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, giving his faithful followers (those who “overcome” by persevering to the end) access to the tree of life, that is, unending life with God and the redeemed on a new earth, 7.

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Listen carefully to what is said to you through the Scriptures.
- ♦ Labor constantly for Christ.
- ♦ However, make loving Christ your first priority, and do not let the busyness of service snuff out your devotion to him.
- ♦ Test the claims of those who say they are speaking for Christ; many are not.
- ♦ Hate the works of those in the church who do evil.
- ♦ Persevere in your faith and follow Christ to the end, so that you may overcome.
- ♦ Eagerly anticipate life on a renewed earth with God's people and with God himself. *See 1 Peter 1:13 and 2 Peter 3:12-13.*



# Revelation 2:8–11

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its veracity

- ♦ Biblical revelation is true, regardless of whether we hear and heed it.
- ♦ “Revelation” does not include our response. Rather, it is the communication of information from God – “what the Spirit says to the churches” – along with urgent pleas and warnings to respond with repentance, faith, and obedience, 11.
- ♦ God’s revealed Word is objective and must not be confused with our subjective response.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ As God, he is the First and the Last, eternally divine and existing, 8. *See Revelation 1:8, 17.*
- ♦ As man, he lived, died, and rose again for our salvation, 8.
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing our works, troubles, fears, and future, 9–10.
- ♦ He is the omnipotent, ever–living, and righteous judge, who will reward his faithful people with eternal life, 10.

His work: He continues to speak to the churches through the words which were inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by the apostles and prophets, 11.

### The Church

#### Its members

- ♦ They work for him, suffer for his sake, and are faithful even unto death, thus “overcoming” the temptations of persecution, slander, and death, 9–11.
- ♦ They hear and heed the words of God given through Christ by the Spirit and written down by the apostles and prophets, 11.

*Note: There are some who claim to be God’s people, like the Jews who persecuted Christians in the first century, but who are really worshipers of Satan, 9.*

## Spiritual Beings

The devil: He is a slanderer who deceives unbelievers into believing lies about God's people, and who, through these his willing servants, inflicts suffering upon God's people, 9-10.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ He will give the crown of eternal life to those who were faithful to him unto death, 10.
- ♦ He will also consign unrepentant, unbelieving people to the second death, which is final, 11.

## Life

---

### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Listen to what Christ says to you in the Scriptures, especially in the book of Revelation in these last days.
- ♦ Work for Christ by doing your duty and by spreading the gospel.
- ♦ Do not fear the temporary losses and pain that will come through persecution by wicked people.
- ♦ Be willing to suffer poverty, persecution, prison, and even death for the sake of Christ, who also died for you.
- ♦ Look forward with eagerness and hope to the return of Christ and to the reward of eternal life which he will give to his faithful followers on that day.

# Revelation 2:12–17

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Balaam was a pagan prophet who taught the Israelites to sacrifice to idols and to commit sexual immorality, 14. *See Numbers 24:14; 25:1–2; 31:16.*
- ♦ Manna from heaven fed the people of Israel for forty years as they wandered in the wilderness, and some of it was “hidden” inside the Ark of the Covenant as a memorial to God’s provision in those years, 17. *See Exodus 16:1–36.*

### Its roots in history

- ♦ Biblical revelation is set within history and reflects the historical period in which it was written.
- ♦ The “throne” of Satan can refer either to the huge altar to Zeus that dominated the citadel at Pergamos or to the altar to Caesar that had been erected there for the worship of the emperor, 13.
- ♦ The persecution of Christians under the reign of Domitian could form the background for the death of Antipas the martyr, 13.
- ♦ White stones were used to indicate that an accused person was to be declared “not guilty” at a trial, 17.

### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is the righteous judge and ruler of the earth. The two-edged sword that proceeds from his mouth is the word of God, which speaks to the hearts of men, uncovering their sins and executing judgment upon them, 12, 16. *See Revelation 1:16 and Hebrews 4:12.*
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing our works, our situation, our faithful witness, and our compromises with evil, 13–15.
- ♦ He hates evil, especially evil in the church, 15.

- ♦ He has the authority to give life (symbolized by the manna) and to pronounce acquittal (signified by the white stone), 17. *See John 6:31-40.*

## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ They dwell in a world ruled temporarily by sin and Satan, 13. *See 1 John 5:19.*
- ♦ They work for God and are called upon to bear witness to Christ, even unto death, 13.
- ♦ They are tempted by people within their midst who advocate compromise with the world, 14-15.
- ♦ They hear what Christ says to them through the apostolic writings, 17.
- ♦ They will receive eternal life, 17.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Idolatry in any form, 14
- ♦ Sexual immorality in any form, 14
- ♦ Compromise with evil in the church, 15

## Life

---

### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Fear the coming judgment of Christ, who will expose your works, your words, and the manner of your witness for him. *See 2 Corinthians 5:10.*
- ♦ Persevere in doing good and in bearing witness to the name of Jesus, even in the midst of a wicked and idolatrous society.
- ♦ Take comfort in the fact that Jesus knows your situation and has not left you.
- ♦ Beware of those in the church who are promoting, even indirectly, worship of idols or sexual laxity.
- ♦ Do not allow false teachers or advocates of compromise to continue in the church.
- ♦ Repent when you are rebuked by Christ.
- ♦ Look forward to the eternal life and final vindication which will come to you when Christ returns.

# Revelation 2:18–29

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Allusions presented in this passage
  - It describes Jesus in words used in the previous chapter, 19. *See Revelation 1:14.*
  - It refers to the Old Testament figure Jezebel, wicked and idolatrous wife of Ahab, 20. *See 1 Kings 16:31; 21:7-10.*
  - It repeats the principle taught in the Old Testament and New Testament that God rewards each according to his works, 23. *See Psalm 62:12; Matthew 16:27; and Romans 2:6.*
  - It applies the prophecy about Christ's rule of the nations to faithful Christians, 27. *See Psalm 2:8-9.*

Its roots in history: Biblical revelation is set within particular eras of history and speaks in terms familiar to readers of that time. For example, here it speaks of the “morning star,” revered by the pagans, 28.

### Christ

#### His person

- ◆ He is the fully divine Son of God, 18.
- ◆ He has eyes that penetrate the heart and see all actions and attitudes, 18-19.
- ◆ He calls his people his servants, as in the Old Testament, 20.
- ◆ He judges iniquity and punishes the wicked, 20-23.
- ◆ He rules the earth, 26-27.
- ◆ Yet, in some sense, he is subordinate to God the Father, from whom he has received power to rule the nations, 27.
- ◆ He rules even the heavens, 28.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ◆ Good works, love, faith, patience, and increasing fruitfulness in serving God, 19
- ◆ Repentance for sin, 22
- ◆ Holding on to the Word of God and persevering unto the end, even unto death, 25–26
- ◆ Hearing and heeding what Christ says to the churches through the Spirit-inspired apostolic writings, 29

## Sin

### It includes

- ◆ Idolatry, sexual immorality, and tolerating those within the church who teach and practice such things, 20
- ◆ Seeking to know “the deep things of Satan,” that is, any form of Satan-worship or spiritualism, 24

### Its consequences

- ◆ Earthly consequences, such as sickness and death, 22–23
- ◆ Eternal judgment, 23, 27

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return and judgment

- ◆ He will reward each person according to his works, 23.
- ◆ He will share kingdom rule with his faithful followers, 26.
- ◆ He will destroy all his unrepentant enemies, 27.
- ◆ He will give heavenly status to those who have followed him faithfully, 28.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Continue in serving Christ, persevering, and believing in him.
- ◆ Increase in your works for Christ as time passes.

- ♦ Do not tolerate those in the church who claim to be prophets but whose teaching allows for sexual immorality and the worship of this world's idols.
- ♦ Repent when you are rebuked for your sins.
- ♦ Ask God for the grace to persevere unto the end, even unto death if necessary.
- ♦ Look forward to the coming of Christ to rule the world with his saints.

# Revelation 3:1–6

## Truth

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### Christ

#### His person

- ♦ As God, Christ has the “seven spirits of God,” 1.
  - That is, he gives the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s gifts to those whom he wills. *See John 4:13–14; 7:37–39.*
  - This verse might lend support to the addition of the “*Filioque* clause” to the Nicene Creed, stating that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father and from the Son,” rather than, as the original version (held by Eastern Orthodoxy) reads, “from the Father” [only].
  - This explains how his words are also the words of the Spirit, 6.
- ♦ As God he is omniscient, knowing both our works and our inner life, which is hidden from others, 1–2.

#### His work

- ♦ He holds the angels of the churches in his hand. These “angels” are probably angels in the ordinary sense of the word, as used by John throughout Revelation, to refer to heavenly beings, 1.
- ♦ As risen Lord and coming Judge, he will arrive suddenly to punish those who do not repent, 3.
- ♦ As the glorified, divine–human Son of God, he dwells in heaven in God’s presence, and he will bring his faithful followers into this holy place to dwell forever, 4.
- ♦ Having authority over eternal life, he will retain their names in the register of life, 5.
- ♦ As the beloved Son of God, he has constant access to God the Father, so he can confess the names of his people to God and to the angels of God’s heavenly court, 5.



## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ God's people—now the church—are marked by those who work for him, 1.
- ♦ Some, however, though they have the reputation of being spiritually alive, are actually spiritually dead, that is, they are not in a close relationship with God, the fountain of life, 1.
- ♦ The church is formed by the gospel, which it has heard and received by faith, 3.
- ♦ Some in the visible church will be faithful followers of Christ, with conduct befitting their name as Christians, 4.
  - These “overcomers” persevere in doing good out of love for Christ unto the end, 5.
  - They truly “hear” and heed what Christ says to them through the Spirit-inspired Scriptures written by the apostles.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ♦ He will reward his faithful followers with complete sanctification, pictured here as white clothing, 5.
- ♦ They will dwell before God, vouched for by Christ, in heaven forever, 5.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Constantly ask whether you are living up to your reputation as a follower of Christ.
- ♦ Do not be misled by the “Christian” activity of others or yourself but look to the heart to see whether they or you have a close walk with God through faith and love towards Christ.
- ♦ Constantly remember how you first received the gospel with repentance and faith and constantly repent of your sins of mind and action before God.
- ♦ Look forward to the time when you shall be “clothed in white,” that is, fully spotless and without blame before God in heaven.
- ♦ Earnestly hear and heed the words of God to us in the Scriptures.

# Revelation 3:7–13

## Truth

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Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ The “key of David” and the power to open and shut, 7–8, refers to God’s words to Eliakim. *See Isaiah 22:22.*
- ♦ The “hour of trial” “coming upon the whole world” recalls predictions by the prophets of great suffering coming upon dwellers on earth and the idea of testing by God to refine our faith, 10. *See Isaiah 24:17–18 and 1 Peter 1:6–7.*
- ♦ The “crown” of reward can be found in the writings of Paul and James, 11. *See 2 Timothy 4:8 and James 1:12.*
- ♦ The “New Jerusalem” reminds us of God’s dwelling among his people in Jerusalem, 12.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ As man and God, he is utterly holy and true, 7. *See John 14:6.*
- ♦ As the Son of David, who is now the resurrected Lord of the universe, he possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, 7. *See Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:20–22.*
- ♦ He is omniscient and knows the works and condition of every church and believer, 8.
- ♦ Though he is equal with God the Father, there is some sense in which he can call the Father “my God,” 12.

### His work

- ♦ He preserves and rewards those who remain faithful to him and do not deny his name as Christ and Lord, 8.
- ♦ He will someday cause all enemies of God’s people to bow down before them, 9.
- ♦ He loved us and gave himself for us, 9. *See Galatians 2:20 and John 15:12–13.*
- ♦ He has total sovereignty over the future of God’s people, 12.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ◆ They work for him by doing good works and spreading his name, 8.
- ◆ They may have little strength in this world, but Christ will accomplish his purposes through them, 8.
- ◆ They are often despised by Jews and Gentiles alike, 9.
- ◆ They keep his command to persevere, 10.
- ◆ They will be kept from falling away during times of trial, 10.
- ◆ They hear and heed what Christ says to them through the Spirit-inspired Scriptures, 13.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return and judgment

- ◆ He will vindicate his people by forcing their enemies to bow before them, 9.
- ◆ He will come quickly, that is, suddenly, with no warning, 11.
- ◆ He will grant his faithful followers permanent places in the temple of God and in the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from God (not by human effort), 12.
- ◆ He will give them a new name, his own new name, 12.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Do not fear opposition or obstacles, for Christ will give you sufficient power to do what he wants you to do.
- ◆ Keep on working for Christ.
- ◆ Read, hear, believe, obey, proclaim, and do not deny his word.
- ◆ Do not fear the slander and opposition of those who claim to be God's people but are not.
- ◆ Hold fast to what you have learned and be always ready for the sudden return of Christ.
- ◆ Look forward to the time when you will be forever with God, in the closest possible relationship with him and with Christ.
- ◆ Hear and heed the words of Scripture.

# Revelation 3:14–22

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Allusions to the Old Testament
  - God's creation by his Word, 14; *see Genesis 1:1–2:3 and Psalm 3:6.*
  - Complacent talk by God's people, 16; *see Hosea 12:8.*
  - “Buying” good things from God, 18; *see Isaiah 55:1.*
  - God's discipline of his erring but beloved children, 19; *see Proverbs 3:11–12.*
  - God's heavenly throne, symbolizing his absolute sovereignty, 21; *see Psalm 103:19, and often in the Old Testament.*
- ◆ Allusions to earlier parts of Revelation
  - Jesus as faithful witness, 14; *see Revelation 1:5; 3:7.*
  - Promises to those who “overcome,” 21; *see all of the seven letters.*
  - The command to hear and heed what the Spirit says to the churches, 22; *see the close of all the letters.*

### Its roots in history

- ◆ Biblical revelation is set firmly in history, reflects the setting of the readers and hearers at the time, and speaks to their particular situation.
- ◆ The water at Laodicea was notoriously lukewarm, suitable neither for bathing (hot) nor drinking (cold), 15–16.
- ◆ The city was a prosperous banking center, known for wealth, 17.
- ◆ It was also a center for the manufacture of textiles, 17–18.
- ◆ It had a medical school and was famous for its Phrygian eye salve, 17–18.

### God

### His greatness

- ◆ He rules from his heavenly throne, 21.
- ◆ He exists as a unified plurality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 21–22.

His goodness: He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and is now known by the faithful followers of Christ as Father, 21. *See Matthew 6:10 and John 20:17.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ As the Son of God and the eternal Word, he is the “Amen,” the one who is ultimately firm and faithful, 14.
- ♦ He is the origin of creation, 14. *See John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15.*
- ♦ He is omniscient, knowing not only our works but also our hearts, whether they are cold or hot, 13.
- ♦ Like the God of the Old Testament, he offers to “sell” spiritual blessings to his people, 18. *See Isaiah 55:1.*
- ♦ Like God, he rebukes and corrects those whom he loves, 19.
- ♦ He offers intimate fellowship with his people, 20.
- ♦ He rules with God the Father, 21.
- ♦ He speaks through the Spirit of God, 22.

## The Church

### Its members

- ♦ God’s visible people contain those who profess to be Christians but are not.
- ♦ They are often tempted to think that they are spiritually well off, when in fact they are in dire straits in the eyes of God and of Christ, 17.
- ♦ They will be corrected by him so that they might repent and turn from sin, 19.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Being lukewarm in our love and service for God, 15-16
- ♦ Proudly imagining that we are spiritually “rich” and endowed with all we need and thus don’t need God, 18

## The Last Things

Christ’s return: He will invite his faithful followers to rule with him from his divine throne, 21.

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Trust Jesus and all he says, for he is the Faithful and True Witness of God.
- ♦ Worship Jesus as the divine Son and Word of God, through whom God created the world and with whom God rules the world.
- ♦ Beware of spiritual complacency and self-satisfaction, for you are then most in need of God's mercy and grace.
- ♦ "Buy" the spiritual wealth, clothing (that is, a status of righteousness), and eye salve (that is, spiritual insight) from Christ by faith each day.
- ♦ Welcome the loving rebukes and even harsh discipline of Christ, for they are meant to turn you from sin back to him.
- ♦ Invite Christ into your heart daily for intimate fellowship. *See John 15:1-10 and Ephesians 3:17.*

# Revelation 4

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Allusions to the Old Testament
  - The visions of the prophet Ezekiel, 1; *see Ezekiel 1:1-10.*
  - A summons to “come up” into the lofty presence of God, like Moses, 1; *see Exodus 19:20, 24.*
  - God’s heavenly throne, representing his universal and absolute sovereignty, 2; *see Psalm 103:19.*
  - A rainbow associated with the vision of God, 3; *see Ezekiel 1:26-28.*
  - Lightning and thunder emanating from the presence of God, 5; *see Exodus 19:16-19; 37:23.*
  - Lamps burning before God’s presence, as in the tabernacle, 5; *see Zechariah 4:2.*
  - A sea of glass, 6; *see Exodus 24:10; Ezekiel 1:22; or, if it refers to the basin in the Temple, see 1 Kings 7:23-25; Jeremiah 27:19.*
  - Living creatures with different heads and bodies, 8; *see Ezekiel 1:6, 10.*
  - The thrice-holy acclamation of worship, 8; *see Isaiah 6:3.*
  - God’s divine name, indicating his eternity, 8; *see Exodus 3:14-15.*
  - His eternal rule, 8; *see Isaiah 41:4.*
  - God’s creation of the world, 11; *see Genesis 1:1-2:3.*

### Its symbolism

- ◆ Parts of the Bible, including much of the prophecy, contain symbols. These are meant to create visual impressions that lead to the understanding, or at least partial apprehension, of spiritual realities. They are often impossible to portray on a canvas and hard to understand fully. Such are the four living creatures.
- ◆ Most interpreters take the four beasts to represent the totality of the animate world: wild animals (lion), domesticated animals (ox), flying creatures (eagle), and man, the pinnacle of God’s creation.

- ♦ The twenty-four elders are understood to symbolize the totality of redeemed mankind, represented by the twelve patriarchs and tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles.

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as a tri-personal unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 2.

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules the universe with absolute authority, symbolized by his sitting on a heavenly throne like a king and by his ability to determine what will happen in the future, 1-5, 9.
- ♦ He is eternal, 8, 10.
- ♦ He is full of life, the source of life, and the giver of life, 10.
- ♦ He is Lord of all living things, human and angelic as well as of the animals and beasts, 6-7, 9, 11.
- ♦ He is the almighty Creator, 11.
- ♦ He possesses infinite intelligence, planning, and purpose, 11.
- ♦ The Spirit is represented here as “the seven spirits of God,” meaning the Holy Spirit in his fullness of being and operations, 5, 8.

### His goodness

- ♦ He invites his people into his presence and temple to enjoy and worship him, 1.
- ♦ He revealed his will and even himself to his chosen servants so that we too might know him, 1.
- ♦ He is beautiful beyond description, 3.
- ♦ He is utterly holy, pure, and just, 8.
- ♦ He accepts the worship of his creatures, 8-11.

## Spiritual Beings

Angels: They are heavenly, spiritual beings of incredible beauty and power. They live in the presence of God in constant worship and go out into the world to accomplish his purposes, 6-9.

## Mankind

Our purpose: As creatures formed in the image of God, we are made for his glory and honor, 11.



# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Read the book of Revelation to learn more about God's majesty, sovereignty, and grace.
- ♦ Worship God constantly as your glorious Creator.
- ♦ Worship God for his absolute purity and holiness.
- ♦ Give to God all glory and honor and power, submitting your entire life to him in willing adoration and obedience, like the elders who cast their crowns (symbols of glory, honor, and power) before the throne of God and worshiped him alone.
- ♦ Do not seek glory, honor, or power for yourself.

# Revelation 5

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Allusions in this passage
  - A scroll written on both sides, 1; *see Ezekiel 2:9-10.*
  - “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” 5; *see Genesis 49:9.*
  - The root of David, that is, the recipient of God’s promise to David (from the tribe of Judah) and his descendants to inherit an eternal kingdom, 5; *see 2 Samuel 7:13, 16; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1, 10; Luke 1:32-33, 68-70; and Revelation 22:16.*
  - The Lamb who had been slain, 6; *see Exodus 12; Isaiah 53:6-7; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; and 1 Peter 1:18-19.*
  - Seven horns, indicating total power, 6; *see Deuteronomy 33:17; Psalm 18:2; 1 Kings 22:11; and Matthew 28:18.*
  - Seven eyes, indicating omniscience, 6; *see Revelation 1:14; 2:18; 19:12.*
  - The harp, an instrument of praise, 8; *see Psalms 33:2; 43:4; 150:3.*
  - Bowls of incense for worship, symbolizing prayer, 8; *see Exodus 30:1-8 and Psalm 141:2.*
  - A new song to celebrate a new saving work of God, 9; *see Psalms 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; and Isaiah 42:10.*
  - Redemption by the shedding of blood, 9; *see Exodus 6:6; 12:1-30; 13:13; 34:20; and 1 Peter 1:18.*
  - God’s blessing coming to people of all nations, tribes, and families, 9; *see Genesis 12:3.*
  - God’s people being a kingly priesthood, 10; *see Exodus 19:6 and Isaiah 61:6.*

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father (God), Son, and Holy Spirit, 6.

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules the universe from his heavenly throne, 1, 7.
- ♦ He holds the “secret” of what will happen to all mankind, 1.
- ♦ He sends his Spirit into all the earth, 6.
- ♦ He is “God,” possessor of his redeemed people and object of worship and royal service by his people, 9-10.
- ♦ He is worthy of all praise and honor, 13.
- ♦ He is eternal, 13-14.

### His goodness

- ♦ He sent his Son as the sacrificial Lamb to redeem us from sin and death, 6, 9.
- ♦ He has reconstituted fallen mankind to become priests and kings in heaven and on earth, 10.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ As the Lamb of God, he is a descendant of King David of the tribe of Judah, a Hebrew, one of Abraham’s “seed,” 5.
- ♦ He “has” the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, and who also acts as his agent (his “eyes . . . sent out into all the earth”), 6.
- ♦ He is thus worthy to take the scroll and open its contents, 5.
- ♦ He is worthy to receive all the praise and honor that God the Father receives from angels and redeemed mankind, 9-10, 13-14.
- ♦ He is eternal, 13-14.

### His work

- ♦ As the Word and as the Son of God, he shares the throne of the universe with “God” (the Father), 6.
- ♦ He died a redemptive death, 6, 9.
- ♦ He has redeemed his people and made them kings and priests to God, as God is said to have done in the Old Testament, 9-10. *See above.*

- ♦ With the Father and the Holy Spirit, he receives incessant worship in heaven from hosts of angels and from the souls of redeemed men and women, 8-14.

## The Holy Spirit

### His person

- ♦ He is the Spirit of God, 6.
- ♦ Seven, the number of perfection and completion, represents his perfect fullness of being and plenitude of creating, revealing, and life-giving activity, 6.
- ♦ He “proceeds from the Father and the Son” (as the Western version of the Nicene Creed states), 6.

His work: The Son sends him into all the earth to reveal God to men and to save them, 6.

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ Redemption, that is, liberation from bondage to sin, Satan, death, and the threat of God’s wrath by the payment of a price, the shed blood of Jesus Christ, 9
- ♦ Our incorporation as individuals into the universal Church, the company of the redeemed from all places and of all ages, 9-10
- ♦ Our inclusion with the angels and the souls of the redeemed in heaven in constant worship of God and of the Lamb, 8-14
- ♦ Kingship on earth, 10
  - Now, with authority over Satan and his demons and even over our own sin, to the degree that we believe and obey by the power of the Spirit
  - Later, with Christ bodily on earth
- ♦ Priesthood unto God, with ready access to the throne of grace through worship and prayer, 1-14
- ♦ Eternal life, 14

### Its source

- ♦ From God the Father, 6, 9-10
- ♦ By the redemptive sacrifice and victorious resurrection, ascension, session at the right hand of the Father, and current ministry of the Son, 6, 9-10
- ♦ Through the constant life-giving work of the Holy Spirit, 6

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Thank God for sending his Son to become your Redeemer.
- ◆ Join with the angels and the redeemed of all ages and nations to praise God and his Son constantly and with your heart.
- ◆ Pray constantly to God, as priests interceding for each other and for the lost.
- ◆ Thank God for revealing himself and his will to you through the Scriptures.

# Revelation 6

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its cumulative fullness

- ♦ Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.
- ♦ Allusions in this passage
  - The horses seem to allude to the one described in Zechariah 1:8-11.
  - The earthly and heavenly convulsions, 12-16; *see Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Isaiah 34:4; Isaiah 2:10, 19, 21; and 24:21, respectively.*

#### Its interpretation

- ♦ The Bible contains some passages that are hard to understand, leading godly interpreters to differ in their explanations. This is especially true of the Book of Revelation.
- ♦ The white horse and its rider
  - These have been taken to mean either Christ, who rides a white horse in Revelation 19:11-16; or human rulers whose lust for power drives them to engage in bloody wars of conquest.
  - The second is more likely, since the rider is not named in this passage, as he is in Revelation 19:11-16, and this horse and its rider are one in a series of judgments upon the world, not in the climactic appearance of Christ.
- ♦ The entire series of judgments brought by the riders
  - These have been taken (like the rest of the visions in Revelation after 4:1) as either a linear history, with each passage building up in chronological order to the final events of the last few chapters, or as a sort of “spiral” of increasing intensity, each segment stopping just short of the final judgment and return of Christ.
  - These notes will try to show a variety of reasons why the second seems more likely.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules over all that happens on earth.
  - Wars of conquest, local violence, famine, and death from all causes, including wild beasts, 2-8
  - The persecution of his people, 9-11
  - Terrestrial and cosmic upheavals, 12-14
- ♦ He determines the extent of each manifestation of his wrath against mankind, limiting the damage so that men might repent, 6, 8.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is a holy and righteous King and Judge, holy and true, 10.
- ♦ In righteous wrath, he punishes evil with both the natural outworking of human sin and with external disasters such as famine, 2-8, 16-17.
- ♦ He allows his people to suffer persecution and death, just as his Son did, 9.
- ♦ He limits the time of the church's suffering, 10-11.
- ♦ He vindicates and gives festal garments to the souls of his faithful martyrs and provides them with rest until the time of the resurrection of the dead, 9, 11.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the revealer of God's will and ways, 1.
- ♦ He is the righteous Judge of all evil, 16-17.

## Mankind

Our fallen state: We are all, regardless of our station in society or condition in life, guilty before God, and we deserve his wrath as a penalty for our sins, 15-17.

## The People of God

Their lives: They hear, believe, and bear faithful testimony to his word, if necessary even unto death, 9.

## Salvation

Its conveyance: It comes to God's faithful followers as life in the presence of God after death, 9-11.

## The Last Things

### Christ's return

- ◆ After a long period of widespread, but limited, manifestations of God's grace to his people and his wrath towards unrepentant sinners, Christ will return.
- ◆ He will give final rest and reward to his faithful followers, 11.
- ◆ He will pour out the full extent of his holy wrath upon all others in a series of earthly and cosmic disasters that reveal his power and purity, 12-17.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Do not fear when you see wars and other international, national, and personal calamities, for God is in control, working out his righteous purposes.
- ◆ Hear, obey, and bear witness to God's word, even unto death, if necessary.
- ◆ Eagerly anticipate the time when God judges the world and reveals his glory to his people.



# Revelation 7

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its symbolism

- ◆ Biblical revelation—especially the prophetic books and particularly Revelation—contains many symbols, including symbolic numbers.
- ◆ The number four
  - The totality of the earth: four winds, four “corners” of the earth, 1
  - Four-fold description of the vast multitude: nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, 9
  - Four living creatures, 11
- ◆ The number 144,000
  - It is almost certainly figurative, being a multiple of twelve and representing the twelve tribes of Israel, 4.
  - Here it probably also stands for the total number of the redeemed.
  - Other things indicate that the number should not be taken literally as the total of all Israelites who were “servants of God,” 3
    - ◆ Not every tribe is named; Dan is left out.
    - ◆ The equal number from each tribe does not reflect the great difference in actual members of the larger and smaller tribes, as recorded in the Old Testament. *See Numbers 1:20-43.*
    - ◆ Twelve is commonly used figuratively in Revelation. *See Revelation 14:1, 3; 12:1; 21:12, 14; 22:2.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ◆ He is living, 2.
- ◆ He is the ruler of the winds, 1-3.
- ◆ He rules sovereignly from his throne, 9-10, 15.
- ◆ He receives worship, 11.
- ◆ To him are ascribed glory, wisdom, honor, power, and might, as well as eternity, 12.

### His goodness

- ♦ He saves his people, 10.
- ♦ To him are ascribed blessing and thanksgiving for his gracious deeds toward men, 11.
- ♦ He will dwell with his people forever, 15.
- ♦ He will wipe away every tear from the eyes of his faithful servants, 17.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He shares the divine throne with “God” (the Father), 9, 17.
- ♦ He receives worship from all creatures, 11–12.
- ♦ He is the Lamb who was slain, shedding his blood for our salvation, 9–10, 14.

### His work

- ♦ He is the divine–human Shepherd.
- ♦ He will shepherd his people forever, giving them food and drink and supplying all their needs, 16–17. *See Psalm 23; John 10:11, 14; and John 6:35; 7:37–39.*

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ Membership in the people of God: For believing Gentiles, this means membership in the “Israel” of God. *See Ephesians 2:11–22.*
- ♦ Cleansing from sin and eventual total moral purity: This is symbolized by white robes, which have been cleansed by the blood of Christ the Lamb, 9, 14. *See 1 John 1:7.*
- ♦ Freedom to worship God in his very presence, 9–12
- ♦ Deliverance from tribulation through our death as faithful witnesses to Christ, 14
- ♦ Eternity with God in a perfect world, 15
- ♦ Full satisfaction of all our needs, physical and spiritual, and complete healing from all pain and sorrow in the new heaven and new earth, 16–17

Its source: Salvation comes to us from God through the sacrificial death of the Son of God, the Lamb, 10, 14.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ♦ They serve him faithfully, 3.
- ♦ They come from all peoples of the world, 9.
- ♦ Their number is innumerable, 9.
- ♦ They worship God day and night, 10-12.
- ♦ They are willing to shed their blood as witnesses to the Lamb, 14.

## The Last Things

Christ's return: Salvation will at last encompass all the blessings God has to offer. See "*Salvation,*" above.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Thank God for including you among his redeemed people.
- ♦ Make disciples of all nations, so that people of all nations can come to know God through Christ. See *Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; and Acts 1:8.*
- ♦ Worship God and Christ for all the blessings that have come to you already.
- ♦ Eagerly anticipate the full salvation that will come to you after Christ returns.
- ♦ Take consolation in the knowledge that God himself will one day wipe away every tear from your eyes.

# Revelation 8–9

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its cumulative fullness

- ♦ Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.
- ♦ Allusions to passages from the Old Testament
  - Silence, 8:8; *see Habakkuk 2:20; Zephaniah 1:7; and Zechariah 2:13.*
  - The golden censor, 8:3, used by priests in the temple worship; *see Leviticus 16:12 and 1 Kings 7:50.*
  - Thunder, lightning, and earthquakes in the presence of God, 8:5; *see Exodus 19:16–20.*
  - Trumpets, which call to battle or to worship, 8:6–9:21; *see Exodus 19:16; Joshua 6:2–5; Leviticus 23:24; Numbers 10:1–10; and Joel 2:1.*
  - Hail, fire, and blood, 8:7; *see Exodus 9:22–25; Psalms 78:47; 105:32; and Ezekiel 38:22.*
  - A huge fiery mountain, 8:8; *see Jeremiah 51:25.*
  - The sea turned into blood, 8:8; *see Exodus 7:20–21.*
  - Bitter waters, 8:11; *see Exodus 7:20–21; 15:23.*
  - Darkness during the day, 8:11; *see Exodus 10:21–23; Matthew 24:29. See also Isaiah 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; and Joel 2:10, where darkness symbolizes final destruction.*
  - Locusts, 9:3; *see Exodus 10:12–15; Deuteronomy 28:38 and Joel 1:4.*
  - Abaddon, 9:11; *see Job 26:6; 28:22; and Proverbs 15:11.*
  - The Euphrates, the northern border of the Promised Land and later of that part of the Roman Empire, 9:14; *see Genesis 15:18; Joshua 1:4. See also prophecies about foes from the north in Isaiah 8:7–8; and Jeremiah 1:14–15.*
  - Fire, smoke, and sulfur, 9:17; *see Genesis 19:24, 28; and Deuteronomy 29:22–23.*
  - Snakes as instruments of God’s judgment, 9:19; *see Numbers 21:6–7.*
  - “Did not repent,” 9:20; *see Exodus 4:21; 14:4.*

- Idols, 9:20; *see Deuteronomy 4:28; 32:16-17; and Psalm 115:4-7.*
- Evil deeds linked with idolatry, 9:21; *see Jeremiah 7:5-11.*

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ Ruling from his heavenly throne, he commands his angels and controls all the forces of the created order, including mankind; he uses these to manifest his power and judgment; 8:2-9:19.
- ♦ He determines the time of all events in history, 9:15.

### His goodness

- He hears the prayers of his people for justice to come on earth, 8:3-5. *See Revelation 6:9-11.*
- He limits the extent of damage and harm issuing from his judgments, giving men time to repent, 8:7, 10-11, 12-13; 9:4-5, 10, 18.

## Mankind

### Our nature

- ♦ In our fallen state, we are prone to commit many sins, for which we are responsible and must repent, 9:20-21.
- ♦ This does not in any way negate God's sovereignty; the Bible teaches both that men are responsible for their actions and that God is completely sovereign.
- ♦ In this life, we are all subject to the consequences of sin and God's preliminary judgments upon them through "natural" disasters and through violence perpetrated by men against each other.

## Spiritual Beings

Angels: These are mighty spiritual beings who execute God's will, 8:2-3, 6, etc.; 9:1, 13-15.

Demons: These are wicked spiritual beings, 9:20.

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Worshiping idols (which are the instruments of demons), 9:20
- ♦ Murder, sorcery, or magic of any kind; sexual immorality; and stealing, 9:21

*Note: These are listed here as representative of all violations of God's commands.*

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Expect this life to be filled with suffering of all sorts, either from “natural” disasters or from the actions of sinful men, such as violence, sexual assault, and theft.
- ♦ Avoid all idolatry, including mental idolatry: that is, placing your hopes in or giving your allegiance and service to any created thing or concept.
- ♦ Pray for God to execute his righteous judgment upon the earth, even as you beg for his forgiveness for your sins and intercede for your fellow sinners.

# Revelation 10

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its cumulative fullness

- ♦ Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.
- ♦ Allusions in this passage
  - A roaring lion, indicating the execution of God's judgment, 3; *see Isaiah 31:4; Jeremiah 25:30-32; Hosea 11:10; Joel 3:16; and Amos, 1:2.*
  - Swearing by God, 5-6; *see Daniel 12:7 and Deuteronomy 32:40.*
  - Eating a scroll of divine revelation, 10; *see Ezekiel 2:8-3:11.*
  - Prophesying over nations and kingdoms, 11; *see Jeremiah 1:5, 10; 46:10.*

Its source: Revelation came from God, sometimes through angels, to his chosen spokesmen, who wrote it down for later generations, 1-11.

#### Its relevance

- ♦ Some aspects of God's message are sweet to us and some are bitter, 9-10.
- ♦ Biblical revelation, especially this book, concerns the entire world, not just the Jews or Christians, 11.

#### Its supreme value

- ♦ The Book of Revelation is the last word of God to the world about its future, 4-7.
- ♦ Biblical revelation unveils the mystery of God's purposes in this world: to save his chosen people and to judge the unrepentant wicked, 7.

## God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is eternal, living forever, 6.
- ♦ He is the almighty Creator of the universe and everything in it, 6.
- ♦ He knows all events that will take place, as well as their timing, because he rules as sovereign over the universe, 6.

His goodness: He graciously reveals his will to his people through the writings of the prophets and the apostles, 8-11.

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Worship God as the Creator and Ruler of the entire universe.
- ♦ Trust him to govern the world wisely and justly and to accomplish his perfect will in his good time.
- ♦ Meditate upon the Word of God day and night, making it the food of your soul.
- ♦ Expect the Bible to contain some things that seem bitter and others that seem sweet, for it includes words of judgment and warning as well as messages of comfort and hope.



# Revelation 11

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its cumulative fullness

- ♦ Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.
- ♦ Allusions in this passage
  - Measuring the sanctuary of the Temple, 1; *see Ezekiel 40:1-42:20 and Zechariah 2:1-2.*
  - The outer court of the temple, 2; *see Ezekiel 40:17, 20.*
  - The Gentiles' treading down of Jerusalem for a period of time, 2; *see Luke 21:24.*
  - Two witnesses, the number required to establish a matter in a court of law, 3; *see Deuteronomy 19:15; also, Jesus' sending out witnesses of himself two by two, Luke 10:1.*
  - Clothing in sackcloth as a sign of mourning for disaster, 3; *see 1 Kings 20:31-32; Nehemiah 9:1; Psalm 69:10-11; Isaiah 32:11; etc.*
  - Two live trees, 4; *see Zechariah 4:2-3, 14.*
  - Lampstands, 4; *see Exodus 25:31-35; 2 Chronicles 4:20.*
  - God's protected messengers, 5; *see Jeremiah 1:9, 12, 19; 5:11, 14.*
  - Plagues called down by God's prophets upon unrepentant enemies of God, 6; *see Exodus 7:14-11:10 and 1 Kings 7:1.*
  - Sodom and Egypt, places punished by God for their wickedness and violence towards God's people, 8; *see Genesis 19:13, 24-25; and Exodus 7:14-11:10.*
  - Ascension into heaven on a cloud, 12; *see Acts 1:19.*

Its interpretation: Interpretation of the book of Revelation varies greatly, depending partly on how one sees the structure.

- ♦ Is it linear and chronological, moving from one event to another?
- ♦ Is it a spiral, repeatedly returning to its original place while also moving steadily towards a climax?

- ♦ The last part of this chapter seems to take the action right up to the point where Christ returns and establishes his kingdom visibly on earth, judging the wicked and rewarding his servants. This supports the “spiral” view, 15–18.

### Its symbolism

- ♦ Prophetic revelation, especially this book, contains many symbols about whose interpretation scholars have differed.
  - The two witnesses
    - ♦ Some think these are two men who will bear testimony to Christ during the last days.
    - ♦ Others think they represent the Old and New Testaments.
    - ♦ Still others see them as representative of all those who are witnesses of Christ in all ages, following the example of Christ himself. *See Revelation 1:5; John 15:27; and Acts 1:8.*
    - ♦ Given Revelation’s figurative use of numbers and general concepts, such as bearing testimony, the last meaning seems most likely.
  - The city where the two witness are killed, 8
    - ♦ Is it Jerusalem (where the Lord was crucified)? If so, then that city today is also to be equated with Sodom and Egypt, places notorious for idolatry and wickedness in the Bible.
    - ♦ Is it the world city throughout all ages? That is, the world of men who hate Christ and his disciples?
    - ♦ The latter is more likely.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules sovereignly over all of history, including the manner and times of the success of the wicked and his people’s sufferings, 2.
- ♦ He is almighty, 17.
- ♦ He has power over all creation and can grant authority to his servants to work miracles through prayer, 5–6, 13.
- ♦ As the ever–living God and the author of all life, he can raise his faithful servants from the dead and cause them to ascend into heaven, as he raised Jesus, 11–12.
- ♦ He rules now from his throne in heaven and deserves all honor and glory, 13.

- ♦ Someday he will rule visibly on earth, after shattering all opposing rulers, 15, 17-18.
- ♦ He is eternal, 15, 17.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He dwelt among his people in the Temple in Jerusalem, where he allowed them to worship him through sacrificial offerings and prayer, 1.
- ♦ He sent his Son to be crucified for our sins, 8.
- ♦ He punishes the enemies of his people while giving them time to repent and glorify him, 13.
- ♦ His justice manifests itself as holy wrath against all those who oppose him and as rewards for his faithful servants, 18.

## Christ

#### His person

- ♦ He is Lord, 8.
- ♦ He shares his throne and sovereignty with God the Father, 15.
- ♦ He is the God-man, the Christ, the anointed Savior of the world, 15.

#### His work

- ♦ He was crucified, 8.
- ♦ He was raised from the dead and taken up into heaven, as a foretaste of what will happen to his faithful witnesses, 11-12.

## The People of God

#### Their characteristics

- ♦ Faithful testimony to Christ, even unto death if necessary, 3-8
- ♦ Believing prayer towards God, 6
- ♦ Resolute opposition to evil, 6
- ♦ The anointing of the Holy Spirit (olive trees) and being light to the world (lampstands), 4; *see Matthew 5:14 and Acts 1:8.*
- ♦ Worship and praise of God for his goodness and his greatness, 17-18
- ♦ Faithful service, including prophetic witness to Christ, 18
- ♦ Reverence (“fear”) towards God, 18

## The Enemies of God

Their identity: These include wicked spirits, as well as ungodly men who hate him and his faithful followers (“those who dwell on the earth”), 7-10.

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ He will raise his people from the dead, giving them new bodies that can never die and bringing them into his eternal presence, 11-12.
- ♦ The kingdoms of this world will be replaced by the eternal kingdom of God and of his Christ, 15, 17.
- ♦ All God’s enemies will be punished, and all his faithful servants will be rewarded, 18-19.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Give faithful testimony to Christ in this dark world, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ♦ Pray to God in faith.
- ♦ Expect to be hated by all men for speaking and living the truth.
- ♦ Be willing to die rather than to deny Christ or to be silent about the truth.
- ♦ Look forward to your resurrection from the dead when Christ returns and establishes God’s eternal kingdom on earth.
- ♦ Fear, worship, and praise God for his goodness and his greatness.

# Revelation 12

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation, and especially the book of Revelation, is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ Allusions to Old Testament and New Testament passages, words, and concepts
  - The dragon, identified with the ancient serpent Satan, who deceives the world, 3, 9; *see Genesis 3:1, 4; 2 Corinthians 11:3*; and who accuses God's people before him, 10; *see Job 1:6-12; 2:3-6; and Zechariah 3:1*.
  - The Christ who will rule (literally, "shepherd") the nations with a rod of iron, 5; *see Psalm 2:29*.
  - Protection in the wilderness, 6; *see Exodus 16:32 and 1 Kings 17:1-70*.
  - Michael the archangel, 7; *see Daniel 1:13, 21; 12:1; and Jude 9*.
  - The dry land "helping" the people of God, 16; *see Exodus 14:16, 22*.
  - The eagle as a symbol of God helping his people, 14; *see Exodus 19:4 and Isaiah 40:31*.
  - A time, times, and half a time, which equals 1,260 days, or 42 months, 6, 14; *see Revelation 11:2; and Daniel 7:25; 12:7*.
  - The earth swallowing up enemies of God's people, 16; *see Exodus 15:12 and Numbers 16:30-33*.

### Its symbolism

- ♦ Revelation contains many signs and symbols, some of them difficult to interpret.
- ♦ The woman
  - She stands for the people of God, as the twelve crowns point to the twelve tribes of Israel, 1.
  - She is Mary, the physical mother of Jesus, who bore a male child, 5.
  - She stands for the people of God again, who are protected by God, 6.
  - She is the descendant of Eve, to whom was promised a male child who would overcome Satan. *See Genesis 3:15*.
  - Though she has great dignity as God's chosen people/person, she is not to be identified with the Roman Catholic version of Mary, "Queen of

heaven”; rather, her twelve crowns represent the twelve tribes of Israel and later the twelve apostles, standing for the whole body of the redeemed, who receive the crown of life from God.

## God

His greatness: He rules as absolute, almighty Sovereign over heaven and earth, 10.

His goodness: He takes care of his people and protects them from complete annihilation, 6.

## Christ

His person and work

- ♦ As God, he shares the rule, the kingdom and the power of God the Father, 10.
- ♦ As the God–man, he is the male child born of Mary, but also the Christ who was caught up to heaven and is now at God’s right hand in heaven, 5. *See Ephesians 1:20 and Colossians 3:1.*
- ♦ As man, he shed his blood as the Lamb of God who takes away our sins, 11. *See John 1:29 and 1 John 1:9.*

## Spiritual Beings

Satan

- ♦ He was “thrown down” from heaven by the incarnation and ministry of Jesus Christ, 9. *See Luke 10:18; John 12:31; and Colossians 2:15.*
- ♦ He still has great anger and the power to persecute, though no longer to accuse, God’s people, 12–13. *See Romans 8:33–34.*
- ♦ His time is limited, for Christ will return and utterly destroy him, 12. *See Revelation 20:10.*

## The People of God

Their identity

- ♦ Before Christ, in the Old Testament, God’s people were the twelve tribes of Israel, from whom the Messiah would come, 1, 5.
- ♦ After Christ
  - They are marked by faith in the redemptive work of Christ, the Lamb of God, giving testimony to Christ by their words and being willing to give up their lives as faithful witnesses to Christ, 11.

- They keep God's commandments and hold on to the testimony about Christ, 17.
- They live as vulnerable aliens in the "wilderness" of this hostile world and face constant opposition from Satan, demons, and unbelievers, 6, 13-14.

## Salvation

Its source: It comes to us through the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, the divine-human Son of God and sacrificial Lamb of God, 11.

### Its fulfillment

- ♦ God has always been Savior to his people.
- ♦ However, a new stage of salvation came when Satan was cast out of heaven at the start of Christ's ministry, 10.
- ♦ Now believers in Christ have no one to accuse them. They are counted as righteous and not subject to condemnation. *See Romans 8:1, 33.*

## The Last Things

### The last days

- ♦ These began when Christ came into the world to save sinners, defeat Satan, and take his place again at God's right hand, thus inaugurating a new phase of the coming of the kingdom of God on earth, 5, 10.
- ♦ Satan still rules on earth, but his "time is short," for Christ will soon return and completely destroy him, 12.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Do not be surprised at the fierce opposition of Satan, demons, and those who do not love God; as they have persecuted God's people throughout the ages, and as they sought to destroy Christ, so they will bitterly assail all who follow Christ.
- ♦ Thank God for the victory won by Christ at the Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension to God's right hand, where he intercedes for you.
- ♦ Be alert to the wiles of Satan, who seeks to draw you away from being faithful to God's commands and to the testimony of Christ.
- ♦ Be willing to suffer for your faith, if necessary even unto death.

- ♦ Look forward to the rewards coming to all those who “overcome” by the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb, that is, by bearing faithful witness to Christ and his shed blood, even unto death.



# Revelation 13

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Allusions in this passage
  - A troubled sea and a terrible beast, 1; *see Daniel 7:2-3, 7.*
  - Earlier passages in Revelation; *see Revelation 2:7; 7:3; 11:20, 25-26; 12:3, 9.*
- ◆ Later passages in Revelation also refer back to this chapter.

### Its symbolism

- ◆ Prophetic revelation contains symbols, some of them hard to interpret.
- ◆ The beasts
  - The beast from the sea clearly represents absolute political tyranny.
  - The beast from the earth represents religious authority that deceives people into worshiping or giving credence and allegiance to political tyrants.
- ◆ The number 666
  - This is less clear.
  - Most likely, being one short of the divine number seven, it represents man.
  - It may, however, refer to a particular individual who will arise at the end.
- ◆ There is no agreement on the identity of the head with the deadly wound that came back to life.

### God

### His greatness

- ◆ He has all authority.
- ◆ The beast from the sea is “given,” or allowed, a mouth of blasphemy (though perhaps the dragon gave it to him), as well as authority, but only for a limited time, 5.

### His goodness

- ♦ He reveals to his people what will happen ahead of time, so that they might not be fainthearted. *See John 16:1-4.*
- ♦ He predestines many to a secure eternal salvation that preserves them from being deceived by false religion and false worship, 8.

## Christ

### His work

- ♦ He is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world; that is, he is eternal, and his incarnation, death, and resurrection were planned by God before all time, 8.
- ♦ He forms the pattern for his disciples, who will also be killed for following him, 7.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ♦ They are called “saints,” meaning that they have been set apart for God’s possession and use by the Holy Spirit, and they are being progressively sanctified (conformed to the moral likeness of Jesus) by the Spirit, 7.
- ♦ They have been predestined from before the foundation of the earth to know and be saved by God, 8.
- ♦ They bear faithful witness to Christ and may die for this, 7, 10.
- ♦ They have patience and faith unto death, 10.

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

- ♦ He holds temporary and limited power over the political and religious powers of this world, which he uses to deceive people into false worship and to persecute the people of God, 4, 7. *See John 14:30 and 1 John 5:19.*
- ♦ He, political rulers, and false religion form a “trinity” of evil to mock and challenge the divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Do not be surprised when political rulers arrogate to themselves “divine” authority and speak blasphemous words against God and his people.
- ♦ Do not be surprised when religious rulers give allegiance to political rulers and systems.
- ♦ Do not be surprised when you are persecuted by political and religious authorities.
- ♦ Be careful to observe what sort of “mark” is being put on you to force you to worship the Beast in order to be able to survive economically.
- ♦ Make the most of the time, doing good and spreading the gospel as long as you have the opportunity.

# Revelation 14

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Examples in this passage include
  - God's "voice" of thunder, 2; *see Exodus 9:23, 28; 19:19; 1 Samuel 7:10; Job 26:14; 28:26; Psalms 18:13; 29:3; John 12:29; and Revelation 4:5; 6:1; 10:4; 11:19; 16:18; 19:6.*
  - A "new song," 3; *see Psalms 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1.*
  - The four living creatures, 3; *see Revelation 4:6, 8-9; 5:6, 8, 11, 14; 6:1, 6; 7:11; 8:9; 15:7; 19:4.*
  - The redeemed as "first fruits" to God, 4; *see Exodus 23:16, 19; 34:26; 40:17; Leviticus 2:12; and James 1:18.*
  - The fall of "Babylon," the great city of sin, 8; *see Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:8, 44; and Revelation 18:2.*
  - The fire and brimstone of God's wrath, 10; *see Genesis 19:24; Isaiah 30:33; Luke 17:29; and Revelation 9:17-18; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8.*
  - The end-time harvest, 14-20; *see Matthew 13:30 and Joel 3:13.*
  - The wine press of God's wrath, 19-20; *see Revelation 19:15 and Isaiah 63:1-6.*
  - "Outside the city," 20; *see also Zechariah 14:1-4; and Hebrews 13:12; 21:27; 22:15.*

### Its structure

- ◆ Revelation appears to follow a "spiral" or "corkscrew" structure rather than a chronologically linear one.
- ◆ Once again, the last judgment, including the fall of the world city Babylon and the punishment of the wicked, seems to be imminent, as it has in earlier passages, 7-8, 10-11. *See, for example, 11:15-19.*

### Its symbolism

- ♦ The book of Revelation abounds in symbolical numbers.
- ♦ The 144,000
  - A vast army of all those who have the Father's name on their foreheads, 1
  - The redeemed, 3-4
  - Those who keep themselves ritually pure like soldiers before battle, 4
  - Those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes, 4
- ♦ One like a Son of Man sitting on a white cloud, with a golden crown, 14-16
  - Interpretation 1: Jesus Christ harvesting the people of God at the end time. *See verse 4, "first fruits"; Daniel 7:13; and Matthew 13:30; 24:30; 26:64.*
  - Interpretation 2: One of two angels "reaping" the harvest of those who will be punished, 17-19.
- ♦ The sickle: the judgment of God at the end time, 16; *see Joel 3:11-13 and Mark 4:26-29.*

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father ("God"), Son (the Lamb), and Holy Spirit, 1, 4, 13.

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules sovereignly from his throne in heaven, 3.
- ♦ His power is symbolized by thunder, the sound of many waters, and hosts of "soldiers" in his army, 1-3.
- ♦ As Creator of heaven and earth, he deserves glory and honor from all creatures, 7.
- ♦ He has power and authority to judge the world, 7, 10-11.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is the Father of Christ and sent his Son to become the Lamb of God who takes away our sins, 1. *See John 1:19.*
- ♦ He sets his mark of ownership and protection upon his faithful followers, 1.
- ♦ He will pour out the fury of his righteous wrath upon all his wicked enemies, 8-11, 19.
- ♦ He issues commands that reveal his will to his people, 12.
- ♦ He gives rest to those who die in faithful service to him, and he rewards their labors, 13. *See Psalm 62:12.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ As God–man, he is the Lamb who was slain, 1.
- ♦ He is the object of faith, 12.
- ♦ He is the resting place of those who die in faithful witness and service to him, 13.

### His work

- ♦ He shares the heavenly throne and kingship with God the Father, as well as “possession” of the redeemed, the “first fruits” of those who will be saved, 3.
- ♦ He leads the heavenly armies, 1, 4.

## The Holy Spirit

His work: The Spirit reveals God’s words to his chosen messengers, 13.

## Spiritual Beings

Angels: They are mighty spiritual beings who reveal God to his people and who execute his holy wrath upon the world, 14–20.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ♦ An intimate relationship with God as Father, 1
- ♦ A close communion with Christ, 1
- ♦ Worship, 3
- ♦ Ethical purity, 3
- ♦ The faithful following of Christ, 4
- ♦ A lack of deceit, 5
- ♦ The keeping of God’s commandments, 12
- ♦ Perseverance amidst trial and persecution, 12
- ♦ Trust in Christ, 12

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Any kind of sexual immorality, that is, sexual relations outside of marriage between one man and one woman, 4, 8

- ◆ Deceit
- ◆ Worshiping any creature, especially political rulers and powers, 9

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ◆ An intimate relationship with God the Father, whose possession we become, 1
- ◆ Redemption, that is, deliverance from the power of sin and of the devil, 4, and from the holy wrath of God, 10–13
- ◆ Freedom to worship God, 3
- ◆ Rest from labors after death, 13

Its conveyance: It comes from God, through the work of his Son, the Lamb who was slain, 1, 4.

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ◆ When the faithful followers of Christ die, they enter into a state of rest, 13.
- ◆ Unrepentant unbelievers, who worship this world and all in it, will be tormented day and night with unending fire, as objects of God's righteous wrath, 9–11.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Constantly sing hymns of praise to God and to Christ for your salvation.
- ◆ Follow the Lamb of God wherever he goes, even into persecution and death.
- ◆ Do all you can to avoid sin of every kind.
- ◆ Preach the gospel to the whole world, telling people to turn from the worship of creatures to worship the Creator and to trust in Christ, the only Savior.
- ◆ Remain patient when you face persecution.

# Revelation 15

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Allusions in this passage
  - Plagues of God's wrath, 1; *see Exodus 7:14-10:29; 12:29-30.*
  - A sea of glass, 2; *see Revelation 4:6; 21:18, 21.*
  - The song of Moses, 3; *see Exodus 15:1-21 and Deuteronomy 31:30-32:43.*
  - "All nations shall come and worship before You," 4; *see Psalm 86:9 and Isaiah 66:23.*
  - God's unique greatness, power, and holiness, 3-4; *see Psalm 86:8-10 and Jeremiah 10:7, 10, 12.*
  - The tabernacle of God, 5; *see Exodus 26:12-35 and Hebrews 9:2-11.*
  - Priestly persons (here angels) clothed in white linen, 6; *see Leviticus 16:4 and Daniel 10:5.*
  - Smoke from the glory of God filling the temple, 8; *see Exodus 19:18; 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10-11; and Isaiah 6:1, 4.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ◆ He is almighty, doing great and marvelous works of salvation and judgment, 1.
- ◆ He rules as Lord and King of all nations and deserves their worship, 3.
- ◆ As King, he is attended by mighty, beautiful, and holy angels, 6.
- ◆ He is eternal, living forever, 7.
- ◆ He is so glorious that no one can stand in his unmediated presence, 8.

#### His goodness

- ◆ He is righteous and holy and will in his wrath punish all wickedness, 1, 4.
- ◆ He is beautiful, creating music, 2.



- ♦ He is the Redeemer of his people, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, 3.
- ♦ He is just and true in all his ways, 3.
- ♦ In the Old Testament, he condescended to dwell among his people in the Temple; he now dwells in the church by the Spirit and in heaven in the true tabernacle, 5.

## Christ

His work: As the victorious, divine-human Lamb of God, he shares in the works of salvation and judgment and in the worship directed towards God by angels and living creatures, 3-4.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ♦ They gain the victory over Satan and the beast by refusing to worship him or receive his mark, 2.
- ♦ They praise God constantly for his works of salvation and judgment, 3-4.
- ♦ They acknowledge his goodness, truth, and justice in all his works, even works of judgment, 3.
- ♦ They fear God and glorify his name, 4.

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ♦ God will pour out his righteous wrath upon all who have worshiped the world, the flesh, and the devil, 1, 4, 7.
- ♦ His people from all nations will worship him, 4.

# Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Read the whole Bible, including the Old Testament, to understand and appreciate the fullness and beauty of God's revelation in the Scriptures.
- ♦ Sing even now to God in praise of his wonderful works of mercy and judgment.  
*See Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:16.*

- ♦ Trust that all the calamities that befall this world are manifestations of God's holiness, justice, power, and love.
- ♦ Eagerly look forward to the return of Christ, when you shall join all the nations in endless worship of the great and gracious God and his Lamb, your Savior Jesus Christ.

# Revelation 16

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ◆ Allusions in this passage
  - A voice from the Temple, probably God's voice, 1; *see Isaiah 66:6.*
  - The "pouring out" of God's wrath, 1; *see Ezekiel 14:19; Jeremiah 10:25; and Zephaniah 3:8.*
  - Seven plagues, all of which parallel the plagues sent by God upon Egypt before the Exodus, and which also refer to plagues God would send upon rebellious Israel; *see Exodus 7:14-11:6; Leviticus 26:21; and Deuteronomy 28:15, 20.*
  - Angels as agents of God in ruling the created order; *see Psalms 104:4; 148:18; and Hebrews 1:7.*
  - The justice of God's judgments, 6; *see Psalm 51:4 and Ezra 9:15.*
  - Frogs as unclean animals, 13; *see Leviticus 11:10-11.*
  - The gathering of kings against God's people, 12, 14, 16; *see Psalm 2:1-3; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-2.*
  - The "great day of God, 14; *see Joel 2:11, 31; and Zephaniah 1:1.*
  - Jesus' promise and warning that he will return unexpectedly, like a thief, 15; *see Matthew 24:43.*
  - God's saying, "It is done!", 17; *see John 19:30.*
  - Thunder, lightning, and an earthquake as signs of the presence and coming of God, 18; *see Daniel 12:1; Joel 2:2; and Haggai 2:6.*
  - The drying up of the Euphrates River as a prelude to the destruction of Babylon, 12; *see Isaiah 11:15; 41:2, 25; 44:27; 46:11; and Jeremiah 50:38. See also the Exodus, Exodus 14:21 ff.; and the river Jordan, Joshua 3:14 ff.*
  - A great battle at "Megiddo," 16; *see Joshua 5:19-21 and 2 Chronicles 35:20-22.*

- Babylon, the great and wicked city that oppressed God's people, 19; *see Isaiah 13:1-22.*
- Great hailstones as God's judgment, 21; *see Joshua 10:11; Job 38:22; Isaiah 28:2; and Ezekiel 13:11-13.*

#### Its roots in history

- ♦ Biblical revelation is set within history and reflects concurrent historical conditions.
- ♦ The "kings of the east" beyond the Euphrates River are probably the Parthians, who threatened the Roman Empire from across its border, the Euphrates.

#### Its symbolism

- ♦ Biblical revelation, especially the book of Revelation, contains symbols that are difficult to understand.
- ♦ Interpretations of Armageddon
  - It literally means "the mountain of Megiddo." Megiddo is about two days' march north of Jerusalem.
  - Symbolically, it may refer to a place outside of Jerusalem where great kings will gather and be defeated.
  - The latter is more likely, since Megiddo is not a mountain, and Old Testament prophecies always place this great encounter in the environs of Jerusalem, 14:20; 20:8-9.

## God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He dwells in heaven, far beyond us, where he rules as Lord, 1, 11, 17.
- ♦ He is almighty, controls all the powers of the created order, and can use them to inflict terrible suffering, as seen in these plagues, 7, 14.
- ♦ He is eternal, living forever, 5.
- ♦ He rules as King and Judge of all the world, 5.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He deigns to speak to men from heaven, 1, 17.
- ♦ He is righteous and just and therefore burns with holy wrath against all sin, which he must and will punish, 1, 6, 19.
- ♦ He is true (that is, faithful to his character, promises, and warnings) and righteous in all his judgments, 7.

## Christ

His person and work: As the risen and exalted, divine–human Messiah and Lord, he will at the end of the age “come quickly” to reward his people and punish his enemies.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ♦ Holiness (as “saints”), 6
- ♦ Proclaiming his word in speech and action (as “prophets”), 6
- ♦ Being willing to die for the sake of Christ, 6
- ♦ Watching earnestly for the sudden return of Jesus Christ, 15
- ♦ Keeping themselves clean from all moral defilement, 15

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Making any compromises in order to survive financially, 2
- ♦ Giving ultimate adoration or allegiance to or placing our trust in anyone—especially political rulers and systems—other than God, 2
- ♦ Persecuting Christians, 6
- ♦ Blaspheming God, 9, 11
- ♦ Not repenting when trouble comes, 9, 11
- ♦ Not giving all glory to God, 9; *see Romans 1:21*.

## The Last Things

### The end of the age

- ♦ Disasters of all sorts will come upon the entire earth as part of God’s judgment upon the world, and the Lord Jesus will come quickly to rescue and reward his people and to wreak vengeance on all his enemies, 15.
- ♦ At some point, all the nations of the earth will unite in murderous hostility to the people of God, but they will be defeated by God in a great battle, 16–21.

### Their interpretations

- ♦ Interpreters differ about whether to take Revelation 6–20 literally or figuratively.
  - Literally—as a linear and chronological prophecy of what will take place in history, especially at the end of time

- Figuratively—as a “spiral” construction that successively, with increasing intensity, reveals the course of world history, especially the events leading up to a single return of Christ and the final judgment of the world
- ♦ Because passages like 17–21 point towards a final judgment and the conclusion of God’s dealings with unrepentant mankind, the latter interpretation seems more likely.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Expect disasters to come upon earth throughout history as God’s warnings that people everywhere should repent and glorify him.
- ♦ Expect that many people will not repent but will blaspheme God because of natural disasters.
- ♦ Expect Christians to be persecuted and even killed by the followers of this world system.
- ♦ Be prepared to suffer and die for Christ, as you give faithful testimony to his goodness and the gospel of Jesus.
- ♦ Praise God at all times for his goodness and justice, even when terrible troubles come upon the world and upon God’s people.
- ♦ Eagerly wait for the sudden return of Christ.
- ♦ Do all you can to avoid any sort of sin or moral defilement.

# Revelation 17

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones, reflecting God's unity and his unfolding plan of redemption and judgment.

- ◆ Allusions in this passage
  - A great city beside the water, likened to a great harlot and a source of sorceries, like Nineveh, Tyre, and Babylon of old, and Rome in John's day, 1-7, 18; *see Nahum 3:4; Isaiah 23; 41:9, 12; and Jeremiah 51.*
  - Kingdoms viewed as voracious beasts, 3; *see Daniel 8.*
  - Babylon as the golden cup in God's hand, 4; *see Jeremiah 51:7.*

### Its roots in history

- ◆ Biblical revelation is set within history and reflects concurrent historical conditions.
- ◆ The great harlot is a city on seven hills beside many waters. It clearly refers to the city of Rome, a representative of every mighty, wealthy, wicked, and oppressive empire in history.

### Its structure

- ◆ Biblical revelation is almost always intricately designed and constructed.
- ◆ The book of Revelation's literary structure is extraordinarily complex.
- ◆ This chapter begins a description of the fall of "Babylon" that goes through 19:5 and contains multiple references to earlier and later passages in the book.

### Its symbolism

- ◆ Prophetic revelation contains symbols about whose meaning interpreters differ.
- ◆ The seven kings—possible interpretations
  - Seven Roman emperors
  - Seven kingdoms
  - Most likely they represent the totality of earthly empires with a lust for divine authority (hence the divine number seven) that rise and fall throughout world history.

- ◆ Likewise, the ten kings represent all the kings of the earth, who receive their power from the Satan. *See 16:13.*

## God

### His greatness

- ◆ He is eternal, having written names in the Book of Life before the foundation of the world, 8.
- ◆ He is more powerful than all the forces of evil, 14.
- ◆ He rules sovereignly even over all the wicked spirits and kings of this world, 17.
- ◆ He is personal, speaks words, and has a plan which he will certainly fulfill, 17.

### His goodness

- ◆ He has chosen, from before the foundation of the world, that some would be saved, 8.
- ◆ In time, he has called them effectually to believe and to remain faithful, 14.
- ◆ He is just and will destroy all evil spirits and unrepentant enemies of his people and his purposes, 17.
- ◆ He has spoken his prophetic words to his servants to relay to his people, so that we might know his will and his ways, 17.
- ◆ He allows wicked rulers and world political and religious systems to exercise power for only a limited time, and then he destroys them, 10, 12.

## Christ

### His person and work

- ◆ He is Lord of lords and King of kings, 14.
- ◆ The risen Lord Jesus is the Lamb of God who died for our sins and who now rules over all the rulers of this world, 14.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ◆ Those chosen before the foundation of the world to have eternal life, 8
- ◆ Holiness (as “saints”), 6
- ◆ Faithfulness to Christ even unto death, 6, 14
- ◆ Fellowship with Christ and following him wherever he goes, 14
- ◆ A life of suffering and persecution by Satan and his servants, 6, 14



## Spiritual Beings

### Satan and his demons

- ♦ Satan dwells with his demons in the bottomless pit, whence they issue to work on the wills of wicked men, including rulers, 8.
- ♦ They wage constant warfare against the Lord and his people, 14. *See Psalm 2:1; Ephesians 6:10-18; and 1 Peter 5:8.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ All sexual immorality (“fornication”), 1-2, 4
- ♦ All worship of any creature, which is spiritual fornication, 2
- ♦ Drunkenness, 2
- ♦ Blaspheming God, either explicitly in words or implicitly by arrogating to oneself divine attributes and authority (as worldly rulers often do), 3
- ♦ Luxurious and self-indulgent living, 4
- ♦ Persecuting God’s people, 6, 14

## Salvation

### Its fulfillment

- ♦ It began in eternity past, when God wrote the names of all who would become his people in the Book of Life, 8.
- ♦ It continues by God’s election (choosing) unto salvation, 14.
- ♦ It takes effect by God’s effectual calling through the word of God, which creates faith, 14.
- ♦ It results in communion with the risen Christ (being “with him”), 14.
- ♦ It gives the grace to be faithful unto death, 14.
- ♦ It will allow the sharing in the victory of Christ over all evil persons and powers at the end time, 14.
- ♦ It gives knowledge of the words of God, 17.

## The Last Things

### The last days

- ♦ Throughout church history, which is already the “last days,” Christians will be persecuted. At the end of time, there will be a huge persecution of believers, 6, 14.

- ♦ The world system, with all its political, economic, and religious power, will finally coalesce into beastly proportions, will be overthrown by Christ at his return, and will be sent to “perdition,” that is, a condition of perpetual and eternal loss and death, 8, 11, 14.
- ♦ If, as seems likely, Revelation has a spiral structure, then this chapter refers both to an ongoing succession of wicked rulers and kingdoms, concentrated in great cities throughout history; and to one last collection of powers at the end of time that will wage war against Christ and his people and that will be destroyed.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Do not be deceived by the wealth, power, and beauty of great cities, rulers, and kingdoms, for they are dominated by fleshly lusts, driven by Satan and deceiving spirits, and doomed to fearful and everlasting destruction.
- ♦ Do not give yourself to the idolatrous world system or make its goals your priorities in life.
- ♦ Instead, remain faithful to Jesus and to his cross-shaped way of life: self-denial, self-control, and self-offering to God for his service.
- ♦ Do not allow yourself to be sucked into the lust for power, wealth, beauty, and fame, but walk with Jesus “outside the city” in a life marked by weakness, modesty, simplicity, and humility.
- ♦ Do not be surprised when great world systems collapse from within, or when their former allies conspire against them to overthrow them, for Satan is a wicked master who seeks the disintegration and degradation of all that is good.
- ♦ Expect that the United States, along with Western Europe and Japan (which are the current manifestations of Babylon), will fall, perhaps suddenly, to be replaced by equally gaudy, greedy, and godless nations and societies, themselves also doomed to disaster in God’s time.

# Revelation 18

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones, in order to demonstrate the unity of Scripture and also God's unfolding plan of salvation and judgment.

- ♦ Allusions in this passage
  - The calamitous fall of Babylon, 1-2; *see Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 50:39-40; 51:37. See also Isaiah 34:8-15 and Zephaniah 2:14-15 on the fall of Edom and of Nineveh.*
  - The destruction of the city which had made merchants rich, 3; *see Ezekiel 27:25-36; 28:1-5.*
  - The call to come out of the abominable wickedness of the city, 4-5; *see Isaiah 48:20; 52:11; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6-8, 45; and 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.*
  - Punishment that fits the crime, 6; *see Jeremiah 50:29; 51:24; Galatians 6:7-8; and Matthew 7:2.*
  - Babylon's boasting and false self-confidence, 7; *see Isaiah 47:7.*
  - Plagues on a wicked and oppressive empire, 8; *see Exodus 7:14-11:11.*
  - The mourning of those who had become rich from trading with the great but idolatrous city, 9-11, 15-19; *see Ezekiel 26:16-19; 27:27-36.*
  - Heavenly rejoicing over the fall of the wicked and oppressive city, 20; *see Jeremiah 51:48.*
  - The judgmental removal of all joy from a place, 22; *see Jeremiah 7:34; 16:9; 25:10.*

### God

#### His greatness

- ♦ He is almighty, commanding powerful angels as his messengers and agents in judgment, 1-2.

- ♦ He has the power to destroy the mightiest of empires, like Babylon, which here represents all the great kingdoms of the earth.

#### His goodness

- ♦ He is just and will “remember” to punish all the sins of the unrepentant wicked, 5-6.
- ♦ He will also avenge the deaths of his faithful servants and witnesses, 20, 24.

## Mankind

#### Our culture

- ♦ Created in the image of God, men and women reflect his glory by constructing cultures and civilizations of amazing variety and complexity.
- ♦ The power of mighty cities and empires reminds us of God’s universal rule, 10.
- ♦ All sorts of items used in commerce—produced, mined, raised, or gathered—are traded across the seas in large ships and enrich the lives of those who can afford them, 12-13, 15, 17.
  - Crafted items, such as jewelry, rich textiles, precious objects of gold, silver, wood, bronze, iron, and marble
  - Goods such as spices, perfumes, wine, and grains
  - Cattle and other domesticated animals
  - Vehicles
- ♦ Music and skilled craftsmanship bring pleasure and beauty to social life, as does marriage, 22-23.

## The People of God

#### Their characteristics

- ♦ Identification as “prophets and saints,” 20, 24
- ♦ Holiness
- ♦ Prophetic testimony to the world
  - Of the gospel of Christ
  - Of the need to repent of sin
  - Even unto the shedding of blood if necessary

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Setting our longings upon these things and making them into idols, thus committing spiritual fornication by loving them more than we love God, 3, 14
- ♦ Living luxuriously on this earth, 3, 7
- ♦ Using people rather than loving them, 13
- ♦ Lifting up our hearts in complacent pride, 7

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ♦ All great empires throughout history have fallen, many very quickly.
  - Babylon, like Tyre and Nineveh before her, came to sudden and total ruin in judgment for sin.
  - Rome, here symbolized by Babylon, was sacked by the barbarians in 410 A.D.
- ♦ At the end of the age, the entire anti-God world system will suddenly be destroyed by God.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Do not be overawed by the splendor, wealth, and power of any earthly empire or city, for they will all meet the same fate—complete destruction and desolation wrought by God in return for their sins.
- ♦ Do not set your hearts on the seductive beauty, wealth, and power of this world or seek to be satisfied by it, since these things will distract you from the worship of the one true God.
- ♦ Avoid living luxuriously.
- ♦ Avoid giving your allegiance to or placing your trust in any political power, nation, or commercial enterprise.
- ♦ Speak prophetically into your culture and show by your simple and self-denying life that you live for God, not for this world. *See 1 John 2:15.*

# Revelation 19

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones, and with the New Testament fulfilling types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament.

- ◆ Allusions and fulfillments in this passage
  - The word, “Alleluia!”—“Praise Yahweh,” 3. *See Psalms 146:1; 147:1; 148:1; 149:1; 150:1.*
  - God as King sitting on a throne, 4. *See Isaiah 6:1; and often in the Psalms.*
  - God or Christ as Husband or Bridegroom to his people, 7. *See Isaiah 54:5 and Hosea 2:19–20.*
  - God’s Anointed One ruling the nations with a rod of iron, 15. *See Psalm 2:8–9.*
  - A robe dipped in blood through the treading of the “winepress” of God’s wrath, 13. *See Isaiah 63:1–4.*

### Its source

- ◆ God revealed his truth in clear and understandable sayings, sometimes through his angels, to his chosen servants, 9. *See 1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; and Titus 3:8.*
- ◆ His prophets and faithful followers bear witness to Jesus, who is the center and core of their message and of God’s revelation to us, 10.

### God

#### His greatness

- ◆ He possesses all glory, honor, and power, 1.
- ◆ He rules sovereignly and with almighty power from his heavenly throne, 4–6.

#### His goodness

- ◆ He saves his people, 1.
- ◆ He is true to all his promises and warnings, 2.

- ♦ He is just when he punishes the wicked, 2.
- ♦ He avenges the deaths of his faithful servants, 2.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Lamb of God who was slain to save us from our sins, 7. *See John 1:29.*
- ♦ He is the bridegroom of his people, the church, 7, 9. *See Matthew 22:2; 25:10; Mark 2:19-20; John 3:29; and Ephesians 5:22-34.*
- ♦ He is faithful and true, 11.
- ♦ He is righteous, 11.
- ♦ He possesses all knowledge and penetrating insight, 12.
- ♦ He has total sovereignty over the nations (crowns), 12.
- ♦ He has a name which is known only to himself, 12.
- ♦ He is the incarnate and risen Word of God, 13. *See John 1:1-3.*
- ♦ He is the risen and victorious Messiah, 12.

### His work

- ♦ He leads his people in victorious combat over all spiritual enemies now by the Word and Spirit, and he will lead them in a final victory over Satan, the world system, and all who oppose him, 11, 14.
- ♦ He will rule the nations with the word of his mouth, 15.
- ♦ He executes God's fierce wrath against the unrepentant wicked, 16.
- ♦ He is King of kings and Lord of lords, 16.

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ♦ Giving praise to him who saved them, 1, 4-5
- ♦ Being called servants of God, 5
- ♦ Fear of God, 5
- ♦ Purity of life and conduct by God-given power ("saints"), 8
- ♦ Membership in the family of God ("brethren"), 10
- ♦ Holding to the testimony of Jesus, 10
- ♦ Following Christ wherever he goes, 14; *see Matthew 4:19, 22.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ♦ Sexual immorality of any kind (“fornication”), 2
- ♦ Shedding the blood of any person, especially one of God’s people, 2
- ♦ Worshipping (that is, giving adoration or allegiance to) any creature, 10
- ♦ Conspiring with others to oppose the kingdom of God, 19
- ♦ False prophecy, 20
- ♦ Identifying with the powers of this world by receiving their “mark,” 20
- ♦ Worshipping any image, 20

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ Final deliverance from all who persecute believers, 2
- ♦ Vindication in the eyes of God and of the world at the last day, 2
- ♦ Spiritual union now with Christ, 7; *see Romans 7:4*.
- ♦ A new status of ritual purity, 8
- ♦ The ability to do good works, 8; *see Ephesians 2:10*.
- ♦ An invitation to participate in the Messianic banquet, 9
- ♦ Knowledge of the will and ways of God through special revelation, 9-10

Its source: It comes to us from God, through Christ, 1.

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ He will defeat all his human and demonic enemies, 11-21.
- ♦ He will judge all who have opposed him without repentance, sentencing them to everlasting torment in hell, 20.
- ♦ He will vindicate and avenge his faithful followers, 2.
- ♦ He will invite his people to the final, unending marriage supper of the Lamb in the new heaven and new earth, 7.
- ♦ He will completely purify his people from all sin, 7-8. *See Ephesians 5:27*.



# Life

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## Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Praise God constantly for the victories he has already won through Jesus Christ and for the final victory which will be won when Christ returns.
- ♦ Ask God daily for the power to do those good works which he has prepared for you to perform.
- ♦ Read and ponder the Scriptures, which are “the true sayings of God,” 9.
- ♦ Be prepared to die as a witness of Christ.
- ♦ Make Jesus the center and content of your testimony before others, 10.
- ♦ Make a conscious union with Christ – abiding in him and having communion with him—your first priority in life, for he alone is your true “husband.”
- ♦ Follow wherever Jesus leads you.
- ♦ Eagerly await the return of Jesus and your final and full union with him.

# Revelation 20

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its interpretation

- ♦ Prophetic revelation, and especially the book of Revelation, contains passages about whose meaning godly interpreters differ.
- ♦ Revelation 20 has perhaps occasioned more disagreement than any other passage in the Bible. Traditionally, there have been three views.
  - Post-millennialism: Post-millennialists believe that the visible influence of God will grow, mostly through the spread of the gospel and the application of God's laws to all of life, until it has permeated the whole world, after which Christ will return to establish the new heaven and new earth.
  - Pre-millennialism: Pre-millennialists believe that Christ will return visibly and bodily and will reign from his throne in Jerusalem for 1,000 years, during which Satan will be bound and unable to affect mankind. After these 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed, and there will be one final battle when Christ returns again and judges the world.
  - Amillennialism: Amillennialists believe that the 1,000 years, like almost every other number in Revelation, is symbolic: the Christians, or the souls of departed believers, are those who "came to life," 4, and they reign spiritually on earth now as the representatives of Christ, mostly by preaching the gospel, casting out demons, healing, and overcoming Satan's wiles by the power of the Word and Spirit of God. A variation of this view is that the souls of departed believers now share the reign of Christ.
- ♦ These views flow from different ways of interpreting the Bible, especially Old Testament prophecies of the coming reign of God.
  - Some try to take all these prophecies literally in every detail. They assign each passage to either the 1,000-year visible and bodily reign of Christ from Jerusalem on earth, or the new heaven and new earth which will be established.

- Others see them as figurative, simply descriptive of the conditions of the new heaven and the new earth.
- All agree that these prophecies will be fulfilled on earth at some time. In that sense, there are no true “amillennialists,” since even they believe that there will be an ideal world ruled by the risen Christ on earth.
- Another view holds that this chapter, like all of Revelation, is symbolic in nature, and that it portrays realities about both the present and the future that cannot be literally applied to any linear chronological scheme of the past, present, or future. Given the symbolic nature of virtually every other passage in this book, including the many numbers, and given the impossibility of interpreting every passage literally, this last view seems most likely to be correct.

## God

### His greatness

- ♦ He has power over Satan, 2-3, 7-10.
- ♦ He has power over life and death, both physical and spiritual, 4-5.
- ♦ He rules sovereignly from his throne, 11.
- ♦ He has judicial power over all mankind, 11-12.

### His goodness

- ♦ He has communicated his will and his ways through his Word of revelation to the prophets and apostles and especially through Jesus, 4.
- ♦ He is generous, sharing his rule with the saints, 4, 6.
- ♦ He will control, defeat, judge, and finally consign to eternal torment Satan and all his followers, 9-10.
- ♦ He will protect his people from spiritual destruction, 9.
- ♦ He is just and will judge each person according to his works, 12-13.
- ♦ He is gracious and will save those whose names have been recorded in the Book of Life from all eternity, 12.

## Christ

His person: He is equal with God the Father, receiving worship from his people just as the Father does, 6.

### His work

- ♦ He rules now as risen and ascended Lord, 6. *See Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; and 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.*
- ♦ He will also share the final judgment with God the Father, 11-12. *See Matthew 7:21-23; 25:31-46.*

## The People of God

### Their characteristics

- ♦ Willingness to suffer for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, 4
- ♦ Not worshiping the beast, that is, not giving allegiance or adoration of any kind, including submission, to the world system when it opposes Christ, 4
- ♦ Practical holiness as “saints,” 9

## Spiritual Beings

### Satan

- ♦ He is a ravenous beast, who constantly seeks to devour and destroy people, 2. *See Revelation 12:4 and 1 Peter 5:8.*
- ♦ He is the “ancient serpent,” the one who deceived Eve in the garden, 2. *See Genesis 3:13 and 1 Timothy 2:14.*
- ♦ He is the devil, that is, slanderer, the adversary (“Satan”) of God and his people. He formerly (though not now) accused God’s people before God’s face, 2. *See Revelation 12:10; Job 1:6-12; and Romans 8:1, 31-34.*
- ♦ He works primarily by deception since he is the father of lies, 3, 10. *See Revelation 12:9 and John 8:44; 6:11.*
- ♦ Though very powerful, he cannot match the superior power of God and of his angels, 2, 7-10.
- ♦ He has been cast down from heaven and severely restricted in his activities since the first coming of Christ, 2-3. *See Revelation 12:7-9; Matthew 12:24-30; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 10:17-19; and John 12:31-32.*
- ♦ In this weakened and “bound” state, he can be resisted and even defeated by believers in Christ, who in that sense now “reign” over him, 4. *See Ephesians 6:10-13; James 4:7; and 1 Peter 5:8-9.*
- ♦ At the end of the age, he will be allowed to unleash his full fury against God’s people, but Christ will utterly defeat him and cast him into a lake a fire, there to endure endless torment, 7-10.

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ♦ Deliverance from the deceptive power of Satan, as we believe the truth of God, 3
- ♦ New life in Christ, that is, participation in the first resurrection, 4; *see John 5:24; Ephesians 2:4-6; and Colossians 3:1.*
- ♦ Co-regency with Christ over the powers of evil, 4, 6
- ♦ Protection from the spiritual attacks of Satan, 9
- ♦ Recompense for good deeds, 12-13; *see Romans 2:6-7 and Ephesians 2:10; 6:8.*
- ♦ Eternal life, based on our names having been written in the Book of Life from before the foundation of the world, 12, 15; *see Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 21:27; Philippians 4:3.*
- ♦ Being priests of God and of Christ even now, 6; *see 1 Peter 2:9.*

## The Last Things

### The final judgment

- ♦ Through Christ, God will conquer and destroy all those who have opposed him and persecuted his people, 9.
- ♦ God will cast Satan and his servants into the lake of fire to be tormented eternally, 10.
- ♦ Everyone will be raised from the dead and evaluated according to their works, 12-13.
- ♦ Those whose names are written in the Book of Life will receive everlasting life, 12.
- ♦ Those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire and tormented eternally, 15.

### Their interpretations

- ♦ While the aspects of the final judgment listed above are clearly understood, other things are not as clear, at least to some godly and learned interpreters.
- ♦ Some, who profess to take all the Bible literally, believe that the one thousand years should be taken as a literal period of time. Others believe this number is symbolic, like nearly all other numbers in Revelation and refers to a long but limited time.

- ♦ Some believe that this chapter and the previous one present a straightforward, chronological sequence of events in the future. Others point to signs of cyclical structure in Revelation and hold that this passage, again, recapitulates history up to the time of the end.
- ♦ This difference of interpretations repeats with other parts of these two chapters and of Revelation as a whole, and many questions and confusions arise.
  - Will there be literal “books” opened? If so, how large will they be? Printed, or handwritten? Scrolls, or codices? In what language?
  - Gog and Magog are not located in “the four corners of the earth,” but somewhere in the Middle East and perhaps Russia, depending upon one’s interpretation of Ezekiel 38–39.
  - How can Death and Hades be literally “cast into the lake of fire”?
  - How many Spirits does God have? Seven, as in Revelation 1:4? Or is that number symbolic of fullness and full deity?
  - What kind of “sword” proceeds from the mouth of Christ? *See Revelation 19:15*. Is it a physical one made of metal? Or is the “sword” figurative for the word of God? *See Hebrews 4:12*.
  - Will Christ rule the nations with a literal “rod of iron,” or is this also figurative language? *See Revelation 19:15*.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Respect believers in Christ who differ with you on the interpretation of difficult passages of the Bible.
- ♦ Eagerly await the coming of Christ; the destruction of Satan, death, and all evil; and the final victory of God.
- ♦ Spread the gospel throughout the world, so that those who have been written in the Book of Life may hear, repent, and believe in its saving message.
- ♦ Warn people of the impending judgment of God, which will be impartial and based on their works.

- ◆ Conduct yourself with reverence and fear during your time on earth, knowing that God will judge you according to your works. *See Matthew 7:21-27; Romans 2:1-16; Ephesians 6:8-9; and 1 Peter 1:17-19.*
- ◆ Trust in the work of Christ for you and not in your own good works, because no one will be justified by works. *See Romans 3:2-26.*

# Revelation 21

## Truth

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### Revelation

#### Its reflection of God

- ♦ Biblical revelation reflects the nature of God, who is one in three, by possessing both a fundamental, coherent unity and a beautiful diversity.
- ♦ The book of Revelation sums up the major themes of all previous revelation.
- ♦ Allusions to God and his work
  - His initial creation of the heavens and the earth, 1; *see Genesis 1:1.*
  - The prophesied dissolution of the present creation, 1; *see Psalm 102:26; Isaiah 34:4; 51:6; Matthew 24:35; and 2 Peter 3:7, 10-13.*
  - The sea as a symbol of restless hostility and danger, 1; *see Isaiah 57:20-32.*
  - The chosen city of Jerusalem, 2; *see Psalm 48:1-3; Isaiah 12:1.*
  - The people of God as his bride, 2; *see Ephesians 5:22-32.*
  - His promise to dwell among his people, 3; *see Genesis 28:15; Leviticus 26:11; Jeremiah 24:7; 30:22; 31:33; 32:38; Ezekiel 37:26-27; and John 1:14.*
  - His promise to be their God, 3; *see Genesis 17:17; Exodus 6:7; and Ezekiel 34:24; 36:28.*
  - His promise to bless all peoples (plural), 3; *see Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18.*
  - His promise to banish sorrow from the earth, 4; *see Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; 65:19.*
  - His promise to make all things new, of which the regeneration and “new creation” of believers in Christ is a current foretaste, 5; *see Isaiah 43:19; 2 Corinthians 5:10; and Ephesians 2:10.*
- ♦ Other allusions
  - Rivers of living water, symbolic of the life God gives through his Spirit; *see Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13; John 4:10; 7:37-39; and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. See also Psalm 46:4; 65:9.*



- The inheritance which God gives his people, 7; *see Genesis 17:6; 22:17; Romans 4:13; 8:17; and Ephesians 1:11.*
- God's promise to be the God of his people and to be the father to those who serve him, 7; *see 2 Samuel 7:14; Romans 8:14, 16; Galatians 3:26, 29; Zechariah 8:8; and previous passages in Revelation.*
- "Alpha and Omega," 6; *see Revelation 1:8.*
- Several of the Ten Commandments, 8; *see Exodus 20:2-17.*
- A great and glorious city that is measured, 9-21; *see Ezekiel 48.*
- The cube-shaped city that recalls the cube-shaped Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, 16.
- The presence of God as its light and the absence of darkness and night, 23-25; *see Isaiah 60:11, 19-20.*
- The prophecy that the nations would bring their glory into the city as an offering to God, 26; *see Isaiah 60:3.*

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as Father ("God"), Son ("the Lamb"), and Holy Spirit, 1-5, 10, 22.

### His greatness

- ♦ He is almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the one who will usher in a new heaven and new earth at the end of time, 1.
- ♦ He is transcendent, dwelling in heaven, far above this world, 2.
- ♦ He is able to destroy death and destruction and to renew all things, 4-5.
- ♦ He is eternal, the beginning and the end, 6.
- ♦ He is full of life and is the fountain of life in all its forms, 6.
- ♦ He owns all things, 7.
- ♦ He is the source and author of light, 23. *See Genesis 1:3 and 1 John 1:5.*

### His goodness

- ♦ He is holy, therefore inhabiting a holy city with holy people, 2.
- ♦ He is immanent, dwelling among his people, 3, 22.
- ♦ He is intimately connected to his people as their God and faithful to his promises to be the God of his chosen people, 3. *See Leviticus 26:11-12; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27; and 2 Corinthians 6:16.*

- ♦ He is kind, tender, and compassionate, assuaging the pain of his people and removing all causes of further sorrow, 4.
- ♦ He is heavenly Father to his people, 7.
- ♦ He is utterly opposed to evil, 8, 27.
- ♦ He is inexpressibly glorious, beautiful, and resplendent, 11–25.
- ♦ He is the giver of eternal life and blessedness to those whom he has chosen, 27.

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He is the Bridegroom of his people, the church, 2. *See Ephesians 5:22–32.*
- ♦ He is equal with God the Father.
  - He and the Father together are the temple of the New Heaven and New Earth, 22.
  - He shares God’s glory and nature as light, 23.
- ♦ He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, 27. *See John 1:29.*

## The Holy Spirit

His person: He is the agent of God’s revelation to his people through his chosen messengers, 5, 10.

## The People of God

### Their identity

- ♦ All the elect from Israel and from the church since Pentecost, 12, 14, 19–21; they are also referred to as “tribes of Israel,” “apostles of the Lamb,” and “twelve stones.” *See Exodus 28:17–21.*
- ♦ The Bride of Christ, 2
- ♦ God’s special people, 3
- ♦ Those who “overcome” by refusing to worship this world and by faithfully following Christ, even unto death, as his witnesses, 7
- ♦ Saints, marked by holiness and avoidance of sin, 8

- ◆ Both individually and corporately, they are the dwelling place of God and of the Lamb, and they constitute the glorious city of God, which will one day be revealed in all its beauty and splendor, 9–21. *See 1 Corinthians 3:9–17; Ephesians 2:20; and 1 Peter 2:4–10.*

## Sin

### It includes

- ◆ Unbelief
- ◆ Abominable actions (such as homosexual activity)
- ◆ Sexual immorality of all sorts (that is, any sexual relations outside the marriage of one man and one woman for life)
- ◆ Sorcery (and all use of magic, fortune-telling, etc.)
- ◆ Idolatry
- ◆ Lying, 8, 2

## Salvation

### Its substance

- ◆ A living hope in all that God has promised to do for us when Christ returns; *see Revelation 21:1–22:5.*
- ◆ Current enjoyment of blessings that we shall receive in perfect fullness later, such as the presence of God and Christ wherever we go in obedience to him, 3; *see Matthew 28:20.*
- ◆ Comfort in sorrow, 4; *see 2 Corinthians 1:3–5.*
- ◆ Being a new creation, 5; *see 2 Corinthians 5:10.*
- ◆ Knowledge of the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures, 5
- ◆ Access to the water of life through faith in Jesus, who gives us the Holy Spirit, 6; *see John 4:10; 7:37–39.*
- ◆ The Holy Spirit as the down payment of the inheritance we shall receive later, 7; *see Ephesians 1:13–14.*
- ◆ Dwelling in the temple of God, which is the church, and having God dwell in us, 3, 22; *see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; Ephesians 2:19–22; and 1 Peter 2:4–5.*
- ◆ Being called a “son” of God, 7; *see Galatians 4:3–7.*

Its source: It came when Jesus died for our sins and rose again for our justification.

## The Last Things

### The new creation

- ◆ When Christ returns, he will bring down from heaven the new city of God, which will be his own people, now fully sanctified, beautified, and glorified, dwelling harmoniously together and praising him forever, 1-2, 9-27.
- ◆ He will inaugurate an endless era of intimate fellowship with God, 3.
- ◆ He will banish all sorrow and all causes of pain, 4.
- ◆ He will renew the entire creation, 5.
- ◆ He will fully satisfy all our longings and desires, 6.
- ◆ He will give the kingdom of God, as well as God himself, to his people, 7.
- ◆ He will bring salvation to all the peoples of the earth, 24, 26.
- ◆ He will grant everlasting and complete security and freedom from fear, 25.
- ◆ He will punish all unrepentant evildoers, 8, 27.
- ◆ He will glorify himself through his people forever.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ◆ Eagerly await, pray for, and set your hopes on the grace to be brought to you as the revelation of Jesus Christ. *See Matthew 6:10 and 2 Peter 3:12-13.*
- ◆ Do not put your hopes in this world to satisfy your longings, to provide security, to bring social harmony and peace, or to establish justice.
- ◆ Thank God daily for the foretastes of ultimate salvation that you already enjoy.
- ◆ Seek that holiness without which no one will see God. *See Hebrews 12:14.*

# Revelation 22

## Truth

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### Revelation

Its cumulative fullness: Biblical revelation is a consecutive, cumulative, and coherent whole, with later passages referring to and incorporating earlier ones.

- ♦ In this chapter, John alludes to several passages in the Old Testament and the New Testament, especially to the early chapters of Genesis and to Ezekiel 47:1–12, to show how the new heavens and new earth will not merely restore, but also surpass the original creation.
  - A river of life, 1; *see Genesis 2:10; Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:25–27; 47:1; John 4:10–14; 7:38–39; and Revelation 7:17; 22:17.*
  - The tree of life, 2; *see Genesis 2:9 and Revelation 2:7.*
  - The healing of the nations, 2; *see Ezekiel 47:12.*
  - The curse, now lifted and removed, 3; *see Revelation 21:4 and Genesis 3:17–19.*
  - The throne of God, a common Old Testament theme, 3; *see Psalm 11:4 and Isaiah 6:1; 9:7.*
  - Seeing God's face, 4; *see Matthew 5:8 and 1 John 3:2.* Notice the contrast with Moses, who was not allowed to see God's face, that is, his glory. *See Exodus 33:20–23; 34:29–35.*

### Its veracity

- ♦ Biblical revelation is faithful and true, entirely reliable, and trustworthy, a fact emphasized seven times in the last two chapters of Revelation, 6. *See Revelation 19:9–10; 21:5; 22:6–7, 9–10, 18–19. See also Psalm 12:6; Isaiah 40:8; and 1 Peter 1:25.*
- ♦ Sometimes it was given through an angel to God's chosen messenger, but it derives from Jesus, the Word of God, 6, 16.
- ♦ Its truth extends to its very words, not just to ideas or concepts, 9, 18.
- ♦ Some of it is prophetic, in the sense of being predictive, 10.
- ♦ It contains blessings and warnings, 14–15.
- ♦ Those who read and keep its words are blessed, 7 (one of seven blessings in Revelation).

- ♦ It reveals God’s will to us in clear commands, 14.
- ♦ With the completion of the book of Revelation, biblical revelation as a whole was also completed, so that nothing may be added to it or subtracted from it, 18–19. This refutes liberal theologians, who would subtract from the Bible, as well as Roman Catholics, who add to it.

## God

His Triune nature: He exists as a Trinity of Father (“God”), Son (“the Lamb”), and Holy Spirit, 1, 17.

### His greatness

- ♦ He rules from his throne as sovereign Lord over all creation, 1, 3, 6.
- ♦ He is the source of life, 2.
- ♦ He deserves unique worship, 9.
- ♦ He possesses authority over life and death, 18–19.
- ♦ He is eternal, 13. *See Revelation 1:8; 21:6; and Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12.*
- ♦ God is a personal entity, having a name, 6.

### His goodness

- ♦ He is relational, allowing his people to know and serve him, 3–4.
- ♦ He is immanent, dwelling among his people, 3.
- ♦ He is the giver of light, 5.
- ♦ He has revealed his will and ways to his prophets and chosen messengers, 6.
- ♦ He rewards those who serve him, 7.
- ♦ He is just, repaying each person for the works he has done, 12. *See Isaiah 62:11.*

## Christ

### His person

- ♦ He shares the throne of heaven with God the Father, 1, 3.
- ♦ Like the Father and the Spirit, he is eternal, 13. *See John 1:1; 8:58.*
- ♦ He gives light, 5. *See John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5.*
- ♦ He is the “root” of David and his line, 16.
- ♦ He is the stem from Jesse’s tree, 16.
- ♦ He is the descendant of David, 16.
- ♦ He is the Bridegroom of his people, 17.

- ♦ He is the bright morning star prophesied by Balaam, 16. *See Numbers 24:17.*
- ♦ He is Lord (the Greek translation of the Old Testament word “Yahweh”), 21.

#### His work

- ♦ As the Lamb of God, he was able to be killed, 1.
- ♦ He gives light, 5. *See John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5.*
- ♦ He has authority to reward and punish, as God does, 12. *See above.*
- ♦ He has authority to send angels, 16.
- ♦ He bestows grace like God, 21.

### Holy Spirit

His work: He speaks to and through his people to draw others to Christ, 17. The invitation here is to those who are thirsty. *See Isaiah 55:1.*

### The People of God

#### Their characteristics

- ♦ They are marked by a life of service to God, 3, 6, 9.
- ♦ They keep—that is, believe, follow, and proclaim—the words of the Bible, especially Revelation, 7.
- ♦ They come constantly to Christ to drink of the Spirit, 17.
- ♦ They constantly invite others to come to Christ, 17.
- ♦ They eagerly await the return of Christ, 17, 20.
- ♦ They trust in the entirety of the Bible and adhere to Scripture alone as authoritative revelation, 18–19.

### Spiritual Beings

#### Angels

- ♦ They are God’s servants, and they bring his revelation to his servants the prophets, 6.
- ♦ They are only creatures, fellow servants of God, and therefore must not be worshiped, 9.

### Sin

#### It includes

- ♦ Injustice, that is, not giving to others what they are due, 11

- ♦ Filthiness, that is, sexual impurity, 11, 15; *see Ephesians 5:5.*
- ♦ Sorcery and all magic, 15
- ♦ Murder, including hatred in the heart, 15; *see Matthew 5:21–22.*
- ♦ Idolatry, which includes inordinate desires of all sorts, 15; *see Exodus 20:17 and Ephesians 5:5.*
- ♦ Loving and practicing what is not true, 15; *see Exodus 20:16.*
- ♦ Adding anything to God’s Word as authoritative or obligatory, or subtracting anything from God’s Word, 18–19

## Salvation

Its fulfillment: Salvation is “already but not yet.” Already, believers in Christ enjoy a foretaste of things to come.

- ♦ Access to Jesus, who gives us to drink of the Holy Spirit, 1; *see John 7:37–39.*
- ♦ Access to Christ as the Tree of life, giving new life to us even now, 2; *see John 3:16; 5:24; and 1 John 5:11–13.*
- ♦ Blessing instead of God’s curse, 3; *see Galatians 3:10–14 and Ephesians 1:3.*
- ♦ The privilege of serving God, 3, 9
- ♦ Seeing the face of God in the life and work of Jesus Christ, 4; *see John 1:14, 18; 14:7–9; and 2 Corinthians 4:6.*
- ♦ The constant light of Christ in our lives, 5; *see John 1:3–4; 8:12; and 1 John 1:5, 7.*
- ♦ The knowledge of God’s revelation in the words of the prophets and apostles, 6
- ♦ The hope of Christ’s return, 7; *see Romans 8:18–25.*
- ♦ The God-given ability to keep his commands (though not perfectly), 14; *see Ephesians 2:10.*
- ♦ God’s grace, that is, his unmerited favor towards us in Christ, 21

## The Last Things

### Christ’s return

- ♦ He will bring in fullness all the blessings mentioned above.
- ♦ He will come quickly, that is, suddenly, at a time when we do not expect him, 7, 12, 20. *See Matthew 24:36–44.* Before his physical return, he may “come” to us by an unexpected death. *See 2 Thessalonians 5:2, 4.*
- ♦ He will reward his people for their good works and punish all evildoers, 12.



- ♦ He will grant his faithful followers access to the tree of life and the city of God, 15.
- ♦ He will banish all evil from his renewed earth, 15.

## Life

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### Ethical Imperatives

- ♦ Eagerly await the coming of Christ and all that he will bring.
- ♦ Set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ and not upon earthly things. *See 1 Peter 1:13.*
- ♦ Meditate upon “things above,” that is, on the character of God and of the eternal blessed state which awaits you. *See Colossians 3:1-3.*
- ♦ Read the words of God in the Scripture, especially in the book of Revelation, often and with prayer, 7.
- ♦ Be eager to keep all the commands that God has revealed in the Scriptures, 7, 14.
- ♦ Do not detract anything from Scripture or add anything to it as authoritative and obligatory for faith and life.
- ♦ Invite people to come to Christ and warn them of the coming judgment.