

An Introduction

Someone new to Christianity will wonder what a “statement of faith” is. Simply put, it is a way of telling other people what you believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and so forth. A statement of faith can be used as an indicator toward learning whether an organization represents true Christianity. It should be an important factor when deciding whether or not a church is right for you. Below you’ll find, in full transparency, Rock Harbors’ Statement of Faith.

Let’s get started.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Scriptures

“The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man. The verbal inspiration of the original autographs was plenary and verbal. Therefore, the Bible is inerrant and infallible in its original manuscript. It is the sole authority for faith and practice in all matters to which it speaks.”

Sources:

[Exodus 24:4](#); [Deuteronomy 4:1-2](#); [Joshua 8:34](#); [Psalms 19:7-10](#); [119:11,89,105,140](#); [Isaiah 34:16](#); [40:8](#); [Jeremiah 15:16](#), [36:1-32](#); [Matthew 5:17-18](#), [22:29](#); [Luke 21:33](#); [24:44-46](#); [John 5:39](#); [16:25-26](#); [2 Timothy 3:15-17](#); [Hebrews 1:1-2](#), [4:12](#); [1 Peter 1:25](#); [2 Peter 1:19-21](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful and all-knowing and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God The Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-

powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalms 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3, 15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7

B. God The Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We believe in the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ who always was and will be God and did not cease to be God at the incarnation. The Man Christ Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit; that He was born of the virgin Mary; that He possesses both a divine and human nature both distinct and unmixed; that He was without sin; Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision and atonement for the redemption of men from sin. He died a penal substitution for the sin of all men; that He was buried; that He arose on the third day in the same but glorified body in which He lived and died; He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He functions as the High Priest for all believers ever making intercession for them and now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord. He will return personally and physically in power and glory. The Second Coming has two phases: the Rapture in which Christ returns for the Church in the clouds and the Second Coming to earth to judge the world, save Israel and to consummate His redemptive mission.

Genesis 18:1ff; Psalms 2:7ff; 110:1ff; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6, 19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18, 29; 10:30, 38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16, 28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20, 28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5, 20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3, 34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8, 24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-

15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. He is the infallible author and interpreter of the infallible Word. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. In this age, at the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ and permanently indwells every believer. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He empowers, instructs, and guides the believer in living, service, and worship through His gifts. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service. His chief purpose is to witness and glorify Christ; that His fullness and power and control are appropriated in the believer's life by faith.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10, 12; Luke 1:35; 4:1, 18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17, 39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28, 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11, 13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8, 14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: The Dispensations

The dispensations are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on earth through man by varying responsibilities; that they are chronologically successive; that they are not ways of salvation nor different methods of the administration of the Covenant of Grace but are a test of man's submission to God based on progressive revelation; that they are a necessary view of Scripture based on literal interpretation, a consistent distinction of Israel and the Church, and that the ultimate purpose of God is His own glorification; that they are not different ways of salvation but in every dispensation the basis of salvation was always the blood of Christ, the means of salvation was always by grace through faith, the object of faith was always God, but

the content of faith changed in different dispensations dependent upon progressive revelation.

Genesis. 12:3; Deuteronomy. 28:25, 64, 65; 30:1-4; 2 Samuel. 7:8-16; Psalms. 89; Is. 2:1-5; Jeremiah. 31:31-34;; Ezekiel 40-48; Daniel. 9-12; Matthew. 11:13; 16:18; 18:15-18; 24-25; 26:26-28; Mark 2:21-22; Mark. 7:18-19; 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; Acts. 2: 2:16-21; 2:34-5; 15:13-17; Acts. 13:46-47; 17:30; Romans. 9-11. 1 Corinthians. 11:23-25; 1 Corinthians. 15:51-52; 2 Corinthians. 3:5-6; Galatians. 3:1-6:2; Ephesians. 1:7-14; 2:11-18; 3:1-11, Colossians. 1:24-28; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5; Hebrews. 7:1-28; 8:6-13 10:14-18; 12:22-24; 1 Peter 2:9-12; Revelations. 4-22

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Angels: Unfallen and Fallen

A. Creation of Angels

God created an innumerable number of sinless beings known as angels, seraphs, and cherubs. The Scriptures do not indicate a precise time for this creation. The Scriptures do teach that the angels saw the foundations of the earth created which would be between day 2 and 3.

Job 38:6, 7; Ezekiel.28:15; Matthew.8:10; 24:31; 26:53 Psalms.148:2, 5; Colossians.1:16; Jude 6

B. Satan

One of these created beings, "Day-Star, Son of the Morning," the highest in rank, sinned through pride, thus becoming Satan the adversary; that he is an actual person with all the characteristics of personality; that he is the originator of sin; that he operates today as the prince and god of this world; that he is the arch-enemy of God and the people of God and deceiver of humanity; that he led the first parents into transgression causing their fall; that he was judged at the cross, a judgment yet to be executed in the Lake of Fire.

Job.1:12; Ezekiel 24:18; 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-15; Matt.13:39; 12:24; Luke 10:18; 11:18; John 8:44; 12:31; 2 Corinthians. 4:4; 6:15; 2 Corinthians.11:3, 14; 1 Ephesians.2:2; 6:11-12; Thessalonians. 3:52 Timothy.2:26; James 4:7; 1 Peter.5:8; 1 John 5:19; Revelations.12:3, 9-10, 17.

C. Unfallen Angeles

A great company of angels kept their holy estate and are ministering spirits of God for the carrying out of His purpose, especially to those who inherit salvation.

[Genesis.21:17-20](#); [1 Kings 19:5-7](#); [Psalms.34:7](#), [35:4-5](#); [Daniel.6:20](#), [23](#); [Matthew.18:10](#); [Luke 16:22](#); [Acts 12:7](#); [Hebrews.1:14](#); [Jude 9](#)

D. Demons

One third of the angels followed Satan in his fall, some of whom became demons who are active as Satan's agents in the carrying out of unholy purposes, while others who fell are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

[Genesis.6:4](#); [Daniel.10:10-20](#); [Zechariah.3:1](#); [Matthew.4:9-10](#), [8:28](#), [10:1](#), [12:24](#), [25:41](#); [Mark 1:14,34](#), [5:32](#); [Acts 19:16](#); [2 Corinthians. 11:13-15](#); [Ephesians. 6:12](#), [5:6](#), [7](#); [1 Timothy.4:1-3](#); [Jude 6](#), [7](#); [Revelations.9:1-11](#); [16:13-16](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherits a sin nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

[Genesis 1:26-30](#), [2:5](#), [7](#), [18-22](#); [3: 9:6](#); [Psalms 1](#); [8:3-6](#); [32:1-5](#); [51:5](#); [Isaiah 6:5](#); [Jeremiah 17:5](#); [Matthew 16:26](#); [Acts 17:26-31](#); [Romans 1:19-32](#); [3:10-18](#), [23](#); [5:6](#), [12](#), [19](#); [6:6](#); [7:14-25](#); [8:14-18](#), [29](#); [1 Corinthians 1:21-31](#); [15:19](#), [21-22](#); [Ephesians 2:1-22](#); [Colossians 1:21-22](#); [3:9-11](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Salvation

A. Only Through Christ

Due to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainments in morality however high, no culture however attractive, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; Our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and was made a curse for us, dying in our stead; and that no repentance, no feeling, no good resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to the rules and regulations of any church, nor all the churches that have existed since the days of the Apostles can add in the very least degree to the value of the blood, or to the merit of the finished work wrought for us by Him who united in His person true and proper deity with perfect and sinless humanity ([Lev. 17:11](#); [Isa. 64:6](#); [Matt. 26:28](#); [John 3:7-18](#); [Rom. 5:6-9](#); [2 Cor. 5:21](#); [Gal. 3:13](#); [6:15](#); [Eph. 1:7](#); [Phil. 3:4-9](#); [Titus 3:5](#); [James 1:18](#); [1 Pet. 1:18-19, 23](#)).

B. The Object

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. (see below for scriptures)

C. The Means

Salvation is wholly a work of God's free grace and not the work of man in whole or in part, nor due to man's goodness or religious ceremony; that it is a gift to man received by personal faith at which time the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner, thereby justifying him in God's sight; that those who are saved have been elected to salvation according to the foreknowledge of God in eternity past and have been called by the Holy Spirit. (See below for scriptures)

D. Regeneration

Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It occurs after someone has responded by faith to God's call to salvation; the creation testifies, the conscious bear witness, the Scriptures

testify, and the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. Once someone responds by faith, the Holy Spirit regenerates the person which entails a change of heart, and a new nature is given to the person, which wants to obey. The person is freed from the enslavement to the old nature and can now make a decision concerning which nature to exercise. The person is adopted in to God's family and the Holy Spirit now indwells the believer.

E. Justification

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God. (See below for scriptures)

F. Sanctification

Sanctification, beginning in regeneration, which is a setting-apart unto God, is threefold: It is already complete for every saved person because his position toward God is the same as Christ's position. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God. The believer retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. There is, therefore, a progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to "grow in grace," and to "be changed" by the unhindered power of the Spirit. We believe also that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ when he shall see his Lord and shall be "like Him" ([John 17:17](#); [2 Cor. 3:18](#); [7:1](#); [Eph. 4:24](#); [5:25-27](#); [1 Thess. 5:23](#); [Heb. 10:10](#), [14](#); [12:10](#)).

G. Glorification

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed. The redeemed will receive their new glorified bodies and will not possess a sin nature and nor will they ever be able to rebel again. (See below for scriptures)

H. The Extend of Salvation

When an unregenerate person exercises that faith in Christ which is illustrated and described as such in the New Testament, he passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new; being justified from all things, accepted before the Father according as Christ His Son is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his place and portion as linked to Him and one with Him forever. Though the saved one may have occasion to grow in the realization of his

blessings and to know a fuller measure of divine power through the yielding of his life more fully to God, he is, as soon as he is saved, in possession of every spiritual blessing and absolutely complete in Christ, and is therefore in no way required by God to seek a so-called "second blessing," or a "second work of grace" ([John 5:24](#); [17:23](#); [Acts 13:39](#); [Rom. 5:1](#); [1 Cor. 3:21-23](#); [Eph. 1:3](#); [Col. 2:10](#); [1 John 4:17](#); [5:11-12](#)).

I. Eternal Security

Because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall be secure to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ. They receive a loss of temporal blessings and eternal rewards. They may also bring temporal discipline on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. God is a holy and righteous Father and that, since He cannot overlook the sin of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love; but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He, who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son ([John 5:24](#); [10:28](#); [13:1](#); [14:16-17](#); [17:11](#); [Rom. 8:29](#); [1 Cor. 6:19](#); [Heb. 7:25](#); [1 John 2:1-2](#); [5:13](#); [Jude 24](#)).

J. God's Purpose of Grace

God graciously calls and convicts all of mankind equally to salvation. God must initiate the call to individuals and he or she will either accept or reject God's call. Mankind's sin nature does not totally render a person incapable of responding to God's call to salvation. Those who accept the call by faith will be regenerated/ born again/ born from above. Election is according to the foreknowledge of God, and predestination is the gracious blessings of God that were marked out ahead of time for those that He knew would respond to the Gospel in faith. God has predestinated beforehand the kind of destiny He will graciously give anyone who believes in Him. Therefore, God has determined that He will regenerate, justify, sanctify, and glorify sinners to make them into the image of His Son. Furthermore, God planned and blesses the believer with

adoption, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a new nature, spiritual gifts, inheritance, and many other promises as part of becoming part of the elect. Also, election in many cases deals with the corporate election of either Israel or the Church. When a person becomes part of one of these two bodies they are called “elect” since they now belong to either the nation of Israel or the Church. Israel and the Church are the two elected vehicles God would use to reach the world. Again, these elect vehicles are also considered blessings which were marked out ahead of time for those who would respond in faith as God’s program in salvation history developed. These are all part of the blessings of becoming saved, which God purposed before the foundation of the world. Predestination and election have to do with blessings that accompany salvation that God decided to give to individuals who become believers before the foundation of the world. It is consistent with the free agency of man since it is based on God’s foreknowledge of the individual’s faith in Him, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness towards believers and allows for human freedom. It excludes prideful boasting and promotes humility since man cannot work for/earn/merit or deserves salvation.

[Genesis 3:15](#); [Genesis 12:1-3](#); [Exodus 3:14-17](#); [6:2-8](#); [Exodus 19:5-8](#); [1 Samuel 8:4-7](#), [19-22](#); [Isaiah 5:1-7](#); [Jeremiah 31:31ff.](#); [Matthew 1:21](#); [4:17](#); [16:18-19](#); [16:21-26](#); [21:28-45](#); [24:22,31](#); [25:34](#); [27:22-28:6](#); [Luke 1:68-79](#); [2:28-32](#); [19:41-44](#); [24:44-48](#); [John 1:11-14](#), [29](#); [3:3-21](#), [36](#); [5:24](#); [6:44-45,65](#); [10:9](#), [27-29](#); [14:6](#); [15:1-16](#); [17:6,12,17-18](#); [Acts 2:21](#); [4:12](#); [15:11](#); [16:30-31](#); [17:30-31](#); [20:32](#); [Romans 1:16-18](#); [2:4](#); [3:23-25](#); [4:3ff.](#); [5:8-10](#); [6:1-23](#); [8:1-18](#), [28-39](#); [10:9-15](#); [11:5-7,26-36](#); [13](#); [13:11-14](#); [1 Corinthians 1:1-2](#); [1:18](#), [30](#); [6:19-20](#); [15:10](#); [15:24-28](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17-20](#); [Galatians 2:20](#); [3:13](#); [5:22-25](#); [6:15](#); [Ephesians 1:4-23](#); [2:1-10](#); [2:8-22](#); [3:1-11](#); [4:11-16](#); [Philippians 2:12-13](#); [Colossians 1:9-22](#); [3:1ff.](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:23-24](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14](#); [2 Timothy 1:12](#); [2:10](#), [19](#); [Titus 2:11-14](#); [Hebrews 2:1-3](#); [5:8-9](#); [9:24-28](#); [11:1-12:8](#), [14](#); [James 1:12](#); [2:14-26](#); [1 Peter 1:2-23](#); [2:4-10](#); [1 John 1:6-2:11](#); [2:19](#); [3:2](#); [Revelation 3:20](#); [21:1-22:5](#)

K. Assurance of Salvation

Assurance of salvation is based on a believer’s belief in Christ and is not based on what the believer does or fails to do in his sanctification. The good works of the believer are a test of discipleship and not of salvation. We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word, exciting within His children filial love, gratitude, and obedience ([Luke 10:20](#); [22:32](#); [2 Cor. 5:1](#), [6-8](#); [2 Tim. 1:12](#); [Heb. 10:22](#); 1 John in its entirety).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Israel

God called a people to Himself who are the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that Israel is the Wife of Jehovah, unfaithful in the past, divorced in the present, and to be reunited in the future; that God has made one conditional covenant (The Mosaic, which has now rendered inoperative since the Messiah has fulfilled the law) and has made four unconditional covenants (Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, and New) with this elect nation that have remained unfulfilled. God intends to fulfill all His promises to Israel in a literal way just as His warnings and judgments were fulfilled in a literal way; that in Israel's history of unbelief there has always been a believing remnant according to the election of grace; that there will be a national regeneration of Israel at the end of the Tribulation at which time all of the provisions of the unconditional covenants will be fulfilled, including the seed, land, and blessing aspects which will be realized in the Millennial Kingdom. Currently, Israel becoming a nation again in 1948 is prophetically significant since this predicted by the prophets concerning the last days.

[Genesis. 12:1-3,7; 13:6,14-15,17;15:1-6,17-21;17:1-21;22:17;26:2-5,24;28:13-15;49:1-28; Exodus 15:26;19:3-8; 32:11-14; Deuteronomy 4:7-8,37; 7:6-8; 30:1-10; 2 Samuel 7:11b-17; 23:1-5; 1 Chronicles 17:10b-15; Psalm 79; 80:1-19; 89:1-52, Isaiah 2:2-3; 9:6-7; 11:1-9; 12:1-3; 14:1-2; 27:12-13; 28:14-22; 35:1-10; 40:1-2; 43:1-12; 49:22-23; 55:3; 59:21; 60:18-21; 61:4-9; 64:1-12; 65:1-25; 66:20-22; Jeremiah 3:18; 16:14-16; 23:5-6; 30:4-18; 31:31-37; 32:37-41; 33:14-17; 19-26; Ezekiel 11:17-21; 16:1-63; 20:33-38; 22:17-22; 28:25-26; 30:7-10; 34: 11-16,25-31; 36:22-24; 36:26-28; 37: 37:1-14, 21-28; Ezekiel 38-39; 40-48; Daniel 9-12; Hosea 1:10-11; 3:4-5; 5:15; Joel 2:28-32; 3:1-3,17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:1,4-7; 7:14-17; Zephaniah 2:1-2; 3:14-20; Zechariah. 8:4-8,23; 10:11-15; 12:10-13:1; 13:7-9; 14:8; Matthew 12:22-45; 21:43; 22:23-33; 23:1-36; Luke 1:30-35, 68-73, 19:43-44; 21:6,20-24; John 19:41-44; Acts 15:14-18; 26:6-8; Romans 3:1-2; 11:25-36; Hebrews 6:13-20; Revelation 7:1-17; 12:1-17; 20:1-15](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible

and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. The Church is the body and Bride of Christ; that it is composed of all Jewish and Gentile believers from Pentecost to the Rapture; that entrance into this body is by Spirit-Baptism; that it is distinct from Israel; that while sharing spiritual blessings with Israel of the Jewish covenants, it neither fulfills them nor has taken possession of them from Israel. All believers are obligated to assemble together for the purpose of participation in the ordinances, to be taught the Scriptures by gifted men, to edify each other, and to worship God; that this assembling is to be organized as a local church under authoritative leadership; that the believer is called to holy living in the power of the indwelling Spirit; to fight the spiritual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil; to use his spiritual gifts for the purpose of building up of the local body of Christ.

[Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; 28:18-20; Romans 1:7; 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the age to its appropriate end. The Rapture of the church will commence the Day of the Lord; the dead will be raised and the believers who are alive will be glorified and translated to Heaven to await the judgment seat of Christ where they will receive their reward; The Rapture will be followed by the seven year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, according to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth to rescue the remnant of Israel and the Gentile nations and Christ will judge the nations in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The remnant of Israel and the Gentile will live in the Millennial Kingdom for 1,000 years. After the 1,000 years are over, the Great White throne Judgment will commence and sentence all unbelievers and the Devil and his angels to the Lake of fire forever. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will dwell in Heaven with the Lord forever. (see scriptures below)

A. The Rapture of the Church

Christ will return into the air for the purpose of gathering the Church to Himself both dead and alive; that this event is both imminent and Pre-Tribulational; that this is the blessed hope of the Church. (see scriptures below)

B. The Seven year Tribulation

We believe that sometime after the Rapture, the Tribulation of Israel's Seventieth Week will occur for a period of seven years; that it is a time of judgment of all humanity; that it will bring to an end the times of the Gentiles and result in the national regeneration of Israel. (see scriptures below)

C. The Second Coming

We believe in the personal, visible, and bodily return of Christ to the earth with his saints after the Tribulation and before the Millennium in the clouds of heaven with glory and great power at the request of and to save Israel from her enemies; to judge all living Gentiles for the purpose of determining who will be excluded from the Kingdom and who will be included in the Kingdom. (see scriptures below)

D. The Messianic/Millennial Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Currently, we are in the Mystery or Invisible Kingdom phase of God's kingdom. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and His rule for 1,000 years over Israel and the Gentile nations. The Kingdom of God will continue after the Millennium for all eternity. During the Millennium, the Church will co-reign with Christ, the unconditional covenants with Israel will be fulfilled, Israel will be restored along with the resurrection of the Old Testament saints, Satan will be bound in the abyss, the curse will be lifted, and the knowledge of God will permeate the world, and peace will be maintained by the iron-rod rule of Christ.

[Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18, 3:11; 20:1-22:13. Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10, 23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrew 11:10, 16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 20-22](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: The Final State

A. The Present Time

At physical death, the believer immediately goes into the presence of God in full conscious fellowship with the Lord, awaiting the resurrection of the body; that the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal conscious separation from God in Hell, awaiting the resurrection of the body. (see scriptures below)

B. The Eternal Order

In the eventual resurrection of all saints before the Kingdom to fellowship with Christ in the Kingdom on this earth and then in the New Jerusalem on the New Earth in eternity after the Kingdom; in the resurrection of all unbelievers after the Kingdom to appear before the Great White Throne Judgment and then to abide for eternity in the Lake of Fire. (see scriptures below)

[Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21: 27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians. 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelations. 1:18, 3:11; 20:1-22:13. Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10, 23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10, 16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 20-22](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic

responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

[Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7, 11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15;3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5;3:17.](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Stewardship

A. Stewardship in the Church

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians are in the dispensation of grace so grace giving is the procedure in stewardship. Believers in the Church age are not obligated to keep the Mosaic 23% tithe or the pre-Mosaic practices of making a one-time donation of 10% from the spoils of war. However, believers are still mandated to give today, but are to be led by the Holy Spirit in the amount they give. There are no legalistic percentages that are mandated because the Holy Spirit directs the amount. Furthermore, the church is not the storehouse since it is not in Jerusalem, is not the Jewish temple, and the Mosaic Law has been rendered inoperative. Therefore, the Holy Spirit directs believers in the age of grace to where He sovereignly chooses to channel funds. This could be to the local church but could also include various other missions, ministries, and people. Believers are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, individually, proportionately, and liberally under the direction of the Holy Spirit for the advancement of the Gospel on earth.

B. Principles in Giving

There are five basic principles of biblical giving. First, giving is a measure of the believer's love for God. If the believer is laying up treasures here on earth, then the believer's heart will be on earthly things. But if the believer is laying up his treasures in Heaven, his heart will be on heavenly things. Secondly, giving is an expression of faith.

Thirdly, the believer will never out-give God. [Philippians 4:15-19](#) teaches that if the believer gives, God will supply his needs; the believer need not worry about his needs, as God will take care of these things. He should be more concerned about giving, because giving will result in God's supplying the believer's needs. Fourthly, giving should be done in secret. The fifth principle is that the believer should be willing to work in order to give more. One should give as one has purposed to give, according to one's ability. A similar point is made in [Acts 11:29](#). One should give according to his ability and according to his own free will or as he has purposed. The believer should not do it out of a sense of necessity.

C. Gentile Indebtedness to Jewish Believers

Furthermore, according to the apostle Paul, Gentile believers are required to support Jewish believers ([Romans 15:25-27](#)) since Gentiles have become partakers of Jewish spiritual blessings. According to Paul, the Gentile believers have become indebted to the Jews, especially Jewish believers. The way of fulfilling or paying off their indebtedness is by sharing their material things with Jewish believers. As Gentiles have become partakers in their spiritual things, they are now to fulfill their indebtedness by giving in a material way to Jewish believers.

[Matthew 6:1-4](#), [19:21](#); [19:21](#); [23:23](#); [25:14-29](#); [Luke 12:16-21](#), [42](#); [16:1-13](#); [Acts 2:44-47](#); [5:1-11](#); [17:24-25](#); [20:35](#); [Romans 6:6-22](#); [12:1-2](#); [15:25-27](#); [1 Corinthians 4:1-2](#); [6:19-20](#); [12](#); [16:1-4](#); [2 Corinthians 8-9](#); [12:15](#); [Philippians 4:10-19](#); [1 Peter 1:18-19](#).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament. The

Christian must use wisdom in who and what they align themselves with on common cause issues.

[Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: The Christian Walk

We are called with a holy calling, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. But the flesh with its fallen, Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, being with us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord.

[\(Rom. 6:11-13; 8:2, 4, 12-13; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 2:1-10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 1:4-7; 3:5-9\).](#)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: The Christian's Service

We believe that divine, enabling gifts for service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit, and each is called to his own divinely appointed service as the Spirit may will. In the apostolic church there were certain gifted men—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—who were appointed by God for the perfecting of the saints unto their work of the ministry. We believe also that today some men are especially called of God to be evangelists, pastors and teachers, and that it is to the fulfilling of His will and to His eternal glory that these shall be sustained and encouraged in their service for God ([Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11](#)).

We believe that, wholly apart from salvation benefits which are bestowed equally upon all who believe, rewards are promised according to the faithfulness of each believer in his service for his Lord, and that these rewards will be bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ after He comes to receive His own to Himself ([1 Cor. 3:9-15; 9:18-27; 2 Cor. 5:10](#)).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: The Christian and Society

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose evolution, rewriting history, racism, social justice, the social gospel, socialism, cults, the occult, communism, fascism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, the redefinition of a biblical marriage, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to endeavor, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. The Christian must also use wisdom in who and what they align themselves with on common cause issues. The Scriptures do not promote social justice, Marxism, Communism or Fascism since these socio/politico/economic theories are not compatible with the Scriptures. The Scriptures do not promote radical environmentalism but state plainly that man cannot effect the environment. The Christian must be aware of that the world is prophetically heading for a one world government, one world currency, and one world leader. Although the will of God cannot be thwarted, the Christian is to be salt and light to oppose these trends.

[Genesis 8:22](#); [Exodus 20:3-17](#); [Leviticus 6:2-5](#); [Deuteronomy 10:12](#); [27:17](#); [Psalms 101:5](#); [Micah 6:8](#); [Zechariah 8:16](#); [Matthew 5:13-16](#), [43-48](#); [22:36-40](#); [25:35](#); [Mark 1:29-34](#); [2:3ff](#); [10:21](#); [Luke 4:18-21](#); [10:27-37](#); [20:25](#); [John 15:12](#); [17:15](#); [Romans 12-14](#); [1 Corinthians 5:9-10](#); [6:1-7](#); [7:20-24](#); [10:23-11:1](#); [Galatians 3:26-28](#); [Ephesians 6:5-9](#); [Colossians 3:12-17](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:12](#); [Philemon](#); [James 1:27](#); [2:8](#).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to

put an end to war if possible. However, the Bible gives clear indications for a just war. The strong help the weak and defenseless. To confront evil and extract it through war is justifiable from the scriptures. Pacifism is nowhere found in the scriptures. Turn the other cheek has to do with personal insults and not war. Therefore, nations are not allowed to sit by and watch evil do as it will. On a personal level, we would protect our families if evil confronted our family. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of The Lord's teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. However, the world is getting worse and evil will have to be confronted. True peace will only be found in the Millennial Kingdom and not during this age. In fact, the Lord comes back to fight against His enemies at the Second Coming.

[Isaiah 2:4](#); [Matthew 5:9, 38-48](#); [6:33](#); [26:52](#); [Luke 22:36, 38](#); [Romans 12:18-19](#); [13:1-7](#); [14:19](#); [Hebrews 12:14](#); [James 4:1-2](#).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government, being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

[Genesis 1:27](#); [2:7](#); [Matthew 6:6-7](#), [24](#); [16:26](#); [22:21](#); [John 8:36](#); [Acts 4:19-20](#); [Romans 6:1-2](#); [13:1-7](#); [Galatians 5:1](#), [13](#); [Philippians 3:20](#); [1 Timothy 2:1-2](#); [James 4:12](#); [1 Peter 2:12-17](#); [3:11-17](#); [4:12-19](#).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Marriage, Family and Sexuality

All matters of faith and conduct must be evaluated on the basis of Holy Scripture, which is our infallible guide ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)). Since the Holy Bible does speak to the nature of human beings and their sexuality, it is imperative that we correctly understand and articulate what the Bible teaches on these matters. We are committed to the home and family as set forth in Holy Scripture. We believe God has ordained and created marriage to exist between one man and one woman, with absolute marital fidelity. The Bible sets forth specific home and family values, which include the distinct roles of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. It is our firm conviction that we uphold the dignity of each individual as we embrace the unchanging and long standing principles of scriptural truth. Based on Holy Scripture and the constant moral teaching of the universal Church, we believe:

- **Marriage** — RHC defines marriage as the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of one man and one woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. A pastor of RHC may only marry someone with the biblical qualifications as stated above. A failure to meet the above qualifications disqualifies the applicant. ([Genesis 1:27-28](#), [Genesis 2:18-24](#), [Matthew 19:4-9](#), [Mark 10:5-9](#), [Ephesians 5:31-33](#))
- **Sexual Immorality** — RHC believes that sexual acts outside marriage are prohibited as sinful. Consequently, RHC members must resist and refrain from any and all sexual acts outside marriage — including but not limited to adultery, fornication, incest, zoophilia, pornography, prostitution, masturbation, voyeurism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, sodomy, polygamy, polyamory, sologamy, or same-sex sexual acts. ([Exodus 20:14](#), [Leviticus 18:7-23](#), [Leviticus 20:10-21](#), [Deuteronomy 5:18](#), [Matthew 15:19](#), [Matthew 5:27-28](#), [Matthew 15:19](#), [Romans 1:26-27](#), [1 Corinthians 6:9-13](#), [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#), [Hebrews 13:4](#), [Galatians 5:19](#), [Ephesians 4:17-19](#), [Colossians 3:5](#))
- **Sexual Identity** — RHC believes that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Consequently, RHC members must affirm their biological sex and refrain from any and all attempts to physically change, alter, or disagree with their predominant biological sex — including but not limited to elective sex-reassignment, transvestite, transgender, or non-binary “genderqueer” acts or conduct. ([Genesis 1:26-28](#), [Romans 1:26-32](#), [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#))

- **Sexual Orientation** — RHC believes that God created and ordered human sexuality to the permanent, exclusive, comprehensive, and conjugal “one flesh” union of man and woman, intrinsically ordered to procreation and biological family, and in furtherance of the moral, spiritual, and public good of binding father, mother, and child. Consequently, RHC members must affirm the sexual complementarity of man and woman and resist any and all same-sex sexual attractions and refrain from any and all same-sex sexual acts or conduct, which are intrinsically disordered. ([Genesis 1:27](#), [Genesis 2:24](#), [Matthew 19:4-6](#), [Mark 10:5-9](#), [Romans 1:26-27](#), [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#), [Ephesians 5:25-27](#), [Revelation 19:7-9](#), [Revelation 21:2](#))
- **Sexual Redemption** — RHC believes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and should seek redemption through confession, repentance, baptism, and faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, RHC members must try to help and treat with respect, compassion, and sensitivity all who experience same-sex attractions or confess sexually immoral acts, but are committed to resisting sexual temptation, refraining from sexual immorality, and conforming their behavior to RHC Statement of Faith. ([Matthew 11:28-30](#), [Romans 3:23](#), [Ephesians 2:1-10](#), [1 Corinthians 10:13](#), [Hebrews 2:17-18](#), [Hebrews 4:14-16](#))
- **Celibacy** — RHC believes that Holy Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for human sexual behavior: (1) the conjugal “one flesh” marital union of one man and one woman, and (2) celibacy. Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them. Celibacy and faithful singleness is to be celebrated and affirmed within the RHC. ([Genesis 1:27-28](#); [2:18](#), [21-24](#); [Matthew 19:4-6](#); [Mark 10:5-8](#); [Hebrews 13:4](#); [1 Corinthians 7:1-8](#); [Matthew 19:12](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#); [Romans 12:10](#); [1 Timothy 5:1-2](#)).

[Genesis 1:26-28](#); [2:15-25](#); [3:1-20](#); [Exodus 20:12](#); [Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#); [Joshua 24:15](#); [1 Samuel 1:26-28](#); [Psalms 51:5](#); [78:1-8](#); [127](#); [128](#); [139:13-16](#); [Proverbs 1:8](#); [5:15-20](#); [6:20-22](#); [12:4](#); [13:24](#); [14:1](#); [17:6](#); [18:22](#); [22:6](#); [15](#); [23:13-14](#); [24:3](#); [29:15](#), [17](#); [31:10-31](#); [Ecclesiastes 4:9-12](#); [9:9](#); [Malachi 2:14-16](#); [Matthew 5:31-32](#); [18:2-5](#); [19:3-9](#); [Mark 10:6-12](#); [Romans 1:18-32](#); [1 Corinthians 7:1-16](#); [Ephesians 5:21-33](#); [6:1-4](#); [Colossians 3:18-21](#); [1 Timothy 5:8](#), [14](#); [2 Timothy 1:3-5](#); [Titus 2:3-5](#); [Hebrews 13:4](#); [1 Peter 3:1-7](#).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Creation

The Bible declares that the human mind (if open to possibility of creation) is able to explore the manifestations of the Triune God rationally, scientifically, and teleologically. The Creator of the universe is the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is only one eternal and transcendent God, the source of all being and

meaning, and He exists in three Persons, each of whom participated in the work of creation.

The biblical record of primeval earth history in Genesis 1-11 is fully historical and clearly expressed, including the creation and Fall of man, the Curse on the Creation and its subjection to the bondage of decay, the promised Redeemer, the worldwide cataclysmic deluge in the days of Noah, the post-diluvian renewal of man's commission to subdue the earth (now augmented by the institution of human government), and the origin of nations and languages at the tower of Babel.

A. Creation

The physical universe of space, time, matter, and energy has not always existed, but was supernaturally created by a transcendent personal Triune Creator, (The Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit) who alone has existed from eternity. Scripture, which serves as an eye witness account, teaches a recent origin for man and the whole creation, spanning approximately 4,000 years from creation to Christ and approximately another 2,000 years from Christ to the present. The gap theory or an old universe/earth theory has no basis in Scripture since death would be introduced into the world before the fall of man. All things in the universe were created and made by God in the six literal days of the Creation Week described in [Genesis 1:1-2:3](#), and confirmed in [Exodus 20:8-11](#). The days in Genesis do not correspond to geologic ages, but are six [6] consecutive twenty-four [24] hour days of creation.

The phenomenon of biological life did not develop by natural processes from inanimate systems but was specially and supernaturally created by the Lord Jesus Christ. Each of the major kinds of plants and animals was created functionally complete from the beginning and did not evolve from some other kind of organism. Changes in basic kinds since their first creation are limited to "horizontal" changes (variations) within the kinds, or "downward" changes (e.g., harmful mutations, extinctions).

The creation record is factual, historical, and presented clearly; thus all theories of origins or development that involve evolution in any form are false. All things that now exist are sustained and ordered by The Lord Jesus's providential care. However, a part of the spiritual creation, Satan and his angels rebelled against God after the creation and are attempting to thwart His divine purposes in creation.

B. Adam and Eve

The first human beings did not evolve from an animal ancestry, but were specially created in fully human form from the start. Furthermore, the "spiritual" nature of man (self-image, moral consciousness, abstract reasoning, language, will, religious nature,

etc.) is itself a supernaturally created entity distinct from mere biological life. The first human beings, Adam and Eve, were specially created by the Lord Jesus Christ, and all other men and women are their descendants. In Adam, mankind was instructed to exercise “dominion” over all other created organisms, and over the earth itself (an implicit commission for true science, technology, commerce, fine art, and education), but the temptation by Satan and the entrance of sin brought God’s curse on that dominion and on mankind, culminating in death and separation from God as the natural and proper consequence.

C. Noah’s Flood

The record of earth history, as preserved in the earth’s crust, especially in the rocks and fossil deposits, is primarily a record of catastrophic intensities of natural processes, operating largely within uniform natural laws, rather than one of gradualism and relatively uniform process rates. There are many scientific evidences for a relatively recent creation of the earth and the universe, in addition to strong scientific evidence that most of the earth’s fossiliferous sedimentary rocks were formed in an even more recent global hydraulic cataclysm.

D. Miracles in the Natural World

Processes today operate primarily within fixed natural laws and relatively uniform process rates, but since these were themselves originally created and are daily maintained by the Lord Jesus Christ, there is always the possibility of miraculous intervention in these laws or processes by Him. Evidences for such intervention should be scrutinized critically, however, because there must be clear and adequate reason for any such action on the part of God.

E. Man’s Fall Affected Creation

The universe and life have been impaired since the completion of creation, so that imperfections in structure, disease, aging, extinctions, and other such phenomena are the result of “negative” changes in properties and processes occurring in an originally-perfect created order. Since the universe and its primary components were created perfect for their purposes in the beginning by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is a competent and volitional Creator, and since He does remain active in this now-decaying creation, there does exist an ultimate purpose and meaning in the universe. Teleological considerations, therefore, are appropriate in scientific studies whenever they are consistent with the actual data of observation. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that the creation presently awaits the consummation of the Lord Jesus Christ’s purpose.

F. The Redemption of the Creation

The final restoration of creation's perfection is yet future. The eventual accomplishment of God's eternal purposes in creation, with the removal of His curse and the restoration of all things to divine perfection, will take place at the personal bodily return to earth of Jesus Christ to judge and purge sin and reign for one thousand years. After the one thousand years, God will create a new heaven and earth free from corruption and will last for all of eternity.

Genesis 1-11; Exodus 4:11; 20:11; Deuteronomy 4:32; 2 Kings 19:15; Nehemiah. 9:6; Job 9:8-10; 10:8-12; 12:10; 26:7-10; 26:13; 28:26; 31:15; 33:4; 33:6; 34:19; 35:10; 36:3; 37:16,18; 38:4-12,19,21,33,36; 40:15,19; Psalms 8:3,5,6; 19:1,4; 24:1,2; 33:6-9,11; 65:6; 74:16,17; 78:69; 86:9; 89:11-12,47; 90:2; 94:9; 95:4; 95:5-7; 96:5; 100:3; 102:18,25; 103:22; 104:2-6,8,24,26,30; 111:4; 115:15; 119:73,90-91,152; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 136:5-9,13,16; 146:6; 148:1-6; 149:2; Proverbs 3:19; 8:26-29; 14:31; 16:4; 17:5; 20:12; 22:2; 26:10; 30:4; Ecclesiastes 3:11; 7:29; 11:5; 12:1,6; Isaiah 17:7; 22:11; 27:11; 29:16; 37:16; 37:26; 40:26,28; 42:5; 43:1,7,10,15,21; 44:2,21,24; 45:7-9,11-12,18; 48:7,13; 49:1,5; 51:13,16; 54:5; 57:16; 64:8; 65:17-18; 66:2; Jeremiah 1:5; 5:22; 10:11,12,16; 14:22; 16:20; 27:5; 31:35; 32:17; 33:2; 51:15,19; Hosea 8:14; Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:6; Jonah 1:9; Zechariah 12:1; Malachi 2:10; Matthew 13:35; 19:4; Mark 13:19; John 1:1-3,10; 17:24; Acts 4:24; 7:50; 14:15; 17:24-26,28-29; Romans 1:20,23,25; 4:17; 8:19-22; 9:20; 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 11:9,12,18,24; 15:38, 45,47; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18; Ephesians 2:10; 3:9; 4:24; Colossians 1:15-17; 3:10; 1 Timothy 2:13; 4:3-4; 6:13; Hebrews 1:2,10; 2:10; 3:4; 11:3; 12:9; James 3:9; 1 Peter 4:19; 2 Peter 3:4; Revelation 3:14; 4:11; 10:6; 14:7; 20:1-15; 21:1.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Addendum

Why do we have an invitation?

The Scriptures record many incidents where listeners to God's word were given an opportunity to respond to God's conviction on their hearts.

(Exodus 32:26; Joshua 24:15; Matthew 7:28-8:1; 8:22; 10:32-33; 10:38-39; 11:28-30; 15:21-28; 16:24-27; Mark 1:17; 3:5; Mark 8:34-38; 10:14-16; 10:17-22; Luke 6:8-11; 6:17-19; 8:40-48; 9:57-62; 17:11-19; John 1:38-39; 1:4; 1:7-8; 4:16; 5:5-15; 6:1-14; 32-59; 7:37-39; 8:11; 9:1-11; 11:39-44; Acts 2:41; 3:19-4:4; 8:36-39; 10:34-35; Revelation 22:17)

What Decisions can you make?

Salvation

Today is the day of salvation! This is the most important decision of your life.

The Bible presents a clear path to eternal life. First, we must recognize that we have sinned against God: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” ([Romans 3:23](#)). We have all have broken His laws, which makes us deserving of punishment. Since all our sins are ultimately against an eternal God, only an eternal punishment is sufficient. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” ([Romans 6:23](#)). Our sin has separated us from God, and the consequence of sin is death; physical death and spiritual death, the latter being separating from God for all eternity in Hell. Salvation is deliverance from “wrath,” that is, from God’s judgment of sin ([Romans 5:9](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:9](#)). Biblical salvation refers to our deliverance from the consequence/penalty of sin and therefore involves the removal of the guilt sin.

God calls everyone to salvation and only God can remove sin and deliver us from sin’s penalty ([2 Timothy 1:9](#); [Titus 3:5](#)). God has rescued us through Jesus Christ ([John 3:17](#)). Jesus Christ, the sinless ([1 Peter 2:22](#)), eternal Son of God became a man ([John 1:1, 14](#)) and died to pay our penalty. “God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” ([Romans 5:8](#)). Specifically, it was Jesus’ death on the cross, taking the punishment that we deserve ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). Jesus was buried and on the third day He rose from the dead that achieved our salvation, proving His victory over sin and death. (([1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#)); [Romans 5:10](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#)). In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” ([1 Peter 1:3](#)). Scripture is clear that salvation is the gracious, undeserved gift of God ([Ephesians 2:5, 8](#)) and is only available through faith in Jesus Christ ([Acts 4:12](#)).

We are saved by faith. First, we must hear the gospel—the good news of Jesus’ death on the cross to pay for our sins, burial, and resurrection ([Ephesians 1:13](#)). Then, we must believe—fully trust the Lord Jesus ([Romans 1:16](#)). This involves repentance, a changing of mind about sin and Christ – who He is, what He did, and why – for salvation ([Acts 3:19](#) and calling on the name of the Lord ([Romans 10:9-10, 13](#)). If we place our faith in Him, trusting in the person and work of Christ, we will be forgiven and receive the promise of eternal life in heaven. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that anyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life” ([John 3:16](#)). “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” ([Romans 10:9](#)). Faith alone in the finished work of Christ on the cross is the only true path to eternal life!

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)).

If you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, here is a sample prayer. Remember, saying this prayer or any other prayer will not save you. It is only trusting in Christ that

can save you from sin. This prayer is simply a way to express to God your faith in Him and thank Him for providing for your salvation. "God, I know that I have sinned against you and deserve punishment. But Jesus Christ took the punishment that I deserve so that through faith in Him I could be forgiven. I place my trust in You for salvation. Thank You for Your wonderful grace and forgiveness – the gift of eternal life! Amen!"

Baptism

Baptism doesn't save you or prove that a person is truly saved. The thief on the cross was saved and was never baptized. ([Luke 23:40-43](#)) Baptism is a command since Jesus commanded His disciples to Baptize as part of fulfilling the Great Commission. ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)) Therefore, baptism is not optional and must be done as soon as it is possible. Baptism is a believer's first step of obedience after receiving Christ as Lord and Savior. Christian baptism is an outward testimony/profession of their faith that memorializes/points back to the inward reality of salvation that has already occurred in a believer's life when they were saved. The meaning of the symbol action of Baptism signifies three different realities that occurred in and for the believer at salvation.

First, Baptism symbolizes our union with Christ. A believer is identified with the person and saving work of Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. ([Romans 6:3-4](#); [Colossians 2:11-12](#)).

Second, the symbolic action of being immersed in the water symbolizes being freed from the power of sin and dying to our sin nature. The action of coming out of the water pictures our new life in Christ and entering into eternal life by being regenerated/born again. ([Romans 6:6-12](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)) The immersion into water symbolizes the washing away /cleansing of sin by the Holy Spirit in regeneration ([Ezekiel 36:25](#); [Acts 22:16](#); [Titus 3:5](#)) Furthermore, the raising of the person out of the water also signifies the hope that one day the person will be physically resurrected from the dead as Christ was resurrected. ([Romans 6:3-5](#); [1 Corinthians 15:20-22](#); [42-44](#); [50-57](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:13-17](#))

Third, it identifies the believer with the Church through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which was a waterless Baptism that occurred at Salvation. At salvation the Holy Spirit placed the believer into the Body of Christ at salvation and identified and connected the person with everyone in the believing Church. ([Acts 1:4-5](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#); [Ephesians 4:5](#)) Baptism of the Spirit makes all believers of the Church unified in spirit. Therefore, Baptism points to our union with the Body of Christ. To identify with Christ is to identify with His people. ([Ephesians 2:15](#); [1 Corinthians 12:12](#); [Romans 12:4-5](#)) Furthermore, Baptism has been given to the church as an ordinance. This gives the local body of believers a visible sign that a person is a professing believer since salvation/the new birth cannot be witnessed by anyone. ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [John 3:8](#); [Acts 2:38-42](#); [Acts 10:47-48](#); [Acts 19:5](#))

Therefore, the symbol of Baptism and the Greek word baptizo, which means to dip into water, demands total immersion into water. In Christian baptism, there are two requirements before a person is baptized: 1) the person being baptized must have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior, and 2) the person must understand what baptism signifies. If a person knows the Lord Jesus as Savior, understands that Christian baptism is a step of obedience in publicly proclaiming his faith in Christ, and desires to be baptized, then there is no reason to prevent the believer from being baptized.

Church Membership

The Definition of Church Membership

When an individual is saved, he becomes a member of the body of Christ universal; in Heaven and on earth. ([1 Corinthians. 12:13](#)). The believer now possesses the qualifications necessary to become member of a local expression of that Body. To become a member of a church one has to commit oneself to an identifiable, local body of believers who have joined together for the purposes of the Church. These purposes include receiving instruction from God's Word ([1 Timothy 4:13](#); [2 Timothy. 4:2](#)), serving and edifying one another through the proper use of spiritual gifts ([Rom. 12:3-8](#); [1 Cor. 12:4-31](#); [1 Pet. 4:10-11](#)), participating in the ordinances ([Luke 22:19](#); [Acts 2:38-42](#)), and proclaiming the Gospel to those who are lost ([Matt. 28:18-20](#)).

Although Scripture does not contain an explicit command to formally join a local church, the biblical foundation for church membership, formal or informal, is discussed in principle in the New Testament. This biblical principle can be seen most clearly in the example of the early church, the existence of church government, the exercise of church discipline, and the exhortation to mutual edification. In the early church, the idea of experiencing salvation without belonging to a local church is foreign to the New Testament. When individuals repented and believed in Christ, they were baptized and added to the church ([Acts 2:41, 47](#); [5:14](#); [16:5](#)). More than simply living out a private commitment to Christ, this meant joining together formally or informally with other believers in a local assembly and devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer ([Acts 2:42](#)).

The letters of the New Testament were written to local churches that possessed certain spiritual and practical boundaries. In the case of the few written to individuals—such as Philemon, Timothy and Titus—these individuals were leaders in churches. The New Testament letters themselves demonstrate that the Lord assumed that believers would be committed to a local assembly. There is also evidence in the New Testament that just as there was a list of widows eligible for financial support ([1 Tim. 5:9](#)), which could illustrate the possibility that local churches were tracking their members through lists as they grew in size. ([Acts 2:41, 47](#); [5:14](#); [16:5](#)). In fact, when a believer moved to another city, his church often wrote a letter of commendation to his new church ([Acts 18:27](#); [Rom. 16:1](#); [Col. 4:10](#); [2 Cor. 3:1-2](#)).

The idea of experiencing salvation without belonging to a local church is foreign to the New Testament. In the book of Acts, much of the terminology fits only with the concept of some type of church membership. Phrases such as “the whole congregation” (6:5), “the church in Jerusalem” (8:1), “the disciples” in Jerusalem (9:26), “in every church” (14:23), “the whole church” (15:17), and “the elders of the church” in Ephesus (20:17), all suggest recognizable church membership with well-defined boundaries (also see [1 Cor. 5:4](#); [14:23](#); and [Heb. 10:25](#)). Therefore, whether or not the membership was formal or informal, there were clear boundaries of who belong and who did not that one cannot deny.

The Existence of Church Government

The consistent pattern throughout the New Testament is that a pastor/pastors is/are to oversee each local body of believers. The specific duties given to these pastors presuppose a clearly defined group of church members who are under their care. Among other things, these men are responsible to shepherd God’s people ([Acts 20:28](#); [1 Pet. 5:2](#)), to labor diligently among them ([1 Thess. 5:12](#)), to have charge over them ([1 Thess. 5:12](#); [1 Tim. 5:17](#)), and to keep watch over their souls ([Heb. 13:17](#)). Scripture teaches that the pastors will give an account to God for the individuals allotted to their charge ([Heb. 13:17](#); [1 Pet. 5:3](#)).

Those responsibilities require that there be a distinguishable, mutually understood membership, formal or informal, in the local church. Pastors can shepherd the people and give an account to God for their spiritual well-being only if they know who they are; they can provide oversight only if they know those for whom they are responsible; and they can fulfill their duty to shepherd the flock only if they know who is part of the flock and who is not. The pastors of a church are not responsible for the spiritual well-being of every individual who visits the church or who attends sporadically. Rather, they are primarily responsible to shepherd those who have submitted themselves to the care and the authority of the church, and this is only done through some type of formal or informal church membership.

Conversely, Scripture teaches that believers are to submit to their pastors. [Hebrews 13:17](#) says, “Obey your leaders, and submit to them.” The question for each believer is, “Who are your leaders?” The one who has refused to join a local church and entrust himself to the care and the authority of the pastor has no leaders. For that person, obedience to [Hebrews 13:17](#) is impossible. To put it simply, this verse implies that every believer knows to whom he must submit, which, in turn, assumes clearly defined church membership.

Therefore, even though requiring a formal church membership is not discussed in Scripture per se, it is also not forbidden to require it either. The Scripture discusses the spiritual organization of the church such as the two offices of pastor and deacon, the roles of men and women, its discipleship and evangelism goals and values, and the behavioral expectations for believers. However, there is a great amount of flexibility in

how each individual church decides to function in its cultural and contextual setting. For example, in the United States a church can file Articles of Incorporation with its respective state in order to protect individual leaders within that church from being sued personally. The negative of having Articles of Incorporation is that the church, which is considered a non-profit, must have a board with officers. Articles of Incorporation are not discussed in the Scripture but neither are they forbidden. Therefore, they become a preference issue, which allows a church the freedom to have this protection or not. ([Romans 14:1-23](#); [Colossians 2:16-17](#)) Rock Harbor Church (RHC) has taken advantage of this law to protect its leadership and members from being sued. However, a church has the freedom to file Articles of Incorporation or not to. Therefore, having a formal church membership is categorized under this same freedom. One church may decide not have a formal church membership while another one has the freedom to require it based on the context and cultural setting. Neither of the decisions are wrong. Therefore the issue is morally neutral if the intent is for good reasons and church does not try to force its decision on other churches. At Rock Harbor Church we have decided to require membership for 5 reasons:

1. Commitment

In America commitment is a rare commodity, and in general church membership ranks very low on many believer's priorities. Sadly, American Christians practice horrible ecclesiology because they tend to move from church to church on whims of children, teens, or some perceived felt need. Many practice what is commonly called "cafeteria Christianity." In other words, they pick and choose the best programs from different local assemblies to meet the needs of themselves and their families. Therefore, they never commit to a specific church, but simply take the best from multiple churches. RHC desires that its members be committed to every aspect of the church and its agenda. RHC's desire is for its members not to get into the practice of taking the best of churches in the community but to find ways to increase the ministry capabilities by their commitment to the cause of RHC. The New Testament teaches that the church is the body of Christ, and that God has called every member to a life devoted to the growth of the local body they belong to. In other words, Scripture exhorts all believers to edify the other members by practicing the "one-another's" of the New Testament (e.g., [Heb. 10:24-25](#)) and exercising their spiritual gifts ([Rom. 12:6-8](#); [1 Cor. 12:4-7](#); [1 Pet. 4:10-11](#)). Mutual edification can only take place in the context of the corporate body of Christ in a local church setting. Exhortations to this kind of ministry presuppose that believers have committed themselves to other believers in a specific local assembly. Church membership is simply the formal or informal way to make that commitment.

2. Accountability

It is a sad fact but many American Christians do not want accountability in their lives. They refuse to submit themselves to the care of the pastors and deacons, and they

never commit themselves to a group of fellow believers. In essence, they try to practice Christianity in isolation which goes against how the church was designed as a body. When one becomes a member of a church, formally or informally, he submits himself to the care and the authority of the biblically qualified pastors that God has placed in that assembly as long as they function correctly. ([1 Timothy 3:1-7](#)) Furthermore, believers are all responsible to serve the local body of Christ, but this can only be done in the context of a local church. If that local church has chosen to practice a formal church membership, then that is the step the believer would have to take in order to effectively serve at that church. This would be an issue of submission. ([Hebrews 13:17](#))

3. Church Discipline

In [Matthew 18:15-17](#), Jesus outlines the way the church is to seek the restoration of a believer who has fallen into sin—a four-step process commonly known as church discipline. First, when a brother sins, he is to be confronted privately by a single individual (v. 15). If he refuses to repent, that individual is to take one or two other believers along to confront him again (v. 16). If the sinning brother refuses to listen to the two or three, they are then to tell it to the church (v. 17). If there is still no repentance, the final step is to put the person out of the assembly (v. 17; cf. [1 Cor. 5:1-13](#)). The exercise of church discipline according to Matthew 18 and other passages ([1 Cor. 5:1-13](#); [1 Tim. 5:20](#); [Titus 3:10-11](#)) presupposes that the pastors of a church know who their members are. For example, the pastor/pastors has neither the responsibility nor the authority to discipline a member of the church down the street. Sadly, the widespread lack of understanding of church membership by Christians has made it necessary for pastors to discipline not only formal members but also non-members who regularly fellowship at the church but never join. However, the Bible's teaching on church discipline assumes church membership formally or informally.

4. Liability

One of the biggest factors for congregations losing their churches is due to being sued. Even though the Scriptures admonish brothers not to sue one another, the culture that we live in is a very litigious one; believers included. Many believers ignore the warning in Scripture ([1 Corinthians 6:1-8](#)) and actually sue the very church they attend. This ability to sue a church does not really exist in third world countries or even throughout church history, but it is a reality today in America. This sad reality requires that a church protect itself. Therefore, membership becomes a way to protect a church from being sued. Membership protects against several things that has and does happen:

Defamation of Character/Public Slander lawsuits.

If RHC did not have membership requirements and we publically church disciplined someone as prescribed in [Matthew 18:15-19](#), then we could be sued for either defamation of character or public slander. The fact that we require church membership protects us as a non-profit entity in the State of California. For example, if

we church disciplines a member for living in open sin and we had to take it to level three of [Matthew 18:17](#), then that member could not sue us for public slander or defamation of character. The ability to sue a non-profit organization is lost when a person decides to give up that right when they join and sign a membership agreement. By signing a membership agreement, the person has submitted to the non-profit organization's rules and understands that rule violations are grounds for dismissal. Our rules for dismissal are found in [Matthew 18:15-19](#), [Romans 16:17-18](#), [1 Corinthians 5:5,9-11](#)-13, [2 Thessalonians 3:6,13-15](#), and [Titus 3:10](#). This reality exists for all non-profits and not just churches. We have handled several instances of church discipline since the inception of RHC, but those issues were handled privately at the first and second levels of Matthew 18. However, it is very real possibility that one day RHC will have to publicly church discipline one of its members due to the person's unrepentance reaching the third level of Matthew 18. If this happens, RHC will have to take the issue to level four of Matthew 18 and publicly disciplined an individual. RHC is protected from being sued at this point for defamation of character or public slander due to our formal membership covenant that the person signed. The courts will defend us and not them since they submitted to the non-profit's form of discipline for non-compliance.

5. A Vetting System.

If someone comes to faith in Christ for the first time in their lives, then we can properly vet them with our own discipleship program. However, the majority of people who join RHC come from other churches and that brings a whole new dynamic to our context. We are not in an isolated area such as in the first century or some remote place on the mission field. Churches in America are on every block it seems and so we believe that there needs to be a vetting system to ensure that RHC's members are professing salvation according to the Scriptures, Biblically baptized, living biblically consistent lives, and are not under church discipline. In the American culture of churches, there exists the fact that other churches do an extremely poor job leading people to the Lord, baptizing, and disciplining people. Some of these churches are liberal or apostate so the person comes with a host of heresies and are at times practicing an immoral lifestyle. Therefore, when the people who have been attending these kinds of churches decides to join RHC, we have discovered that they have major spiritual, theological, and moral issues that need to be confronted since we don't want heresies or immorality infecting our people. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy that false doctrine acts as a cancer. ([2 Timothy 2:16-18](#)) Therefore, to protect our people and our reputation in the community, we have decided to have a vetting system. This vetting system of membership allows us to maintain our theological standards and to present a membership whose behavior is consistent with the Scriptures. Lastly, one of the last safety nets that RHC has is a public invitation after the sermon. If someone comes forward to join the church during the invitation, then the members can see who is joining RHC. If a member is aware of an issue regarding a person desiring

membership, then they can alert the leadership of the church of any issue they deem to be problematic. Therefore, in our cultural context, RHC is exercising the freedom given in Scripture by requiring membership as the vehicle used for vetting people.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Spiritual Gifts

I. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The Bible teaches that Spirit Baptism happens the moment one believes, and it occurs only one time. According to Paul, Spirit Baptism results in the believer being placed into the Body of the Messiah positionally. ([Romans 6:1-10](#); [Colossians 2:12](#); [Ephesians 4:5](#); [1 Corinthians 12:13](#)) This is membership into the universal Body of the Messiah. It also identifies and unites the believer with the Messiah in co-crucifixion, co-burial, and co-resurrection in regards to the sin nature of a believer. ([Romans 6:3-4](#); [Galatians 3:27](#); [Colossians 2:12](#)) In the context of Paul discussing spiritual gifts in [1 Corinthians 12:13](#), the Baptism of the Spirit is when the believer receives his or her specific spiritual gifts. Whatever gifts the believer is given at that time is all they get for their lifetime. There are not additional gifts given later in the believer's life, and so the believer must discover which gifts he or she has. Therefore, gifts are not something given after salvation, but are given at salvation. Also, the believer will not evidence his or her salvation by one specific gift such as the gift of tongues. Some have tried to make a distinction between being baptized by the Spirit and baptized with the Spirit using the King James Bible. This is unjustified since the KJV translates some verses as reading "by" and others reading "with." Therefore, people incorrectly teach that while all are baptized by the Spirit, only those who speak in tongues are baptized with the Spirit. This distinction of "with" or "by" is found only in English translation, primarily the KJV. This unfortunate interpretation fails to look at the Greek word which is the same Greek word for "with" or "by." Therefore, the Greek indicates that the same word is being used, so there is no basis for distinguishing between being Baptized by the Spirit or being Baptized with the Spirit.

II. The Anointing of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit anoints the believer at the moment of salvation, and He does not repeatedly give anointings subsequent times. The believer is anointed at salvation and this anointing will abide with the believer continually. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is very much like the sealing of the Holy Spirit in that it is connected to the believer's position of being "in Christ." (i.e., being part of the Body of Christ) ([2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#)) Therefore, the anointing of the Holy Spirit confirms this forever. According to [1 John 2:20](#), this anointing results in the believer knowing "all things" in regards to salvation, and not to the whole body of truth of the Bible. Furthermore, another result

of the anointing of the Holy Spirit at salvation is that the believer does not need to be taught by someone anymore about the truth of the Gospel since they are now saved and regenerated. ([1 John 2:27](#)) This passage does not mean that the believer does not need a teacher for all the other doctrines. It means that the new believer does not need to be taught the Gospel again by someone. (Note: the Gospel is a technical term and does not refer to all of God's Word. It refers to how one becomes saved through Jesus the Messiah.) However, believers will need a teacher for the rest of the body of truth in the Bible and this is why the Lord gifts the Body of Christ with the gift of teaching. Practically, the anointing gives the believer the secure and strong conviction that the Gospel of the Messiah is true. The anointing also serves as a basis for the believer to go past the knowledge of the Gospel and to open oneself to gain more knowledge of spiritual truth from the whole counsel of God. (i.e., Genesis to Revelation) Lastly, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is the basis in which believers serve the Lord. Every believer is anointed at the moment of salvation, so every believer should serve the Lord from that point forward for a specific service based on his or her spiritual gifts. ([2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#); [1 John 2:20](#); [1 John 2:27](#))

III. The Delay of the Holy Spirit's Baptism in the Book of Acts

The book of Acts is a transitional book so it must be interpreted in light of this context, especially in regard to the delay of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Since the book of Acts is a transitional, then many of the events that transpire are descriptive in nature rather than prescriptive. This is a primary hermeneutical law that if something in scripture is descriptive and not prescriptive, then we are not to build theology based on the descriptive parts. If this rule is not applied properly, then historical accounts that are non-prescriptive are misinterpreted to be prescriptive, and hence, cause doctrinal error. For example, taking the delay of the Holy Spirit in Acts, which is descriptive and has a timebound theological reason for it, as normative for today, goes against the rules of hermeneutics. Furthermore, telling people that only those who speak in tongues have been baptized by the Holy Spirit is also a theological error based on applying a descriptive text. The next sections (see below) will discuss why there was a delay in the Baptizing of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

The book of Acts evidences a transition between the Mosaic Law Dispensation and the Dispensation of Grace, which includes a new ministry of the Holy Spirit in relationship to believers under the New Covenant. The book of Acts will also point out the Apostolic Authority that Peter and Paul have, which will contribute to the delay in the coming of the Holy Spirit to different people groups in the book of Acts. Regarding the gift of tongues (known languages), it is apparent that the gift was given at certain times to certain groups that correlates to the delay in the giving of the Holy Spirit. Tongues authenticated to Peter that the group had received the Holy Spirit. As will be explained below, the gift of tongues was given as a sign of opening the Gospel to three specific

groups: Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. Furthermore, this will not be repeated with Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles after this opening of the Gospel to these groups is accomplished.

This delay has to do with the requirement that each group had to be authenticated, initiated, and inaugurated by the Apostle Peter. Messiah gave Peter the authority and responsibility of the Keys of the Kingdom to initiate, authenticate, and inaugurate the opening of the Gospel to three different people groups: the Jews, the Samaritans, and then the Gentiles. This doctrine of the Keys of the Kingdom is found in [Matthew 16:19](#). Therefore, Peter had to be present when all three groups were incorporated into the Body of the Messiah, and therefore, the Holy Spirit was delayed in baptizing the Samaritan and Gentile believers. For example, in Acts 2, The Holy Spirit Baptized and filled the Jews who believed when Peter preached at Pentecost. Peter was there to authenticate that the Gospel had went to the Jews first. ([Acts 11:15-17](#)) Then in Acts 8, the Holy Spirit Baptized the Samaritans when Peter laid his hands on them. The issue of Peter laying his hands on them was to illustrate the authority of Jewish Apostles and the Jerusalem church since the Jews were the Samaritans' rivals. This was meant to prevent the Samaritans from setting up a rival church like they had done by setting up a rival city of worship to Jerusalem, a rival religious system to Judaism, a rival Mosaic Law, and a rival Temple. Lastly, in Acts 10, Peter is a witness of the Holy Spirit's baptizing the Gentile believers as he preaches the Gospel to them.

After this initial authentication, initiation, and inauguration, the group was incorporated into the Body of the Messiah. After this point, the door of the Gospel was permanently opened to that group and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit would not be delayed anymore and would occur at salvation. After, the transition period is over in which all three groups are reached, the doctrine of the Epistles states that every believer is now Baptized by the Holy Spirit at salvation. ([1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#), [Ephesians 4:5](#)) As an example of this in [Acts 19:1-2](#), Paul already expects people to have been Baptized by the Spirit at salvation, and in [I Corinthians 12:13](#), [30](#) Paul gives a doctrinal statement by saying that not all speak in tongues, but all are Baptized by the Spirit.

IV. The Holy Spirit's Spiritual Gifting

Spiritual gifts are a God-given supernatural ability given to believers to minister to the Body of Christ and evangelize the lost. Only Jesus the Messiah, the God-Man, possessed all the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. ([Isaiah 11:2](#)) The spiritual gifts are graciously given to all believers by the Messiah Himself through the agency of the Holy Spirit, ([Romans 12:6](#); [1 Corinthians 12:11](#); [Ephesians 4:7-8](#)) Therefore, the Lord Jesus decides who gets which gifts. One cannot pray to have a gift because it is up to the Messiah to determine. One can seek a gift as the Apostle Paul states, but the seeking would allow the believer to discover what gifting they possess. Also, there is

not one specific gift that is given to every believer such as the ability to speak in tongues. The main reason for believers being gifted is to edify the Body of the Messiah. Each believer will receive at least one or more spiritual gifts at salvation ([Romans 12:6](#); [1 Corinthians 12:7,11,13, 27](#)) which is the same time the person is Baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. ([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)) However, no believer has every gift, and the reason for this is due to the Lord's intent of linking the Body of Christ together through the different gifts. It creates an interdependency between believers that requires believers to be together to be edified by one another. This prevents believers living in isolation which stifles the spiritual growth of the person. The Body of the Messiah helps equip the saints for ministry ([Ephesians 4:12](#)), helps mature believers with the knowledge of scriptures ([Ephesians 4:13](#)), protects believers from false doctrine ([Ephesians 4:14](#)) and helps believers grow and mature spiritually ([Ephesians 4:15](#)). Therefore, believers are required to use their gifting to minister to other believers where the local Body of the Messiah is assembled. According, the Apostle Paul, the spiritual gifts have different values and an order of importance, so the gifts must be used in such a manner that is in accordance with this Holy Spirit inspired Pauline evaluation of the gifts. ([1 Corinthians 12:28](#)). The gifts are not for self, but are to be used for others responsibly, in order, and with love and wisdom. ([1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#)) Some of the gifts such as teaching, wisdom, knowledge, helps, and administration are given but must be developed through spiritual maturity, while others such as tongues, miracles, healings, and prophesying are given without being dependent upon spiritual maturity. Lastly, the spiritual gifts are not to be defined as a particular place of service in ministry, are not a type of office one has to occupy, are not related to our natural talents or experiences, are not designed for specific age groups, and definitely do not indicate the person's spiritual maturity.

V. The Hierarchy of Spiritual Gifts

Paul mentions in [1 Corinthians 12:27-31](#), that not all spiritual gifts are of equal position. There is an order of rank concerning the gifts so Paul will use a ranking system of numbers: first, second, third. Paul is not enumerating the gifts but is ranking the spiritual gifts in descending order. The reason for this is due to the particular gifts nature and ability to edify and mature believers. The lower ranked gifts do not edify and mature believers to the degree that the higher ranked gifts do. For example, a believer will spiritually grow faster under the gift of teaching than under the gift of tongues. ([Ephesians 4:11-16](#)) Therefore, the highest ranked gift is the gift of apostleship and the second highest ranked is the gift of prophecy. The gift of apostleship is now over (see discussion below), and the gift of prophecy is still extant today except that prophecy given for writing scripture is rendered inoperative. (See discussion below) The third highest ranked gift is the gift of teaching. The gift of

miracles is ranked fourth. The gift of healings is ranked fifth. The gift of helps is ranked sixth which includes the gift of serving, the gift of showing mercy, the gift of giving, and the gift of discernment of spirits. The seventh ranked gift is the gift of administration or ruling, and tongues are ranked eighth and is last among the gifts since it is the least edifying. In [1 Corinthians 12:31](#) and [1 Corinthians 14:1](#), Paul admonishes the church to “earnestly desire the best gifts,” and “desire spiritual gifts.” Paul uses the second person plural in Greek which translates “you all desire.” Therefore, Paul is not telling them that believers should seek a specific gift because Paul already stated earlier in chapter 12 that the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts to individuals as He sees fit. ([1 Corinthians 12:7-11](#)) Instead, Paul is telling the Corinth church, and any local church for that matter, that they should seek with a great desire the higher ranked spiritual gifts because they bring the most edification for the Body of the Messiah. This seeking is not to be done to the exclusion of the lower ranked gifts but is meant to give more time to the higher ranked gifts for spiritual edification and spiritual maturity. This is what Paul meant when he said, “I show you a more excellent way.” ([1 Corinthians 12:31](#))

VI. Not All Have The Same Gifts

According to [1 Corinthians 14:29-31](#), Paul points out that not all can have the same gifts. In the context, every question Paul asks requires a rhetorical negative answer, “No!” Therefore, no single gift is given to every believer. [1 Corinthians 12:13](#) teaches that every believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit, and verse 30 states that all do not speak in tongues, so it is wrong to require that all speak in tongues or require any other spiritual gift. Not all can have the same gift. The questions Paul points connect to the illustrations concerning the different body parts that cannot function alone and make up one body. In other words, as Paul points out, not everyone can be an eye, an ear, a hand, or a leg. By Paul’s wisdom, everyone in the Body of Christ will not have the same gifting.

VII. There Are 19 Spiritual Gifts That Emanate For The 7-Fold Ministry Of The Holy Spirit

1. The Gift of Service

The supernatural gift of serving concerns serving the Body of the Messiah in various roles and positions whenever and wherever God leads the person. ([1 Corinthians 12:8](#))

2. The Gift of Teaching

The gift of teaching is the supernatural ability to organize the spiritual truth and make it understandable for other believers.

3. The Gift of Exhortation

The supernatural ability to apply the truth to the believer's life so that the believer can live out the truth in a practical way. This gift allows one to connect biblical content and principles with application into current geopolitical events that align with Biblical prophecy of the last days, apologetics, wisdom, and living out the spiritual truths revealed by the illumination ministry of the Holy Spirit as one reads the scriptures.

4. The Gift of Giving

Fourth is the gift of giving. Those with the gift of giving can give to a far greater degree. While everyone is responsible to give what the Holy Spirit directs them to give in five areas, these believers supernaturally will be able to exceed the normal ability of a believer to give:

- a. The believer's family who are in true need. ([1 Timothy 5:8](#))
- b. The work of ministry, which includes the believer supporting a church, pastors, missionaries, evangelists, etc. ([1 Corinthians 9:7-14](#); [Philippians 4:10-16](#); [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#); [1 Timothy 5:17-18](#))
- c. Jewish believers and Jewish evangelism. The scriptures note, "for the Jew first and then for the Greek." ([Romans 1:16](#)) Therefore, giving towards Jewish evangelism is a high priority. Secondly, Paul notes in [Romans 11:11-36](#), that Gentile believers are debtors to the Jews, particularly Jewish believers due to Gentiles having become partakers of these Jewish spiritual blessings. Therefore, Gentiles are to share their material things (i.e., give money) with Jewish believers. ([Romans 15:27](#)) The best way to do this is to support Jewish believers who are trying to reach unbelieving Jews with the Gospel.
- d. The Bible Teacher. According to [Galatians 6:6](#), if one is being taught the Scriptures by a bible teacher or Bible teaching organization, they are obligated to support the teacher or the organization financially. It might be a group, a school, a pastor, an evangelist, a missionary, or a disciple-maker, who teaches the Bible on television, radio, podcasts, the internet, DVD's, etc.
- e. Believers in need because of circumstances beyond their control or cannot afford something they truly need. ([James 2:15-17](#)) This principle does not mean supporting someone who will not work.

5. The Gift of Administration

Those who have this gift have the supernatural ability to organize people to accomplish a spiritual objective. They can organize the Body of Christ in such a way that it allows the church to function at the most spiritual effective and optimal level. Believers with this gift work well organizing teams and delegating roles to others.

6. The Gift of Mercy

This gift seeks to meet the immediate needs of others and alleviate any suffering physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The believers will sacrifice themselves for the sake of meeting the needs of others, especially for the Body of Christ. This gift is primarily to be used concerning the Body of Christ but also is used with unbelievers in terms of evangelism. When the gift of mercy is used for unbelievers then it must be accompanied with the truth of the Word of God. If not accompanied with propositional truth, then the person exercising the gift is seen as nothing more than a “good person” or philanthropy. The use of the gift of mercy without propositional truth has caused social justice and the social gospel to arise in the church.

7. The Gift of Apostleship (no longer in effect)

The first gift mentioned is the gift of apostleship. This was a unique gift, because, in order to receive this gift, one had to meet certain qualifications beyond that of being a believer.

(1) The Qualifications for Apostleship

(a) The 12: These were handpicked by the Messiah himself. One had to have been a follower of Jesus from the baptism of John. The person had to be a disciple of John, had to be picked by Jesus and follow Him, and had to see the resurrected Messiah and His Ascension. ([Acts 1:22](#))

(b) The Second group: To be this second group, one had to have seen the resurrected Messiah. Barnabas, Jesus’ half-brother James, and Paul were in this class of apostles. This gift was only available to the 500-600 people who saw the resurrected Messiah. ([Acts 14:14](#); [I Corinthians 9:1](#); [15:7](#); [Galatians 1:19](#))

8. The Gift of Evangelism

This is the supernatural ability to lead people to the Lord more effectively than other believers. The ability to talk with people without fear and to lead them to the Lord is easier for them.

9. The Gift of Pastor-Teacher

This is not an office but a gift of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, some Bibles mistranslate the term “pastor-teacher” and separate the word into two words and concepts, but it is one word in the Greek language: Pastor/Teacher. This gift is the ability to organize the truth and present it in a logical and coherent manner. Please note: Someone may have the gift of teaching, but it does not make them a pastor-teacher. If one is a pastor, they will not only have the gift of teaching, but will have the gift of pastoring. Pastor-Teacher goes together because a pastor feeds the flock (teaching the Word) but also leads the flock. (i.e., shepherding) One can only lead the flock if one can teach the flock. However, all who take the office of pastor must have the gift of pastor-teacher.

10. The Gift of Singleness

The gift of singleness is a spiritual gift that allows the individual to have their sexual desires under total control, and therefore would not need to be married to channel their sexual desires. This gives them the ability to totally focus their time on ministry. ([1 Corinthians 1:1,7](#))

VIII. Gifts That Are Misinterpreted by Cessationists And Continuationists

Many of the Cessationists have went too far in eliminating many of the gifts, created a false category for some of the gifts, and have simply failed to understand the implications of the Greek language rules in regard to the gifts. On the other hand, many of the Continuationist have grossly abused the gifts, went beyond the definition of the gifts, misapplied the gifts, have not followed the rules of Paul, and have added to the gifts aspects that do not come from the scriptures but from the occult. Therefore, there is much confusion these days concerning the spiritual gifts. Our desire at Rock Harbor Church is to have a biblical approach to the gifts rather than allowing denominationalism, preconceived notions, observing the outlandish and occultic abuse by many believers in this area, and our own bias or prejudice to affect our interpretation.

The foundation to understanding these gifts and whether or not they have ceased or continue is based on the Greek rules of grammar, correct lexical-syntactical analysis, proper hermeneutics, understanding of the eschatology of the church, and the eschatology of Israel and the Gentile nations in the Tribulation. Fundamental to the argument is the interpretation of Paul's phrase, "When that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ([1 Corinthians 13:10](#))

A. The Argument

Paul explains in [1 Corinthians 13:8-12](#) that in the future, a day will happen when all the gifts will not be needed. Paul mentions that the current gifts are partial and not perfect in verse 9. The gifts from the Holy Spirit to the Church will cause the Church to reach a level of maturity (v.8) that will require that something else must happen to the Church as seen in verse 10. Paul explains this in verse 10, "when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." The "that which is in part," are the spiritual gifts of verse 9, and when this "perfect" comes, that which is imperfect (i.e., the gifts of the Holy Spirit) will come to an end. The perfect that Paul is discussing is not the "Parousia" (i.e., the Second Coming) or "the New Testament Scriptures." The Greek term for "perfect" (Gk. teleios) is a neuter term, and by the rules and laws of Greek grammar, a neuter cannot modify a feminine. Therefore, it cannot be the "Parousia" since that word is feminine, and it cannot be the Greek word for New Testament which is "kainei didachel," which is also feminine.

Contextually, Paul began his explanation of spiritual gifts with 1 Corinthians 12 in which he discussed the concept of the “one Body with many members” and extends it through chapter 14. The Greek word for “body” is “soma,” which is a neuter noun and the natural antecedent to what the “perfect” refers to. Therefore, the “perfect” is connected to the Body of the Messiah so that when the Body of Messiah is perfected (i.e., complete) then the gifts will be done away. This will occur at the Rapture of the Church when the full number of believers that God planned to bring into the Church is achieved. ([Acts 15:14](#); [Romans 11:25](#); [Ephesians 4:13](#)) It is at this point that the spiritual gifts will end for the Church. Therefore, all the spiritual gifts except one (Apostleship) and a limited one (Prophet/Prophecy) are still given to the Church as long as the Church is here.

Furthermore, [Ephesians 4:13a](#) states that the Body of the Messiah will continue to grow until “we all come to the unity of the faith.” What this passage means is that the Body of the Messiah will continue to grow until all believers of the church age are united into one Body. In other words, the growth of the Body of the Messiah will continue until all who are going to be saved and included into the Body of the Messiah have done so. Paul said this another way in [Romans 11:25](#) when he stated that the Body of the Messiah will continue to grow “until fullness of the Gentiles comes in.” Second, [Ephesians 4:13b](#) also states that Body of the Messiah will not be complete until all the believers who are going to believe and be included into the Body of the Messiah have attained the knowledge of the Son of God. Today, according to Paul, believers have a partial and dim knowledge ([I Corinthians 13:9,12](#)), but there will be a time when all believers in the Body of the Messiah will know the Messiah fully. This will occur at the Rapture when the Body of the Messiah is made complete. Third, Paul makes the point that our spiritual gifts help us in our spiritual growth until maturity is attained by the Body of the Messiah. This growing process will continue until the Body of the Messiah is complete. Once the Body is complete, it will be removed by the Rapture of the Church, and the gifts will cease for the Church since the gifts will no longer be necessary for the Body of Christ. However, the Holy Spirit’s gifting of believers will continue through the Tribulation due to the New Covenant’s guarantee of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the gifting of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, both Jew and Gentile believers during the Tribulation period, which is the last of the Mystery Kingdom dispensation, will be gifted by the Holy Spirit in the same way. This gifting is not for the body of Christ since the Church has been removed by the Rapture, but is for the equipping, the edification, spiritual stability, and the empowering of the Tribulation saints. ([Zechariah 12:10-14](#); [Joel 2:28-32](#); [Revelation 7:4-17](#); [11:3-6](#); [14:1-5](#))

B. Misinterpreted Gifts

11. The Gift of Prophecy and Role of a Prophet

The gifts of prophecy and the role of a prophet still exist because of the argument mentioned above concerning the Greek neuter “perfect” referring to the completion

of the Body of the Messiah at the Rapture. (see introduction to this section) We believe that the scripture teaches several truths about the office of prophet and prophesying that the Cessationists and Continuationists fail to understand.

a. The Gift of Prophecy categories

There are two categories in Scripture in regards of prophesying:

1. One category was the ability to receive direct revelation from God for writing Scripture and making predictions in terms of Biblical prophecy as seen in books like Daniel and the Book of Revelation. Today, receiving direct revelation from God for the purpose of writing Scripture has ceased with the Book of Revelation. In other words, according to Paul, the foundations have been laid down now. ([Ephesians 2:19-22](#); [3:1-9](#); [Jude 1:3](#); [Hebrews 1:1-2](#); [Revelation 22:18-19](#)) This category of prophecy has ended. There will be no additional information given by God that will be added to the Canon.
2. The second category of prophesying which is still in effect as seen in scripture is either a warning (present or future) or for the edification of an individual or group (present or future). Proof of the continuance of this category of prophecy is seen with Paul stating it in [Romans 12:6](#) and [1 Corinthians 12:10, 28](#). Paul allows prophets and prophecy in the Church even after the transition period in Acts is over. ([1 Corinthians 11:4-5](#); [13:2](#), [8-9](#); [14:1-6](#), [22](#), [24](#), [26-40](#); [Ephesians 4:7-16](#))

This second category of prophesying does give revelation from God, but it is not Scriptural revelation. Notice that Paul uses the term “revelation” in [1 Corinthians 14:6, 26, 30](#): “by revelation,” “a revelation,” and “anything revealed.” This category of prophesying includes foretelling and forthtelling for either a warning or the edification of the church or individual ([Acts 21:10-12](#); [1 Corinthians 14:5, 26](#)) and tongues (i.e., a real foreign language that one has never learned with an interpreter, which also includes foretelling and forthtelling for either a warning or for the edification of the church or individual—[1 Corinthians 13:1,8](#); [14:2-5](#), [6-23](#), [26-33](#), [39-40](#)) Therefore, it appears that the second category of non-scriptural revelation prophecies are still operative.

b. The role of a prophet today and in the future

Based on scripture, one cannot say that the role of a prophet has ceased based on the following proofs:

1. There were prophets in the church of Antioch ([Acts 13:1](#)); Agabus ([Acts 11:27-28](#); [21:10-11](#)); and the daughters of Philip ([Acts 21:8-9](#)) that did not write scripture but prophesied.
2. The Greek Neuter concerning “perfection/body of Christ.” (see argument above)

3. Paul admonishes us to not despise or have contempt for prophecy, but to test/examine what is said and then hold to that which is good. ([1 Thessalonians 5:20-21](#))
 4. Paul allowed the office of prophet to continue as evidenced when he calls certain believers “prophets,” and calls on “all” to prophesy, and admonishes all believers to “desire earnestly to prophesy.” ([1 Corinthians 14:1, 29, 31, 39](#)) Again, Paul’s allowance of prophesying and prophets is not for writing Scripture but for edification or warnings to the Body of the Messiah or individual believers.
 5. Lastly, in terms of proper eschatology, even though the Church is removed in the Rapture, the New Covenant is now in effect for every believer from the inception of it until the end of the Millennial reign of the Messiah. God will continue to gift the saints during the Tribulation and even into the Millennial reign of the Messiah. In fact, God uses the Two Witnesses to prophesize 3 ½ years during the 7 Year Tribulation period. ([Rev. 11:3-12](#); [Zechariah 4:11-14](#)) Also, it is possible that the 144,000 Jewish males that are predicted to come ([Revelation 7:1-17](#); [14:1-5](#)) could, in fact, be considered prophets, although one cannot be dogmatic about it. Furthermore, when Israel is regenerated during the 7-Year Tribulation, they will receive the gifting of the Holy Spirit and He will cause some to be prophets. ([Joel 2:28-29](#); [Zechariah 12:10-14](#)) Under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit will continue to gift believers, Jew, and Gentile, during the Tribulation period and during the thousand-year Messianic Kingdom.
- c. Verification

In the Old Testament, a prophet needed to be verified by the Word of God and their near predictions coming to pass with the people they were prophesizing to. ([Deuteronomy 18:20-22](#)) For example, the prophecies of Agabus and Philip’s daughters were in line with scripture and did come to pass, so they were proven to have the gift of prophecy. Therefore, if someone claims to be a prophet or prophesizing, then they must be tested by the Word of God ([1 Corinthians 14:32](#); [37-38](#); [1 Peter 1:20-21](#); [1 John 4:1](#)) and a near prophecy that comes to pass. If they are in accordance with Scripture, then the near prediction involves a waiting period for it to come true. If the prophecy does come to pass, the person and the prophecy are verified. If the prophecy does not come to pass, then the person is a false prophet and is never to be listened to again. ([Jeremiah 14:14](#); [23:21-33](#); [Zechariah 10:2](#)) One false prophecy categorizes the individual as a false prophet. Under the Mosaic dispensation and during the 7 Year Tribulation a false prophet was and will be executed. ([Deuteronomy 18:20](#); [Zechariah 13:1-6](#)) Under the Mystery Kingdom and under the Law of the Messiah, one is not to listen to false prophets ever again. ([1 Timothy 4:1-5](#); [2 Timothy 3:1-9](#); [4:3-4](#))

Even though Paul encouraged believers to prophesize, one cannot self-appoint themselves to prophesize or consider themselves to be a prophet when they have not been given the gift. If one speaks presumptuously for the Lord and is not ordained by

the Messiah to be given the gift of prophecy, then the person is disqualified. It is the Lord Jesus who ordains which believers have certain gifts. ([Romans 12:6](#); [1 Corinthians 12:7, 11](#)) Therefore, if someone claims to have the gift of prophecy but does not have the gift, then the believer is speaking presumptuously for God and is now considered a false prophet and are not to be listened to again. ([Deuteronomy 18:20](#); [1 Timothy 4:1-5](#); [2 Timothy 3:1-9](#); [4:3-4](#))

Even if a believer has the gift of prophecy, it does not mean that every time they prophesize that it is a message from God. Many claim that they have a message from God, but it does not mean we give them automatic credibility until they are properly vetted and tested. It is at this point that those with the gift of discernment must discern if the message came as either a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, from the person's own human spirit, or from a demonic spirit influencing the person. The rule is that the words of the prophets must be tested as noted above. Every message from believers (even if they do have the gift of prophecy) or an angel, must be tested.

d. The rules of prophecy according to the Apostle Paul

1. There can only be up to two or three who prophesy (see definitions of what constitutes prophecy in the above section) during the worship service and it must be in consecutive order; "one by one." ([1 Corinthians 14:29-31](#))

2. Believers are to test what those who prophesy say in light of Scripture, and those with the gift of discernment are also to use their gift to discern which "spirit" the person is speaking by: the Spirit of God, their own spirit, or a demonic spirit. ([Acts 17:10-11](#); [1 Corinthians 14:29-31](#); [2 Corinthians 11:13-15](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:20-21](#); [1 John 4:1](#))

3. When a revelation is revealed to a second person, the first person should finish their revelation, remain silent as the rest of the congregation so that "all may learn, and all may be encouraged." This procedure should be the same for everyone who prophesies with a maximum of three speakers. ([1 Corinthians 14:29-31](#))

e. Therefore, we are left to conclude that prophesying for the purpose of writing Scripture has ceased. However, prophesizing and prophets have not ceased in the Church Age (i.e., from Pentecost to the Rapture) and nor in Mystery Kingdom dispensation. (i.e., from the rejection of the Messiah to the Second Coming—[Matthew 13:1-52](#))

a. Note: Paul gives the principle upon which the rules for the exercise of prophecy are based on when he states, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." ([1 Corinthians 14:32-33](#)) This means that the gift of prophecy is controlled by the person using his or her gift. In other words, the believer cannot claim that they could not help themselves and were "taken over" by the Holy Spirit to prophesy something out of the order of the service, disrupting and causing confusion. It is the human spirit that speaks, and the human spirit is subject to the person. They cannot blame their outburst of prophecy and disruption to the services on the Holy Spirit. Those who

want to prophesy, must restrain themselves until the proper time to prophesy. Biblical prophetic inspiration does not emotionally “carry away” the believer without his or her consent or against their will. This concept of being “carried away” or “taken over” stems from paganism where the person is controlled by a demon spirit that causes them to make outbursts of their so called “inspirations.” ([1 Corinthians 12:1-3](#)) Therefore, when one prophesies, the believer must follow the rules that Paul laid out in 1 Corinthians 14. Believers who say they could not control themselves are deceived and are sinning. The Holy Spirit would not cause them to do such out of control behaviors that violate the Lord’s own inspired rules. ([1 Corinthians 14:32-33](#))

12. The Gift of Wisdom

The gift of wisdom gives the believer the ability to use spiritual knowledge to apply truth correctly in each situation for the best spiritual results. ([1 Corinthians 12:8](#)) Those who have this gift will also have the gift of knowledge. The counterfeit to the gift of wisdom that derives from man is wisdom based on someone’s “spiritual experiences” or “cleverly invented stories” rather than the Word of God. ([2 Timothy 3:7-10](#); [2 Timothy 4:3-4](#); [2 Peter 1:16](#)) The counterfeit to the gift of wisdom that derives from the forces of darkness is occultic information and doctrines of demons that is revealed by fallen angels or demons masquerading as angels of light. ([2 Corinthians 11:14:1 Timothy 4:1](#))

13. The Gift of Knowledge

This gift correlates to the gift of wisdom and has to do with spiritual knowledge from the Scriptures in terms of the ability to see the connecting principles in the Word of God. ([1 Corinthians 12:8](#); [1 Corinthians 13:2](#)) In other words, it is the ability to put the doctrines of Scripture into an understandable alignment of the Biblical subject matter. The gift of teaching requires this gift. However, not everyone who has the gift of knowledge would also have the gift of teaching or gift of wisdom.

There is a human and satanic counterfeit to this gift. The human counterfeit uses a technique called “cold reading.” When someone says, “I have a word of knowledge from the Lord and someone out there has knee pain or you are depressed,” then that is not the Biblical gift. The Satanic counterfeit of this gift includes hearing audible voices or impressions from the demonic realm pretending to be God and giving the believer so called “secret knowledge” about the situation and people. Sometimes the counterfeit will include clairvoyance, which is clearly demonic.

14. The Gift of Faith

The spiritual gift of faith is different from saving faith. The gift of faith is the God-given ability to trust God in all circumstances for His personhood (i.e., his nature and character), His presence, His provision, His protection, His leading, His promises, His preparation of us, His providence, and His power. The counterfeit to the gift of faith stems from the Word of Faith heresy where faith is a force, words are the container of

that force, and through the force of faith people can create their own reality. This is derived from magic in paganism.

15. The “Gifts of Healings”

a. The aspect of the “gifts of healings” that exists today

The “gifts of healings” still exists because of the argument mentioned above concerning the Greek neuter “perfect” referring to the completion of the Body of the Messiah at the Rapture. (see introduction to this section) “Gifts” is plural and the word “healings” is plural in Greek which indicates that it is a repeated action that comes and goes according to God’s will for healing someone in each situation. This gifting of healings contrasts with the other gifts that can be used at any time and stays with the believer throughout their lifetime. This means that no one today has the “gifts of healings” permanently. The so called “faith healers” who claim to have this gift permanently are lying frauds. Furthermore, the plural word “healings” indicates that the gift provides individual, specific healings to a multiplicity of infirmities and diseases and not just one kind of healing. In other words, God can heal any disease or infirmity according to His will. If it is God’s will to heal someone, then the “gifts of healings” will be distributed to heal that particular person’s sickness, infirmity, or disease. ([1 Corinthians 12:9](#))

There is not a limited number of people who have this gift. The gift can come to any believer for the application of healing and then it will leave them. The healing is determined by God, and according to the Bible, it is not God’s will to heal everyone in this lifetime. Ultimately, all believers will be healed at the resurrection, but healing in this life is rare and is considered a miracle. When it is God’s will to heal, He can do it directly or indirectly. When God chooses to heal indirectly, He sometimes chooses to heal through doctors and medicine. When God chooses to heal someone directly it can happen to the person from the person’s own supplication before God, the pastors/elders praying for the sick believer, ([James 5:13-18](#)) or through a believer who prays for another person. When God uses the pastors or another believer who intercedes for an afflicted person, God will grant the “gifts of healings” to the believer or group of pastors and thus, their prayer will be effectual in healing the person. Furthermore, according to the Scriptures ([Acts 3:1-7](#); [9:32-34](#), [36-42](#); [20:9-12](#); [28:8](#)) healings were based on the administering believer who was cooperating with the will of God and not the faith of the afflicted person. Therefore, it is not the lack of faith that causes someone not to be healed and vice versa. It simply is according to God’s will. Furthermore, the pursuit of healing by the believer is meant to conform to the pattern of [James 5:14-15](#) where the infirmed calls upon the pastors of the church to pray for their healing. There have been countless stories of believers praying for other believers or unbelievers and witness a healing as a result. Therefore, the “gifts of healing” is sometimes granted a believer or pastors by God to heal someone through

intercessory prayer. Once the healing has occurred, then the “gifts of healings” will be removed from the believer or pastors who were the instruments of the healing.

b. Validation confusion

In the ministry of the Messiah and the early church, the Apostles were verified and validated by their ability to perform the signs of an Apostle. The gift gave them credibility with unbelievers and believers alike and allowed them to carry out the Great Commission. Paul notes that he also bore the signs of an Apostle when he was verifying his Apostleship to the Corinth Church. ([2 Corinthians 12:12](#)) Paul tells the Corinth church that the signs of the Apostles are “signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” ([2 Corinthians 12:12](#)) Therefore, what we discover in scripture is that there were four categories of people who had the permanent gift of healing with them all their lives: 1. The Messiah, 2. The 12 main Apostles, 3. The 70 outer apostles, 4. The apostolic associates like Philip, Barnabas, and Stephen. ([Matthew 4:23](#); [8:16-17](#); [10:1](#); [Mark 16:17,18](#); [Luke 10:1,9](#); [Acts 8:5-7](#)) Other than these examples, we have no biblical record that a non-apostle had the gift of healing permanently with them their entire life. Therefore, since one had to be either the Messiah Himself, the 12, the 70, or an associate of the Apostles to have this permanent gift, then it follows that it is not given permanently to any believer today. This coincides with the double plural “gifts of healing” in the Greek, which suggest that the gift comes and goes. Furthermore, even the Apostles were subject to the will of God in terms of who they could heal. For example, Paul was able to raise someone from the dead but, on other occasions, he was not able to heal Trophimus or Timothy. ([2 Timothy 4:20](#); [1 Timothy 5:23](#)) Even though Paul had the gift of healings permanently, Paul could not heal them because it was not God’s will. Therefore, since these categories of people do not exist today, then, today, the gifts of healings comes and goes with believers according to God’s will.

c. The counterfeit

Of course, there is always a counterfeit to God’s miracles from the forces of darkness and sinful humans. The counterfeit version that originates with either misguided, biblical ignorant or deceptive people who claim to be a permanent healer and can heal at will. What this person is actually claiming is Apostleship, which cannot be established in this day since one had to see the resurrected Messiah to be an Apostle. These types of people are making a false claim and should be avoided. Concerning the satanic counterfeit, this type of healing originates from a fallen angel or demon inflicting a person with illness as Satan inflicted Job. ([Job 1:12](#); [13-19](#); [2:6-7](#)) Then, the fallen angels or demons will use a counterfeit human healer to simply lift the affliction via the power of the fallen angel or demon that inflicted the person in the first place. The occult world used Jannes and Jambres in Pharaoh’s court to counterfeit Moses’ miracles. ([Exodus 7:11-12](#); [22](#); [8:7](#)) In the future, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be empowered by Satan to perform miracles as well. ([2 Thessalonians 2:9-](#)

[10; Revelation 13:13-15](#)) Therefore, Satan, fallen angels, and demons have miracle working power, and they use this power to deceive through lying signs and wonders. One must test the spirits to discern if a supernatural event, experience, or incident comes from either God or Satan. ([1 John 4:1](#))

16. The “Workings of Miracles”

a. The aspect of the “working of miracles” that exists today

The workings of miracles still exist because of the argument mentioned above concerning the Greek neuter “perfect” referring to the completion of the Body of the Messiah at the Rapture. (see introduction to this section) However, today, this gift comes and goes based on God’s determination to heal someone. The word “miracles” is plural, emphasizing that there are various categories of miracles. The word “workings” is also plural, emphasizing that, like the gifts of healings, it is not with a believer all the time. It comes and goes as God wills it. Once the miracle has occurred, then the “gifts of miracles” will be removed from the believer, group or pastors who were the instruments of the “gift of miracles.” Therefore, there are not so called “miracle workers” who constantly have the gift all their life or need an audience to supposedly perform a miracle. Miracles, which are rare, come to a person either by their own supplication to God, another believer’s intercessory prayer or the pastors’/elders’ intercession. Miracles are not performed by God based on the person’s faith or are withheld due to a lack of faith. It is based simply on God’s will. Therefore, miracles from God do occur and sometimes He will use an intercessory believer or a group of pastors/elders to pray for a miracle. If the miracle asked for is according to God’s will, then the intercessor/s will be granted a “working of miracles” by God through the means of their intercessory prayers. (see discussion on the gifts of healing) If one observes, [1 Corinthians 12:9-10: 28-29](#), the “gifts of healings” were not limited to the Apostles or their associates. In fact, Paul points out that this gift, which comes and goes, is given according to God’s will to various believers for specific circumstances. If one considers [Galatians 3:5](#), Paul points out that the Lord worked miracles among the Galatians by the Holy Spirit and not because there was an Apostle there. Note: this gift of miracles is different from providential miracles, which are considered a different class of miracles. Providential miracles concern the lining up of events, places, people at the right time for something to be accomplished by God in the life of the believer.

There is not a limited number of people who have the gifts of miracles. The gift can come to any believer for the application of a miracle and then it will leave them. The miracle is determined by God, and according to the Bible, it is not God’s will that miracles commonly occur. In other words, they are extremely rare. When it is God’s will to perform a miracle, He can do it directly or indirectly. When God chooses to

perform a miracle directly, then it will occur directly to the situation or person via the person's or group's own supplication before God. When God chooses to perform a miracle indirectly, He will grant the gift of miracles to a believer, group, or pastors/elders who pray for a miracle to occur for someone or something, and thus, their prayer will be effectual for the miracle.

Furthermore, according to the Scripture, miracles were based on the will of God. Therefore, it is not the lack of faith that causes someone not to have a miracle be granted. It simply is according to God's will.

b. Validation confusion

In the ministry of the Messiah and the early church, the Messiah and Apostles were verified by their ability to perform these signs. Paul notes that he also bore the signs of an Apostle when he was verifying his Apostleship to the Corinth Church. ([2 Corinthians 12:12](#)) Paul tells the Corinth Church that the signs of the Apostles are "signs and wonders and mighty deeds." ([2 Corinthians 12:12](#)) Therefore, what we discover in scripture is that there were four categories of people who had the gift of miracles with them all their lives. The Messiah, the 12 main Apostles, the 70 outer apostles, and the apostolic associates like Philip who might have been part of the 70 apostles. ([Matthew 4:23](#); [8:16-17](#); [10:1](#); [Luke 10:1,9](#); [Acts 8:5-7](#)) Furthermore, even the Apostles were subject to the will of God in terms of the miracles they could perform. Other than these examples, we have no biblical record that a non-apostle had the gift of miracles permanently. Therefore, since one had to be one of the 12, the 70 or apostolic associates to have this authenticating and permanent gift, then it follows that it is not given to any believer today in a permanent way. Since the permanent gift of miracles was an apostolic verification, then any claim to have the gift of miracles on a permanent basis is a claim to be an apostle. This claim to be an apostle is invalidated by scripture since one had to see the resurrected Messiah.

c. The counterfeit

Lastly, there is a counterfeit to the gift of miracles. This supernatural ability to do miracles originates from Satan, fallen angels and demons who possess the supernatural ability to perform lying signs and wonders. ([Matthew 24:24](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:9](#); cf. [Revelation 13:14](#); [16:14](#); [19:20](#)). The counterfeit version will use a person to be a "miracle worker" who can perform miracles at will. The individual is operating with the power of the forces of darkness, which pretends to be power from God. This is to be discerned, tested, and avoided.

17. The Gift of Discernment of Spirits

The gift of Discerning of Spirits still exist because of the argument mentioned above concerning the Greek neuter "perfect" referring to the completion of the Body of the Messiah at the Rapture. (see argument at the beginning of this section) This is the

God-given ability to identify the true source of a teaching or problem. ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#)) Whereas most believers must test the spirits by the Word of God to see if something is demonic or not, someone who has the gift of discernment of spirits will be able to identify immediately whether someone else has a demonic problem or not. Believers with this gift know right away that the issue or teaching is demonic. Those who do not have this gift must test the spirits.

18. The Gift of Tongues

a. What is the gift of tongues

Tongues (i.e., unlearned languages) still exist because of the argument mentioned above concerning the Greek neuter “perfect” referring to the completion of the Body of the Messiah at the Rapture. (see argument at the beginning of this section)

Tongues are not some kind of gibberish, ecstatic speech, or the constant repetition of three or four syllables. It is an unlearned human language. ([Acts 2:1-12](#); [1 Corinthians 14:10-11](#)) Note, when Paul says that if he speaks with the tongues of men or angels, the tongues of angels is a Hebrew idiom referring to the Hebrew language. The language of Heaven is Hebrew due to all the angel’s names being in Hebrew, and this is before the nation of Israel even existed. Hebrew is the original language of humans and is the language of the angels and of Heaven. ([1 Corinthians 13:1](#))

The Greek word for tongues means “languages.” The gift of tongues is a God-given ability to speak a language, which one has never studied or learned. ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#)) The fact that the word tongues simply means “languages” is evident from [Acts 2:1-12](#). They were given the gift of tongues and began speaking with other tongues (i.e., languages). The Jews, who had come to Jerusalem from all over the world for the observance of the Feast of Pentecost, could hear the gospel proclaimed in their own language. The one who is using the gift of tongues may not understand what he is saying and probably will not in most cases. However, he is speaking a real, known language with all the rules of grammar, syntax, and diction, which every language requires. He is not speaking mere gibberish or ecstatic utterances. (see [1 Corinthians 14:7-11](#))

b. Tongues are a sign to unbelieving Jews who have rejected the Messiah

Centuries before the Messiah, Israel was warned by the Lord in [Isaiah 28:11-12](#) that if they did not stop their rebellion, idolatry, and apostasy, then the Lord would use the Assyrians to punish them. Israel refused to listen, obey, repent, and believe the Lord’s warning, so God allowed the Assyrian invasion to occur. The nation was punished for their refusal to believe what God had said, refused to understand, and repent as a nation of their wicked practices. Therefore, as Isaiah predicted, when the Assyrians invaded, the Israelites heard the Assyrian language (a foreign tongue), and this foreign language functioned as a sign to Israel. The sign through the foreign language meant that Israel had been judged by God for their unbelief, disobedience, and

refusing to listen to the voice of the prophets. The Assyrian tongue was not heard to illicit belief in Israel but was to serve as a sign of their unbelief. Furthermore, God was showing Israel, that He was working in a new way based on their unbelief via judgment through the Assyrians. Therefore, Paul gives a literal plus application (i.e., a Drash) of this event in history with the Day of Pentecost. A Drash takes a point of similarity between two events and makes an application to the new situation with the similarity. Paul using a Drash, states that based on [Isaiah 28:11-12](#), tongues at Pentecost was a sign to first century Israel of their unbelief in the Messiah. Therefore, the new work that God is doing now is creating a new entity called the Body of the Messiah. Instead of the Assyrians being the entity, God is using the Body of Christ as the new entity. The Church was born in Acts 2 and the gift that was displayed was the gift of tongues. This was a sign to the Jewish unbeliever of his or her unbelief in Jesus. However, one day, in the Tribulation, all Israel will be saved so God has not cast off his people permanently. It is a temporary setting aside until the nation comes to faith in the Messiah. ([Zechariah 12:10-14](#); [Joel 2:28-32](#); [Romans 11:26-27](#))

c. Tongues must exercise according to the rules laid out by the Apostle Paul

1. When one speaks in tongues privately (i.e., a foreign human language) then it is to God and not man because there is no interpreter, so this needs to be done in private and not in the church setting. In the private use of tongues, the person speaking in another language will not even understand what they are saying unless there is an interpreter. In the private use of tongues, it will only edify the believer, but it will not edify the Body of Christ. ([1 Corinthians 14:2-5](#))

2. When one speaks in tongues in the church, then it is to be done in order and to edify the Body of Christ. Therefore, if someone wants to speak in a tongue (i.e., a foreign human language) in the church, he or she must pray for an interpreter. If there is no interpreter present, then one cannot speak in a tongue because it will not edify the congregation. ([1 Corinthians 14:2](#), [5b-18](#), [26-33](#), [40](#))

3. To emphasize tongues in a church in a primary role, shows immaturity rather than maturity because it is the least edifying of the gifts. (see hierarchy of gifts above) The higher gifts that edify the Body of Christ need to be emphasized over and above the other gifts. This hierarchy of gifts are laid out by the Apostle Paul who puts the gifts in the order of priority. Paul admonishes the believers to desire the best gifts in the church service. In other words, Paul is discussing how to prioritize the most edifying gifts above the least edifying gifts. Today, the most edifying gift is teaching and prophesy (we will define prophesy below) which should be given the majority of the time in the worship service. On the other hand, the gift of tongues, which is not to be forbidden, is the least edifying of all the spiritual gifts and should be given the least amount of time the church's services. In the Corinth Church, due to their carnality, they were emphasizing the gift of tongues the most and deemphasizing the greater

gifts that produce more spiritual maturity such as teaching. Therefore, the Corinth Church was spiritually immature. ([1 Corinthians 3:1-3](#); [12:27-31](#); [14:13-18](#), [20-25](#), [29](#), [40](#))

4. There must be one interpreter. This means there must not be three interpreters for three different people. There is only to be one interpreter and this person is assigned by the authority of the church to do this. Furthermore, no interpreter means no one is allowed to speak in tongues. They can speak quietly to God and to themselves, but they must remain silent in the church. ([1 Corinthians 14:27-28](#))

5. There can be no more than two or three people giving a message in tongues during any single meeting of the church. ([1 Corinthians 14:27-28](#))

6. Speaking in tongues must be done in order: one at a time with an interpreter. Two or more people speaking in tongues at the same time is a violation of this rule. ([1 Corinthians 14:27-28,40](#))

7. If there is no one with the gift of interpretation present in the church's service, then those who have the gift of tongues must remain silent. ([1 Corinthians 14:28,40](#))

8. Note: Paul gives the principle upon which the rules for the exercise of tongues are based on when he states, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." ([1 Corinthians 14:32-33](#)) This means that the gift of tongues is controlled by the person using his or her gift. In other words, the believer cannot claim that they could not help themselves and were "taken over" by the Holy Spirit to speak in tongues out of the order in the assembled congregation, disrupting and causing confusion. It is the human spirit that speaks, and the human spirit is subject to the possessor. They cannot blame their outburst of tongues and disruption to the services on the Holy Spirit. Those who want to speak in tongues must restrain themselves until the proper time to speak in tongues with an interpreter. Biblical prophetic inspiration to speak in tongues does not "carry away" the believer without his or her consent or against their will. This concept of being "carried away" or "taken over" stems from paganism where the person is controlled by a demon spirit that causes them to make outbursts of their so called "inspirations." ([1 Corinthians 12:1-3](#)) Therefore, when one speaks in tongues, the believer must follow the rules that Paul laid out in 1 Corinthians 14. Believers who say they could not control themselves are deceived and are sinning. The Holy Spirit would not cause them to do such out of control behaviors that violate the Lord's own inspired rules. ([1 Corinthians 14:32-33](#))

d. Praying In a Tongue

Praying in a tongue is different than speaking in a tongue. The context of 1 Corinthians 14 is explained that prophecy edifies more than tongues and that rules of order must be followed when using the gifts in the church assembly. However, in [1 Corinthians 14:14](#), it appears that Paul discusses the possibility of a believer praying in a tongue (i.e., a foreign language) outside the gathered assembly. In the private use of tongues in prayer, the person's spirit is edified, but not the soul or heart/mind since the person has no understanding of what they are saying to God. ([1 Corinthians](#)

[14:2,4](#)) The person is still using a foreign language to do this but has no interpreter to tell him or her what he or she is saying. Therefore, their spirit can only be edified in this experience. ([1 Corinthians 14:2,4](#)) Paul expresses the need for the believer who does pray in a tongue to pray with understanding as well. ([1 Corinthians 14:15](#)) However, Paul segues back to the church order context and explains that if this is done in a gathered church assembly, then an interpretation of what has been prayed about needs to have an interpretation either by the person praying in the tongue or by someone who has the gift of interpretation. ([1 Corinthians 14:15, 28](#))

19. The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues

The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues still exists because tongues still exist. This is based on the argument mentioned above concerning the Greek neuter “perfect” referring to the completion of the Body of the Messiah at the Rapture. (see argument at the beginning of this section) There is a corollary gift to tongues, and it is the gift of interpretation of tongues. This is a God-given ability to interpret a language being spoken by someone who has the gift of tongues. ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#)) In Acts 2, this gift was not necessary because there were Jews from all parts of the world who understood the languages being spoken. However, in the case of the church where the whole congregation speaks the same language, the gift of tongues can only be used when there is someone present who has the gift of interpretation. ([1 Corinthians 14:26-28](#))

IX. The following practices are not from the Bible but originate either from the occult, other false religions, or people inventing them

Anti-intellectualism, “don’t think” mentality, “slain in the spirit,” “rhema guidance” from feelings, impressions, or experiences without being tested or checked by the authority of the Word of God and or wise counsel. “Mantle grabbing,” “grave soaking,” “grave sucking,” “afterglow,” “giving birth in the spirit,” “centering prayer,” “contemplative prayer,” “binding and loosening,” (binding and loosening refers to church discipline and nothing else) “looking for signs and wonders to make decisions,” “soaking prayer,” making prayer circles and claiming what’s in the circle, “resting in the spirit,” eastern meditation (i.e. repeating a word over and over again while blanking out the mind. (We are only to meditate on the meaning and application of the text.) Practicing Yoga, auto dictation, acting like an animal in the church services, running around in the church services, “little gods” belief, ecstatic utterances, interrupting church services, necromancy, laughing uncontrollably in church services, “emotional ecstasy,” “name it and claim it,” seeing “faith as a force,” “Christian” or “angel” tarot cards, laying hands on people for non-biblical reasons. (There are only three Biblical reasons to lay hands on someone: 1. Peter’s authentication of the Gospel reaching new groups. (this is now over) 2. An appointment to ministry such as a pastor, missionary, or deacon. 3. When someone is sick.) Kingdom Now, New Apostolic Reformation, Dominionism, Joel’s Army, Kansas

City Prophets, Third Wave, Manifests Sons of God, Latter Rain, End time Apostles, Restoring the full office of the Prophet, "spiritual violence," "resurrection life," "violent intercession," identifying other believers as "Nephilim" that supposedly channel demonic spirits, "living Rhema word," "Spiritual gifts impartation," "positive confession," accusing people of a religious spirit, "Appropriate," which means to claim and acquire spiritual gifts, power and attributes. Calling those opposed to hyper charismatic practices as "Babylon." "Become the Word" made manifest in human flesh like Christ: "Be Christ," "Be the Word." "Blowouts" which means spiritual failures that just didn't have the "right stuff." "Breakthrough!" or "Kingdom Breakthrough." Entering into new spiritual levels. Releasing the spiritual power of the thing "loosed" in order to create the reality of it. (e.g., "Loose the word!" or "We loose faith.") "Positive proclamation," "Rebuking the Devil," "Resurrection power," "The spiritual power of the new kingdom age," "Violence." Spiritual elitism which means that God has given a certain group special revelation/power/anointing that other Christian groups or previous generations have not possessed. Marginalizing the Word of God, "spiritual drunkenness," "prayerlessness in private," "anti-Berean," or "anti-discernment" teaching. Teaching that discernment is primarily the prerogative of leadership. The practice of "Mystery Religion," which means that there are successive levels of knowledge and 'deeper' truths. Heightened interest with spiritual levels and rankings. Higher 'spiritual' rank is equated with greater closeness to God. Heightened interest in dreams, visions, new revelations, and novel insights. An increase in subjectivity. Looking for subjective impressions, personal 'prophetic' words and 'revelation' for guidance and direction. Seeking the mystical 'inner voice' as guide over the written Word. Detractors dismissed as having inferior vision. Detractors given derogatory labels, such as 'religious,' 'old order,' 'old wineskins,' or 'Pharisees.' Detractors denounced as not being able to 'handle it,' or they have a 'Jezebel spirit,' or a 'spirit of criticism.' New thing-ism which holds to God doing a 'new thing' and you'd better get on board. A special anointing, a new priesthood, and conference chasing to hear a new word from God.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section: Conclusion

Whether one agrees with having a formal or informal membership is irrelevant. It is the decision of the local body of believers what type of membership dynamic they will use with its members. A church must decide what system is best for them in their cultural and contextual climate so that the many duties and responsibilities of believers can be lived out without any hindrance. Therefore, freedom in Christ is given for a church to make this kind of decision indicative to their situation. For RHC, a formal membership process fits our church's needs.

Rededicating Your Life to Christ

Perhaps you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior but you have been away from fellowship with the Lord. We can never lose our salvation but we can lose fellowship with the Lord due to many issues. For example, a child can lose fellowship with his or her parents due to bad behavior. However, that child is always their child. The union always remains but the fellowship can be broken. Likewise, the same can happen between us and God. Even though our union with Christ can never be broken, we can stop living for Him, get involved into sinful behavior, harbor unconfessed sin, or simply become indifferent towards the Lord. If you have been out of fellowship with the Lord, He desires that you come back to restore your relationship with Him.

Baby/Child Dedication

Baby/Child dedication is intended to be a public statement by the parents that they will train their children in the Christian faith and seek to instill that faith in them. Baby/Child dedication is a symbolic ceremony undertaken by Christian parents soon after the birth of a child. The Act is intended to be a public statement by the parents that they will train their children in the Christian faith and seek to instill that faith in them. There is no implied salvation in the ceremony whatsoever. The idea of dedicating a child to the Lord can certainly be found in the Bible. Hannah was a barren wife who promised to dedicate her child to God if He would give her a son ([1 Samuel 1:11](#)). [Luke 2:22](#) begins the account of Mary and Joseph taking Jesus to the temple after forty days in order to dedicate Him to the Lord as a firstborn.

How to be Saved

1. Understand that the Bible declares you to be a sinner who is in need of forgiveness from God due to the penalty attached to sin, which is both physical death and spiritual. Those who die physically without forgiveness will die a second death by being placed in Hell for all eternity. However, God has provided the means of that forgiveness, which is found in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. ([Romans 3:23](#) & [6:23](#) – “All have sinned”, “The wages of sin is death.”)
2. Therefore, believe (trust/be persuaded/rely on) that Jesus Christ is God who came in the flesh and was the perfect substitutionary sacrifice on your behalf when He died on a cross for your sins, was buried, and rose physically from the dead on the third day. Trust/believe that Jesus, the Messiah, is your substitute for and as your Savior from the penalty of sin ([John 1:1](#) “The Word was God” & [Romans 5:8](#) “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”)
3. Since Jesus accomplished the work of salvation on your behalf, you must understand that salvation is a gift from God that cannot be earned nor worked for. It is provided to the individual by grace and through the means of faith. Faith (trust/believe/be persuaded by/rely on) in Jesus the Messiah’s death as your

substitute for your sins, His burial and resurrection is the only necessary condition for salvation. ([Ephesians 2:8, 9](#) – “By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I ask you to forgive me of all my sins. I believe you are God who came in the flesh and lived the perfect life I couldn't live. I believe You died on a cross for my sins, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day. I receive and trust You as my Lord and Savior. Thank you for saving me and giving me eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Pastor Brandon Holthaus