PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

by


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Introduction

A philosophy of ministry is the blueprint for accomplishing the purpose of the church from which a vision of an accomplished goal is expressed and the strategy for completing the task is dictated. This paper presents a philosophy of ministry that is distinctly biblical and significantly practical for the development of a healthy local church. The first section is an observation of the trend in and the task of the local church that necessitates the use of a biblical and practical philosophy of ministry. The second section provides the assumptions made in a biblical philosophy of ministry statement. The third section categorizes the four scriptural aspects of the purpose of the church. The fourth section identifies the three classifications of people in the local church. In the fifth section, the programs of a biblical philosophy of ministry for the local church are outlined.

Observations of Current Status of Local Church

The following section provides observations of the current status of the local church. The first observation deals with the trends that are influencing the methods being practiced to fulfill the purpose of the local church. This is followed by the second observation which reflects the task that the local church is called to do.

The future of the local church is bleak. There is a pessimistic perception among evangelicals regarding the state of the local church today. The move from scriptural to unscriptural ministries is the alarming trend present in many of today’s contemporary congregations that will reshape the face of the local church in time to come.

The trend in the local church today is need-based, consumer driven, and culturally defined. It is in a path, a wrong path led by culture that is accommodating to the spirit of the age, lacking true theology or doctrine, moved by humanistic endeavors, and is very similar to the ways of the world. The church does not know who she is, what she is supposed to do, where she is going and what her purpose is because she has taken on the mind of the world rather than the Spirit (Col 2:9-16).

The Task of the Church

The task of the church is to glorify God. The second principle that necessitates a philosophy of ministry answers the question what the local church’s task is. In the OT, the Lord declared through Isaiah that He created, formed and called by name His people for His own glory (Isa


This truth is summarized by Paul in Ephesians when he constantly gave God the glory for the church (Eph vv. 6, 12 & 14). The Westminster Catechism concurs by answering the question “what is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.” These statements force us to ask how is the local church to glorify God. The answer to this is by developing a biblical philosophy of ministry that leads the church to be biblical in its being and practice.

Assumptions of a biblical philosophy of ministry

A philosophy of ministry must have a very strong foundation. A foundation that will not and cannot be moved despite various challenges it may face. This philosophy of ministry must be able to transcend and stand the rigors of time. For a biblical philosophy of ministry to endure such extremes it must be based and founded on the character of God, the Scriptures and the proper view of man.

Based on the Character of God

A philosophy of ministry must be based on the moral character or attributes of God. This is generally “regarded as the most glorious of the divine perfections,” because men experience Him through it. The only place men will experience the true character of God is in a church with a biblical philosophy of ministry. The moral character of God manifested through the church are His goodness, holiness and righteousness.

The character of God’s goodness is demonstrated in a church that proclaims and practices his love, mercy and grace. God’s love deals primarily with the whole creation. This love is demonstrated in the provision of life and the means to enjoy it (Ps 104:21-24). More prominently, though, is His love for the Elect. This is a special kind of love wherein He commits Himself to the object of His love to the fullest and richest sense (Eph 1:4-8). God’s mercy is revealed in His compassion and pity for those who are in misery and distress. The idea of withholding wrath from the deserving is pictured. A biblical philosophy of ministry directs the local church to see their relationship to God from this perspective of love, out of which they are to relate to one another and to the lost outside of the church.

A Biblical philosophy of ministry is based on the holiness of God. Berkhof defines, “The fundamental idea of the ethical holiness of God [as] …separation…a separation from evil or sin.” When a church is preaching and practicing the holiness of God it will repulse or attract people (2 Cor 2:14-17). The local church consists of people redeemed and set apart for Christ and from the world and is called to be holy (1 Pe 3:15-16). The local church, therefore, must see herself as being in the world but not of the world.

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5 Ibid., 73.
Thirdly, a biblical philosophy of ministry demonstrates the righteousness of God. All the manifestations of the holy character of God are righteous. The former furthers sanctification and the latter leads to repentance and confession of sin. This implies just judgment upon all wrong doers, thus, striking fear in the heart of men, both believers and unbelievers (Ps 89:4). Within the local church this means fairness and discipline (Jam 2:1-7), while outside of the church it means to stand against the injustices of society (Matt 14:4).

Based on the Authority of Scripture
A biblical philosophy of ministry is based and founded on the authority of Scripture. The character of God can only be known through His self-disclosure (Heb 1:3). Only through God’s revelation, the Bible, can He and His will be known (Deu 29:29). The Bible as the Word of God is both authoritative and relevant to the church.

There is no other authority for the life of the church outside of the Bible (2 Tim 3:16-17). It is the ultimate guide for planning, strategizing, methodologizing, theologizing and conceptualizing the ministries of the local church. The Bible is also relevant today. Although the Bible was written in time past it is not archaic and obsolete. Rather the universal principle truths found in it are eternal and transcends time, culture, language, and race and thus practical for the church today.

Based on a Proper View of Man
A biblical philosophy of ministry must have a proper and balanced view of man. Humanity must be seen for what it is. Humanity is not to be lifted up on a pedestal or its worth devalued. The balance and proper view is to see man as having a dual nature, one spirit and the other physical. In this dichotomy, each nature has its own need that a biblical church should and must meet.

The spiritual nature of man is sometimes called the soul or heart which reflects its value as the image bearer of God and secondly as a fallen creature. Men are valued above the rest of Creation for he is created in God’s image (Gen 9:6). This means the ability to reason, decide and act. These abilities go beyond the animal instinct to make decisions for survival rather on moral choices. The local church must see the value of humanity through the eyes of God. This image must be understood as now being corrupt (Eph 2:1-3). With Adam’s fall in the Garden this corrupted image has been passed on to all men (Rom 5:12). Man’s instinctive and natural response to God is rebellion. Nevertheless, the Bible tells us of God’s love in redeeming men to Himself. It is the church’s duty to preach and proclaim the only truth that can remedy the fallen

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6Robert Duncan Culver, Systematic Theology, (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2005), 93.


ness of man (Matt 28:18-20). This truth is a reminder to the church not to be swayed by the interest of the general public, the outcomes of polls when it plans or strategize for ministry.

The church’s philosophy must also deal with the physical nature of man. This means meeting his physical needs (Matt 25:35-36, also Jam 1:27). But one must be wise to discern the difference between a felt needs and real needs. There are needs that seem necessary but can be done without, needs like career achievements, peer acceptance and even companionship. Though good and beneficial they do not give hope, total fulfillment or develop a person’s well being. On the other hand, there are needs that must be met to bring well-being and maturity to a person (Col 1:28). Needs of the emotional and educational kind, must be met with capable counseling and training ministries within the church (1 Thess 5:15).

The Purpose of the Church\(^9\)

A biblical philosophy must meet the purpose of the local church to glorify God.\(^10\) This purpose was briefly dealt with in the earlier part of this paper. This section will now focus primarily on specific means of meeting this purpose. The means to meeting the church’s purpose of glorifying God is by exalting Him, exemplifying His values, evangelizing the lost and edifying the believers.

Exalt God

The first purpose of the church is to glorify God. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). Our love for God is revealed in our obedience to Him (John 14:15). We exalt God by fully committing our lives to Him in obedience (1 Pet 2:12). Our personal or corporate time of worship is merely the sum and culmination of our whole life being committed to loving God with all of our hearts, mind and soul.

Worship is the missing jewel of the Church.\(^11\) But it is theology that determines that worship.\(^12\) The church today has gone to extremes in worship. On one hand, the worship is dry

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\(^9\) Outline taken from sermon of Pastor Steve Gusto given at the 7\(^{th}\) church Anniversary of Alliance Bible Church of Downey, Ca., 2000.

\(^10\) Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. by Vernon D. Doerksen, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949, reprint, 1994 p), p. 330. The first of seven suggestions Thiessen provides for the church’s purpose or mission is “To glorify God: Man’s chief purpose is to glorify God. This is no more true of the individual than it is of the church as a whole. The Scriptures repeatedly point this out as a primary purpose of the church (Rom. 15:6; 9; Eph. 1:5f., 12, 14, 18; 3:21; 2 Thess. 1:12; 1Pet 4:11).”


\(^12\) Jim Newheiser, Review of *With Reverence and Awe: Returning to the Basics of Reformed Worship*, ed. by Jay E. Adams, 2/1, Winter, 2005, 27.
and dull and on the other unintelligible and chaotic. A biblical worship service meets the criteria for a God-centered worship, which also reveals the local church’s spiritual health. First, biblical worship is theo-centric and not anthropocentric. The doctrines, songs, practices centers on and around the elevation of God, His character and work. Secondly, worship is Christ Centered. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. He is the only mediator between man and God. Every message, song and activity done in a worship service continually points to the primacy of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, it is worship that edifies the saints (1 Cor 14). The church gathers primarily for the edifying of the believers. The worship service must meet the need of the body to be edified. This is met through systematic expository preaching, songs that uplift the spirit and the soul and fellowship that reveals God’s love through the members (Act 2:42). Thirdly, biblical worship is relevant. Worship must be flexible to its culture and time. Liturgical traditions or even the upbeat contemporary services may be applicable to certain cultures and people but may not be to another. The worship service must reflect its own congregation’s personality and cultural preferences.

Exemplify God’s Values

The second purpose of the church is to exemplify God’s values. Jesus said, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39). Believers are mandated to love the people around them (Luk 6:32). Love for others is demonstrated in the local church’s social compassion and action. This involves direct, concrete ministry to existing social, physical, and emotional needs of people (Matt 25:35-36, also Jam 1:27). At the same time this is not to be mistaken for political, social or institutional changes that liberation theology advances. The motivation behind the programs of the local church is the love and compassion for her spiritually lost neighbor.

Evangelize the Lost

The third purpose of the church is to evangelize the lost. Jesus commissioned the church to, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19). The church’s ministries must be structured for the purpose of fulfilling the great commission to evangelize the world with the gospel.

The church has been commissioned to preach the gospel.\textsuperscript{18} There are no other institutions or organizations in the world to which this commission has been given but the church. The context of this commission is the world. Acts 1: 8 categorizes the geographic areas of focus as Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world. This demonstrates the general geographic area of the local church, the cities, counties, states and foreign mission work, thus, evangelism is both local and international. The content of the message proclaimed by the commissioned church contains the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:1-4). This gospel message is also incomplete if people are not called to repent of their sins (Luk 24:47). In the NT, the call to repent is given 11 times as a prerequisite to salvation (Matt 4:17; 3:2; Mar 1:15; 6:12; Luk 13:3, 5; Act 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20). Further, the biblical gospel message challenges those who accept to a life of commitment. This commitment is manifested in seeking and waiting upon God (1 Chr 16:11; Hos 12:6), prayer (Rom 12:12; Eph 6:18), well-doing (Rom 2:7; 2 Thess 3:13), continuing in the faith (Acts 14:22; Col 1:23; 2 Tim 4:7), and holding fast hope (Heb 3:6). Therefore, to be biblical the local church’s programs must be evangelistically focused.

**Edify the Believers**

The fourth purpose of the church is to edify believers. The latter part of Christ’s commission to the church mandates the edification of believers, “teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt 28:20). The local church is to teach and encourage the believers in the word of God.

Jesus Christ gave to the church evangelists, pastors and teachers for the purpose of equipping (Eph 4:11). Each believer has been given a gift for the purpose of the edification of the church (1 Cor 12:7). Collectively, the end result of this equipping and edification is a mature church (Eph 4:12-16 cf. Col 1:28). Edification is coupled with encouragement. Not only do we have the responsibility to teach believers but we must also direct them to encourage and lift up one another. For the church to grow, the believers must create an atmosphere of love and develop relation ministries wherein they can practice the “one another’s”\textsuperscript{19}: Confessing sins one to another (Jam 5:16), forgiving one another (Col 3:13), bearing one another’s burdens (Gal 6:2), rebuking one another (Tit 1:13), comforting one another (1 Thess 4:18), exhorting one another (Heb 10:25), edifying one another (Rom 14:19), admonishing one another (Rom 15:15), and praying for one another (Jam 5:16). A local church is edified when a biblical philosophy of ministry is applied in the development of its ministries.

**The People in the Church**

Although the church is one body it has several parts that have differing roles. A biblical church recognizes each individual part and provides allowance for its operation according to role


\textsuperscript{19} Dann Spader and Gary Mayes, *Growing a Healthy Church*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 57-78.
and giftedness. The local church body is divided into three parts: the elders, the deacons and deaconesses and the congregation.

**The Elders**

Biblical church eldership consists of a plurality of leaders. Elder, bishop and overseer is one and the same office (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; Tit 1:7 & 1 Pet. 2:25). Paul in his letter to Timothy described the elder’s call (v 1), character (vv 2, 3), and conduct (vv 4-7). The office of elder is not a professional office but requires spiritual leadership. **21**

The Deacon & Deaconess

The second group of people in the church is the office of deacons and deaconess. They are to fall under the leadership of the pastors. Their specific task is to handle the finance of the local church and care for the material and physical needs of the members (Act 6:2). Paul also lays out a high moral qualification for this office (1 Tim 3:8-12). The text describes the personal (v 8) and spiritual character of the deacon and deaconess (vv 9-10, 12-13).

The Congregation

The third group of people in the body is the congregation. Their task is to be Spirit-filled, to learn the Bible and to go out into the world and apply what they have learned (Eph 4:12-16). As believers grow, elders, deacons, deaconesses, evangelists and pastor-teachers will be produced.

**The Programs of the Church**

Through specific programs, the people in the church will flesh out the biblical philosophy of ministry. The programs will exalt God, exemplify His values, evangelize the lost and edify believers. These programs are based on the character of God, the Scriptures and the nature of men. They are to be performed by the people of the church.

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The Ministry of the Word

This ministry begins with a dedicated and disciplined pastor teacher who has a great love for God, His word and His people (Ezr 7:10). It will consist of preaching through the Bible in an expository manner. Establishing a Bible institute and leadership academy will provide training for aspiring leaders. The Sunday school will provide teaching and training for the congregation. The following is an example of a list of courses that should be offered: New Believers; Baptism; New Members; Discipleship, Practical Christian Living (e.g. Marriage, Parenting, Finance, etc), Bible Surveys, Essential Christian Doctrines, Evangelism, Apologetics and Spiritual Growth.

The Ministry of Fellowship

The ministry of fellowship is vital to the life of the local church. Through the ministry of fellowship members are encouraged to open their homes to others for fellowship and Bible study (Act 2:42; 5:42; 20:20). Lunch fellowship after church service, especially in a smaller church, allows time for members to practice the “one another.” Discipleship, accountability, prayer and times of encouragement will occur in the context of fellowship as believers seek out other believers.

The Ministry of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism

The ministry of the Lord’s Supper and baptism are biblical ordinances mandated as vital part of the life of the church (1 Cor 11:23 cf. Matt 28:18-20 cf. Act 2:38, 41). With the Lord’s Supper the church is reminded of their spiritual union with Christ and with one another. The observation of the Lord’s Supper provides a venue for the church to encourage one another in their walk of faith and holiness. The latter is an ordinance that offers opportunity for the whole body to be encouraged as they see the miracle of new life in the church. Baptism is most effective when done in the presence of the whole church family. This is best done during Sunday morning or evening services or church family retreats. Observation of the Lord’s supper and Believer’s baptism is a time of worship and celebration and thus must be conducted in a way that is meaningful, uplifting, and edifying to the soul.

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25 The word “κοινωνία, ας” meaning to fellowship, a close mutual relationship; participation, sharing in; partnership; contribution, gift. Provides a picture of close family ties that encourages growth through various activities.
The Ministry of Prayer

The ministry of prayer is non-negotiable. Jesus Christ exemplified (Matt 14:23), provided a model for it (Matt 6:9-13) and He mandated it (Luk 18:1). This ministry involves the whole church (Act 1:14). Even the elderly who are not able to do much physically can have a vital part in the prayer ministry of the local church (1 Tim 5:5). The ministry of prayer should be emphasized from the pulpit and a specific time set aside for it (e.g. weeknight service or morning meeting). All activities should and must be saturated with prayer. The congregation should be taught the practice of prayer for spiritual growth and fasting as a regular part of church life.

The Ministry of Outreach

The ministry of outreach is the first geographical part of Christ’s commission to the church (John 4:35-38). This ministry will endeavor to reach out to the surrounding community with the gospel of Jesus Christ (John 4:28-29). Members will be encouraged to do outreach in their own homes, schools, workplace, convalescent homes, foster homes, prisons, door to door in their communities and other places. Through weeknight Bible studies the congregation can reach out to their love ones, friends and neighbors with the gospel. Formal training will be established and provided to equip and prepare members for this ministry (see Sunday school ministry).

The Ministry of Missions

The ministry of missions is the second geographical part of Christ’s commission to the church (Matt 28:18-20 cf Act 1:8). This ministry goes beyond the local community and nation


29 For more information on how to do the work of an evangelist see Charles Spurgeon’s The Soul Winner: Advice on Effective Evangelism, (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, reprint 2003) and Ray Comfort’s How to Win Souls: Influence People, (Gainesville, Fla.: BridgeLogos Publishers, 1999).

of the local church. It takes the gospel to other countries to evangelize the lost. Foreign missions also involve training indigenous believers and leaders to maintain work of ministry in host country. The local church is to establish a missions program that will promote missions in the life of the church by means of prayer, raising finances, sending long-term and short-term missionaries and mission teams and keeping continuous contact with missionaries.

The Ministry of Interchurch Fellowship

The ministry of interchurch fellowship is necessary for the health of the church and the encouragement of their members (Act 15). This ministry develops accountability and fellowship with other churches of like mind and faith. It will endeavor to work with other church leaders in reaching its own community with the gospel, in supporting each other with prayer, and joining others for encouraging fellowship and training (e.g. men’s conferences, youth rallies, etc).

Conclusion

The philosophy of ministry presented in this paper is a blueprint for accomplishing the purpose of the church. The philosophy of ministry developed in this paper is distinctly biblical and significantly practical for the development of a healthy local church. Through the five sections, the vision and strategy for the completion of that purpose was developed. Section one provided an observation of the trend in and the task of the local church that necessitates the use of a biblical and practical philosophy of ministry. The second section provided the assumptions made in a biblical philosophy of ministry statement. Section three categorized the four scriptural aspects of the purpose of the church. The fourth section identified the three classifications of people in the local church. And the fifth and last section outlined programs of a biblical philosophy of ministry for the local church. The author believes that a faithful application of this biblical philosophy in the local church will lead to healthy and mature church members.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Statement of Faith


2. Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is the true God and the true man.( Philippians 2:6–11) He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.( Luke 1:34–38) He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust,( 1 Peter 3:18) as a substitutionary sacrifice,( Hebrews 2:9) and all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.( Romans 5:9) He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures.( Acts 2:23–24) He is now at the right hand of Majesty on high as our great High Priest.( Hebrews 8:1) He will come again to establish His kingdom, righteousness and peace(Matthew 26:64).

3. The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is a divine person, (John 14:15–18) sent to dwell, guide, teach, empower the believer,( John 16:13; Acts 1:8) and convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7–11).

4. The Bible: The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice (2 Peter 1:20–21, 2 Timothy 3:15–16).

5. Man: Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God:( Genesis 1:27) he fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All men are born with a sinful nature,( Romans 3:23) are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.( 1 Corinthians15:20–23) The portion of the unrepentant and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment;( Revelation 21:8) and that of the believer, in everlasting joy and bliss (Revelation 21:1–4).

6. Salvation: Salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Those who repent and believe in Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life, and become the children of God (Titus 3:4–7).

7. Regeneration: Regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxd in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3)
9. Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. (Matthew 8:16–17) Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil are taught in the Scriptures and are privileges for the Church in this present age (James 5:13–16).

10. The Church: The Church consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, and are born again of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church, (Ephesians 1:22–23) which has been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the gospel to all nations. (Matthew 28:19–20) The local church is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, for edification through the Word of God, for prayer, fellowship, the proclamation of the gospel, and observance of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41–47).

11. Election: Election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

The sovereign election of God does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

The unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).

Election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9).

12. Final Judgment: There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; for the former, a resurrection unto life; (27) for the latter, a resurrection unto judgment. (28) ([27] 1 Corinthians 15:20–23, [28] John 5:28–29)

11. The Second Coming: The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent (29) and will be personal, visible, and premillennial. (30) This is the believer's blessed hope and is a vital truth which is an incentive to holy living and faithful service. (31) ([29] Hebrews 10:37, [30] Luke 21:27, [31] Titus 2:11–14)