

All Saints Covenant Church

The City of Love



Doctrinal Foundations Class

Constructed & Facilitated By:

Pastor Darrian L. Hill, Sr.

Dear Beloved Members of All Saints Covenant Church,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is with immense joy and gratitude that I write to you today. As your pastor, it is my profound honor to lead our **Doctrinal Foundations Class**, a journey that delves deeply into the core of our faith and the doctrines that define us as a church. This class is not just an academic exercise, but a spiritual endeavor to understand and embrace the truths that are unequivocally found in the **Word of God**. From a biblical perspective, the term "**doctrinal**" refers to the teachings and principles derived from the Bible that form the foundation of Christian faith and practice. These doctrines encompass the core beliefs about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, and other essential aspects of Christianity. Doctrinal teachings are the truths revealed in Scripture that guide believers in understanding God's nature, His will, and His plan for humanity. They are meant to be **studied, embraced, and lived out** by Christians, ensuring that their **faith aligns** with the **authoritative** Word of God.

Our doctrine is the bedrock of our faith, and it is imperative that we, as a congregation, know what we believe and why we believe it. In a world that often challenges our beliefs, it is crucial that we are well-equipped to defend and contend for our faith, as exhorted in **Jude 1:3**. This verse reminds us of the importance of standing firm in our convictions and being prepared to share the hope that we have in Christ with others.

It is my prayer that through this class, *each member* of **All Saints Covenant Church** will be strengthened in their faith, gaining a deeper understanding of our doctrine and a greater ability to articulate and share it with others. Let us embrace this opportunity to grow together, to be rooted and grounded in the truth of God's Word, and to be a light in our community and beyond.

May the Holy Spirit guide us, enlighten us, and empower us as we embark on this journey together. I am excited to see how God will work in and through each of us as we commit to knowing Him more deeply and making **Him known**.

In His Service with Agape,

Pastor Darrian L. Hill, Sr.

Teaching Framework (Structure)

Exegetical...

The term "**exegetical**" refers to the process of interpreting and explaining a text, particularly Scripture, in a detailed and systematic manner. In the context of biblical interpretation, **exegesis** involves:

1. **Analyzing the Original Language:** Understanding the meanings of words and phrases in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek.
2. **Contextual Examination:** Considering the historical, cultural, and literary context in which the text was written.
3. **Comparing Scripture with Scripture:** Using other parts of the Bible to shed light on the passage being studied, ensuring a coherent and consistent interpretation.
4. **Identifying the Author's Intent:** Seeking to understand what the original author intended to communicate to the original audience.
5. **Application:** Drawing out the implications and applications of the text for contemporary life and faith.

Exegesis aims to uncover the true meaning of the biblical text, avoiding personal biases or preconceived notions. It is a critical tool for pastors, theologians, and believers to accurately understand and teach the Word of God. ***Exegesis is reading out of the scriptural text, while "Eisegesis" is reading into the scriptural text.***

Eisegesis is the process of interpreting a text, particularly Scripture, by reading one's own ideas, biases, or presuppositions into the text, rather than drawing out the text's original meaning. The term comes from the Greek words "eis," meaning "into," and "hēgeisthai," meaning "to lead."

In contrast to exegesis, which seeks to understand the text based on its context, language, and intended meaning, eisegesis imposes the interpreter's viewpoint

onto the text. This approach can lead to misinterpretations and distortions of the original message.

Key Characteristics of Eisegesis:

- **Subjective Interpretation:** The interpreter's personal views and experiences shape the understanding of the text.
- **Lack of Contextual Consideration:** The historical, cultural, and literary context of the text is often ignored.
- **Confirmation Bias:** The interpreter may selectively focus on parts of the text that support their preconceived notions while disregarding others.

Example:

If someone reads a Bible verse about prosperity and interprets it to mean that God promises financial wealth to all believers, without considering the broader biblical context, they may be engaging in eisegesis.

Analysis & Critical Analysis...

Analysis

Analysis refers to the process of examining something in detail to understand its structure, components, and relationships. It involves breaking down a complex topic or substance into smaller parts to gain a clearer understanding of how it works or what it means. In general, analysis aims to identify patterns, causes, and effects within the subject being studied.

Critical Analysis

Critical Analysis goes a step further by not only examining the components and structure but also evaluating them. It involves a deeper level of scrutiny, questioning assumptions, assessing the validity of arguments, and considering different perspectives. Critical analysis aims to provide a well-rounded and informed judgment about the subject, often highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and implications.

In summary:

- **Analysis** focuses on understanding and explaining the parts and their relationships.
- **Critical Analysis** includes evaluation, questioning, and forming judgments about the subject.

Our Mission – Vision – Values

Foundational Scriptures

- 1. Psalms 50:5: "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."**
 - This verse emphasizes the importance of covenant and sacrifice in the life of believers. It underscores the idea of being called together as a community of faith, united by a commitment to God.
- 2. Ephesians 3:17-19 (KJV): "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."**
 - This passage highlights the profound and multifaceted nature of Christ's love. It calls believers to be deeply rooted in love and to seek a comprehensive understanding of God's love, which surpasses human knowledge.

Mission

"We exist to reintroduce & re-present the unconditional, unfailing, and unrelenting LOVE (AGAPE) of God, in all of its dimensions, to the world."

- **Focus on Love:** Our mission emphasizes the centrality of God's unconditional love (Agape) as the core message and driving force of the church's activities. This aligns with the greatest commandments to love God and love others (**Matthew 22:37-39**).
- **Reintroduction and Representation:** The mission suggests a proactive approach to showcasing God's love in a fresh and impactful way, indicating a commitment to both evangelism and discipleship.

Vision

"To create and build a 'City of Love' based on Ephesians 3:17-18, where Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and we are rooted and grounded in love."

- **City of Love:** Our vision metaphorically describes the church as a community characterized by love, echoing the biblical imagery of a city on a hill (**Matthew 5:14**).
- **Rooted and Grounded in Love:** This phrase from **Ephesians 3:17-18** emphasizes the importance of a deep, foundational love that influences all aspects of life and ministry. It implies stability, growth, and a strong connection to Christ.

Vision Mantra

"We LOVE God. We LOVE our Neighbors. We Maximize Purpose."

- **We LOVE God:** Commitment to loving God with all one's heart, soul, and mind, and walking in alignment with His will (**Matthew 22:37; Romans 12:1-2**).
- **We LOVE our Neighbors:** Commitment to loving others as oneself, treating others with the same respect and kindness one desires (**Matthew 22:39; Luke 6:31**).
- **We Maximize Purpose:** Commitment to fulfilling God's purpose for one's life, trusting in His good plans (**Proverbs 19:21; Jeremiah 29:11**).

Core Values

Based on Galatians 5:22-23 (The Fruit of the Holy Spirit):

1. **Love:** The highest order; unselfish regard for others.
2. **Joy:** Gladness not based on circumstances.
3. **Peace:** Contentment; unity.

4. **Patience:** Slow to speak and slow to anger.
5. **Kindness:** Merciful, sweet, and tender.
6. **Goodness:** Generous and open-hearted.
7. **Faithfulness:** Dependable, loyal, and full of trust.
8. **Gentleness:** Full of humility and calm.
9. **Self-Control:** Behaving well; self-restraint and self-mastery.

Supporting Values:

- **Family:** Emphasizing the importance of familial relationships and support.
- **Integrity:** Commitment to honesty and moral principles.
- **Accountability:** Responsibility to God and one another.
- **Transparency:** Openness and clear communication.
- **Commitment to Excellence:** Striving for the highest standards in all endeavors.
- **Social Justice & Outreach:** Advocating for justice and serving the community.
- **Servant Leadership:** Leading by serving others, following the example of Christ.

Application for Members

- **Understanding the Mission:** Members should grasp the church's mission to embody and share God's love. This involves active participation in evangelism and discipleship efforts.
- **Embracing the Vision:** Members are encouraged to contribute to building a community rooted in love, where Christ's presence is evident. This includes fostering relationships and supporting one another.

- **Living the Values:** Members should strive to live out the church's values in their daily lives. This means loving God wholeheartedly, showing genuine care for others, and pursuing their divine purpose with confidence.

Our Seal Defined



The seal of the **All Saints Covenant Church** represents four fundamental elements: **Love**, **The Word of God (The Bible)**, **Unity**, and **Peace**. Here is a detailed breakdown of each element:

- **Love**
 - **Significance:** Love is the cornerstone of the church's mission and vision. It reflects the unconditional (Agape) love of God, which is central to the Christian faith.
 - **Biblical Foundation:** The emphasis on love is rooted in scriptures such as **Matthew 22:37-39**, where Jesus commands us to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Additionally, **1 John 4:8** states, "**Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.**"
 - **Application:** This element encourages members to embody and express God's love in all their interactions, fostering a community characterized by compassion, kindness, and selflessness.

- **The Word of God (The Bible)**

- **Significance:** The Bible is the authoritative and infallible Word of God, serving as the foundation for the church's teachings, beliefs, and practices.
- **Biblical Foundation: 2 Timothy 3:16-17** emphasizes the importance of Scripture: "**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**"
- **Application:** This element underscores the importance of regular Bible study, teaching, and preaching, ensuring that all aspects of church life are grounded in biblical truth.

- **Unity**

- **Significance:** Unity reflects the church's commitment to fostering a sense of togetherness and mutual support among its members.
- **Biblical Foundation: Ephesians 4:3-6** calls believers to "**make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.**"
- **Application:** This element encourages members to work together harmoniously, valuing each person's contributions and striving to maintain unity in diversity.

- **Peace**

- **Significance:** Peace represents the tranquility and harmony that come from a right relationship with God and with one another.
- **Biblical Foundation: Philippians 4:7** speaks of "**the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,**" and **Colossians 3:15** urges believers to "**let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.**"

- **Application:** This element promotes a culture of reconciliation, forgiveness, and peacemaking within the church and the broader community.

The seal of the **All Saints Covenant Church** encapsulates the core values that define the church's identity and mission. By focusing on ***Love, The Word of God, Unity,*** and ***Peace,*** the church aims to create a community that reflects the character of Christ and fulfills its calling to be a beacon of hope and love in the world.



Our Foundation

The Church of God in Christ, Inc. (COGIC) is a Christian organization in the **Holiness-Pentecostal tradition**. It is the largest **Pentecostal** denomination in the United States.

The membership is predominantly African American with millions of adherents. The Church has congregations in 112 countries around the world.

Mission

To seek and save that which is lost.

About Us

The Church of God in Christ, Inc. (COGIC) is a denomination rich in history and passionate in our beliefs.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST is a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in which the word of God is preached, ordinances are administered and the doctrine of sanctification or holiness is emphasized, as being essential to the salvation of mankind.

Our Church is commonly known as being Holiness or Pentecostal in nature because of the importance ascribed to the events which occurred on the Day of Pentecost, the 50th day after the Passover, or Easter as being necessary for all believers in Christ Jesus to experience.

On the Day of Pentecost, the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, Supernatural Manifestations descended in marvelous copiousness and power. The gift of the

spirit in the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus to clothe those who would wait in Jerusalem with power from on high, was accompanied by three supernatural extraordinary manifestations.

The sudden appearance of the Holy Ghost appealed first to the ear. The disciples heard a “sound” from heaven which rushed with a mighty force into the house and filled it—even as a storm rushes—but there was no wind. It was the sound that filled the house and not a wind, an invisible cause producing audible effects.

Next, the eye was arrested by the appearance of tongues of fire which rested on each of the gathered COMPANY. Finally, there was the impartation of a new strange power to speak in languages they had never learned “as the Spirit gave them Utterance.”

Our Church is also considered to be a member of the great Protestant body though it did not directly evolve from the European or English Reformation but had its origin within the General Association to the Baptist Church.

Elder Charles Harrison Mason, who later became the founder and organizer of the Church of God in Christ, was born September 8, 1864, on the Prior Farm near Memphis, Tennessee. His father and mother, Jerry and Eliza Mason, were members of a Missionary Baptist Church, having been converted during the dark crises of American Slavery.

Elder Mason was converted in November, 1878, and baptized by his brother, I.S. Nelson, a Baptist Preacher, who was pastoring the Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church near Plumerville, Arkansas. In 1893, he began his Christian Ministry with the accepting of ministerial licenses from the Mt. Gale Missionary Baptist Church, in Preston, Arkansas.

He then experienced sanctification through the word of God and preached his first sermon in “Holiness” from II Timothy 2:1-3: “Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” On November 1, 1893, Elder Mason matriculated into the Arkansas Baptist College, but withdrew after three months because of his dissatisfaction with the methods of teaching and the

presentation of the Bible message. He then returned to the streets and to every pulpit that was opened to him declaring Christ by the word, example, and precept.

In 1895, Bishop Mason met Elder C.P. Jones of Jackson, Mississippi; Elder J.E. Jeter, of Little Rock, Arkansas; and Elder W.S. Pleasant of Hazelhurst, Mississippi, who subsequently became Bishop Mason's closest companions in the ministry.

Jointly, these militant gospel preachers conducted a revival in 1896, in Jackson, Mississippi, which had far-reaching affects on the city.

The theophanic manifestations of the revival, which included the large numbers that were converted, sanctified, and healed by the power of faith and the dogmatic teachings of Bishop Mason on the doctrine of sanctification caused church doors within the Baptist association to become closed to him and to all those that believed and supported his teachings.

So in 1897, when these pioneering, persistent preachers returned to Jackson, Mississippi, Bishop Mason was forced to deliver his first message from the south entrance of the courthouse. A Mr. John Lee, who desired to see Bishop Mason's ministry continue, provided the living room of his home the next night. Because of the overwhelming number that attended, a Mr. Watson, the owner of an abandoned warehouse in Lexington, Mississippi, gave his consent to transfer the revival meeting to the gin house on the bank of a little creek.

This gin house subsequently became the meeting house for the Church of God in Christ. This miracle deliverance revival was such a success it stirred up the "Devil", causing someone to shoot five pistol shots and two double barreled shotgun blasts into the midst of the saints while they were shouting and praying. Some persons were wounded but miraculously, none of the shots were fatal.

At the close of the meeting, it was necessary to organize the people for the purpose of establishing a church with a stronger appeal and greater encouragement for all Christians and believers, a church which would

emphasize the doctrine of entire sanctification through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

A meeting was mutually called by Elder Mason, Elder Jones, and Elder Pleasant, and sixty stood as charter members. Land was soon bought on Gazoo Street, from Mrs. John Ashcraft, just beyond the corporate line, upon which was built a little edifice 60×40. These charter members formed a Pentecostal body known as the “Church of God.”

Subsequently, in 1897, while seeking a spiritual name which would distinguish the church from others of the similar title, the name “Church of God in Christ” was revealed to Bishop Mason while walking along a certain street in Little Rock, Arkansas. The following scripture supported his revelation: I Thessalonians 2:14, “For ye brethren became followers of the Churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye have suffered like things of your own countrymen even as they have of the Jews.” All of the brethren unanimously agreed to the name of “Church of God in Christ.”

Later, the church was reorganized during which Elder C.P. Jones was chosen as General Overseer. Elder C.H. Mason was appointed as overseer of Tennessee, and Elder J.A. Jeter was overseer of Arkansas. The turning point in Elder Mason’s life came in March, 1907, when he journeyed to Los Angeles, California, to attend a great Pentecostal revival with Elder D.J. Young and Elder J.A. Jeter. Elder W.J. Seymour was preaching concerning Luke 24:49, “And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.” Elder Mason became convinced that it was essential for him to have the outpouring of the Holy ghost.

The following are excerpts from Elder Mason’s personal testimony regarding his receiving the Holy Ghost.

“The first day in the meeting I sat to myself, away from those that went with me. I began to thank God in my heart for all things, for when I heard some speak in tongues, I knew it was right though I did not understand it. Nevertheless, it was sweet to me.

I also thank God for Elder Seymour who came and preached a wonderful sermon. His words were sweet and powerful and it seems that I hear them now while writing. When he closed his sermon, he said ‘All of those that want to be sanctified or baptized with the Holy Ghost, go to the upper room; and all those that want to be justified, come to the altar.’

I said that is the place for me, for it may be that I am not converted and if not, God knows it and can convert me...”

“Glory!”

“The second night of prayer I saw a vision. I saw myself standing alone and had a dry roll of paper in my mouth trying to swallow it. Looking up towards the heavens, there appeared a man at my side. I turned my eyes at once, then I awoke and the interpretation came.

God had me swallowing the whole book and if I did not turn my eyes to anyone but God and Him only, He would baptize me. I said yes to Him, and at once in the morning when I arose, I could hear a voice in me saying, ” I see...”

“I got a place at the altar and began to thank God. After that, I said Lord if I could only baptize myself, I would do so; for I wanted the baptism so bad I did not know what to do. I said, Lord, You will have to do the work for me; so I turned it over into His hands.”

“Then, I began to ask for the baptism of the Holy Ghost according to Acts 2:41, which readeth thus: ‘Then they that gladly received His word were baptized,’ Then I saw that I had a right to be glad and not sad.”

“The enemy said to me, there may be something wrong with you. Then a voice spoke to me saying, if there is anything wrong with you, Christ will find it and take it away and marry you...Someone said, ‘Let us sing.’ I arose and the first song that came to me was ‘He brought me out of the Miry Clay.’

The Spirit came upon the saints and upon me...Then I gave up for the Lord to have His way within me. So there came a wave of Glory into me and all of my being was filled with the Glory of the Lord.

So when He had gotten me straight on my feet, there came a light which enveloped my entire being above the brightness of the sun. When I opened my mouth to say Glory, a flame touched my tongue which ran down me. My language changed and no word could I speak in my own tongue. Oh! I was filled with the Glory of the Lord. My soul was then satisfied.”

This new Pentecostal experience which Elder Mason found for himself, for he began to proclaim to others upon his return home to Memphis, Tennessee as a New Testament doctrine. A division, subsequently, became evident within the ranks of Elder Mason’s contemporaries when Elder J. A. Jeter, the General Overseer, Elder C. P. Jones, and others regarded the new Holy Ghost experience of speaking in tongues as a delusion. Being unable to resolve their difference in the New Testament doctrine.

The General Assembly terminated by withdrawing the “right hand” of fellowship from C. H. Mason. Elder Mason then called a conference in Memphis, Tennessee of all ministers who believed in receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost according to the scriptures in Acts 2:1-4. Those who responded to Elder Mason’s urgent call were E. R. Driver, J. Bowe, R.R. Booker, R. E. Hart, W. Welsh, A. A. Blackwell, E. M. Page, R.H. I. Clark, D. J. Young, James Brewer, Daniel Spearman and J. H. Boone.

These men of God organized the first Pentecostal General Assembly of the “Church of God in Christ.” Overseer C. H. Mason was then chosen unanimously as the General Overseer and Chief Apostle of our denomination. He was given complete authority to establish doctrine, organize auxiliaries and appoint overseers.

Dr. Hart was appointed Overseer of Tennessee; Elder J.A. Lewis was appointed Overseer of Tennessee; Elder J. Bowe the Overseer of Arkansas; later J. A. Lewis was appointed Overseer of Mississippi. As the church grew, Elder E. M. Page was appointed Overseer of Texas; Elder R.R. Booker, Overseer of Missouri; Elder E. R. Driver, Overseer of California and Elder W. B. Holt as the National Field Secretary.

As the Chief Apostle, he immediately dedicated twenty days, November 25th through December 14th annually as a meeting time for all of his followers to fellowship with each other and to transact all ecclesiastical and secular affairs pertinent to the growth of the National Organization.

This segment of the year was chosen because the majority of the communicants of the church lived in farming districts of Mississippi, Tennessee and Arkansas. By this time of the year, they had sufficient provisions and financial resources from the harvesting of their crops, to enable them to attend and support a national meeting.

The first National meetings were held at 392 South Wellington Street, Memphis, Tennessee. The first National Tabernacle was built and completed at 958 South Fifth Street, in 1925.

This Tabernacle, however, was destroyed by fire twelve years later in 1936. In the interim until 1945, our National Convocation was held within the Church pastored by Bishop Mason at 672 South Lauderdale. In 1945, Bishop Mason was able to visualize the culmination of his dream. He dedicated the Mason Temple at Memphis, Tennessee which was built for less than \$400,000 during World War II. This auditorium became the largest convention hall owned by any colored religious group in America.

Under Bishop Mason's spiritual and apostolic direction our church has grown from ten congregations in 1907, to the largest Pentecostal group in America. The membership of the Church of God in Christ grew from three million in 1973 to an estimated 5.2 million in 1997.

Churches under the parent body in Memphis, Tennessee, are now established throughout the United States, on every continent, and in many of the islands of the sea.

Founder of the Church of God in Christ

Bishop Charles Harrison Mason



Bishop Charles Harrison Mason was the founder and first senior bishop of the **Church of God in Christ (COGIC)**, presently the largest African-American Pentecostal church in the United States.

Born to former slaves Jerry and Eliza Mason in Shelby County, Tenn., on Sept. 8, 1864, Mason worked with his family as a sharecropper and did not receive a formal education as a child. But at an early age, he was influenced by his parents' religion.

Mason joined the African-American Missionary Baptist Church when he was an adolescent and later received his license to preach from the Mount Gale Missionary Baptist Church in Preston, Ark. In November 1893, Mason enrolled at the Arkansas Baptist College, but withdrew after three months to transfer to the Minister's Institute at the College; he graduated from the Institute in 1895.

In 1895, Mason met Charles Price Jones, a popular Baptist preacher from Mississippi. Mason and Jones soon began preaching the doctrine of holiness and sanctification in the local Baptist churches, which led to their expulsion from the Baptist Convention.

Mason and Jones decided to form a new fellowship of churches. Mason suggested the name Church of God in Christ, after what he described as a vision in Little Rock, Ark., to distinguish the church from a number of "Church of God" groups forming at that time.

Due to disagreements in the new Pentecostal teachings, the two men split their group in 1907. Mason won the legal rights to the Church of God in Christ name and charter, and established his work in Memphis.

After moving the COGIC headquarters to Memphis, Mason established additional departments and auxiliaries, created dioceses, and appointed overseers throughout the country.

In 1945, Mason dedicated Mason Temple in Memphis as the church's national meeting site and the international headquarters of the Church of God in Christ.

At the time of Mason's death on Nov. 17, 1961, COGIC had a membership of more than 400,000 and more than 4,000 churches in United States as well as congregations in Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia.

Today, it has an estimated 6.5 million members. The church can be found in every state in the United States and in more than 87 countries around the world.



Our Doctrine – What We Believe

THE BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God and contains one harmonious and sufficiently complete system of doctrine. We believe in the full inspiration of the Word of God. We hold the Word of God to be the only authority in all matters and assert that no doctrine can be true or essential if it does not find a place in this Word.

THE FATHER

We believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Author, and Creator of all things. The Old Testament reveals God in diverse manners, by manifesting his nature, character, and dominions. The Gospels in the New Testament give us knowledge of God the “Father” or “My Father,” showing the relationship of God to Jesus as Father, or representing Him as the Father in the Godhead, and Jesus himself that Son (St. John 15:8, 14:20). Jesus also gives God the distinction of “Fatherhood” to all believers when he explains God in the light of “Your Father in Heaven” (St. Matthew 6:8).

THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Second person in the Godhead of the Trinity or Triune Godhead. We believe that Jesus was and is eternal in his person and nature as the Son of God who was with God in the beginning of creation (St. John 1:1). We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin called Mary according to the scripture (St. Matthew 1:18), thus giving rise to our fundamental belief in the Virgin Birth and to all of the miraculous events surrounding the phenomenon (St. Matthew 1:18-25). We believe that Jesus Christ became the “suffering servant” to man; this suffering servant came seeking to redeem man from sin and to reconcile him back to God, his Father (Romans 5:10). We believe that Jesus Christ is standing now as mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5)

THE HOLY GHOST

We believe the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, proceeds from the Father and the Son, is of the same substance, equal to power and glory, and is together with the Father and the Son, to be believed in, obeyed, and worshipped. The Holy Ghost is a gift bestowed upon the believer for the purpose of equipping and empowering the believer, making him a more effective witness for service in the world. He teaches and guides one into all truth (John 16:13; Acts 1:8, 8:39).

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST

We believe that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an experience subsequent to conversion and sanctification and that tongue-speaking is the consequence of the baptism in the Holy Ghost with the manifestations of the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Acts 10:46, 19:1-6). We believe that we are not baptized with the Holy Ghost in order to be saved (Acts 19:1-6; John 3:5). When one receives a baptismal Holy Ghost experience, we believe one will speak with a tongue unknown to oneself according to the sovereign will of Christ. To be filled with the Spirit means to be Spirit controlled as expressed by Paul in Ephesians 5:18-19. Since the charismatic demonstrations were necessary to help the early church to be successful in implementing the command of Christ, we therefore, believe that a Holy Ghost experience is mandatory for all men today.

MAN

We believe that man was created holy by God, composed of body and soul. We believe that man, by nature, is sinful and unholy. Being born in sin, he needs to be born again, sanctified, and cleansed from all sins by the blood of Jesus. We believe that man is saved by confessing and forsaking his sins, and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that having become a child of God, by being born again and adopted into the family of God, he may, and should, claim the inheritance of the sons of God, namely the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

SIN

Sin, the Bible teaches, began in the angelic world (Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-20), and is transmitted into the blood of the human race through disobedience and deception motivated by unbelief (I Timothy 2:14). Adam's sin, committed by eating of the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, carried with it permanent pollution or depraved human nature to all his descendants. This is called "original sin." Sin can now be defined as a volitional transgression against God and a lack of conformity to the will of God. We, therefore, conclude that man by nature, is sinful and that he has fallen from a glorious and righteous state from which he was created, and has become unrighteous and unholy. Man, therefore, must be restored to his state of holiness from which he has fallen by being born again (St. John 3:7).

SALVATION

Salvation deals with the application of the work of redemption to the sinner with his restoration to divine favor and communion with God. This redemptive operation of the Holy Ghost upon sinners is brought about by repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ which brings conversion, faith, justification regeneration, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Repentance is the work of God, which results in a change of mind in respect to man's relationship to God. (St. Matthew 3:1-2, 4:17; Acts 20:21). Faith is a certain conviction wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as to the truth of the Gospel and a heart trust in the promises of God in Christ (Romans 1:17, 3:28; St. Matthew 9:22; Acts 26:18). Conversion is that act of God whereby He causes the regenerated sinner, in his conscious life, to turn to Him in repentance and faith (II Kings 5:15; II Chronicles 33:12-13; St. Luke 19:8, 9; Acts 8:30). Regeneration is that act of God by which the principle of the new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of soul is made holy, and the first holy exercise of this new disposition is secured. Sanctification is that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Ghost, by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image

of God and enables him to perform good works (Romans 6:4;5:6; Colossians 2:12; 3:1)

ANGELS

The Bible uses the term “angel” (a heavenly body) clearly and primarily to denote messengers or ambassadors of God with such scripture references as Revelations 4:5, which indicates their duty in heaven to praise God (Psalm 103:20), to do God’s will (St. Matthew 18:10) and to behold his face. But since heaven must come down to earth, they also have a mission to earth. The Bible indicates that they accompanied God in the Creation, and also that they will accompany Christ in His return in Glory.

DEMONS

Demons denote unclean or evil spirits; they are sometimes called devils or demonic beings. They are evil spirits, belonging to the unseen or spiritual realm, embodied in human beings. The Old Testament refers to the prince of demons, sometimes called Satan (Adversary) or Devil, as having power and wisdom, taking the habitation of other forms such as the serpent (Genesis 3:1). The New Testament speaks of the Devil as Tempter (St. Matthew 4:3) and it goes on to tell the works of Satan, The Devil, and Demons as combating righteousness and good in any form, proving to be an adversary to the saints. Their chief power is exercised to destroy the mission of Jesus Christ. It can well be said that the Christian Church believes in Demons, Satan, and Devils. We believe in their power and purpose. We believe they can be subdued and conquered as in the commandment to the believer by Jesus. “In my name they shall cast out Satan and the work of the Devil and to resist him and then he will flee (WITHDRAW) from you.” (St. Mark 16:17).

THE CHURCH

The Church forms a spiritual unity of which Christ is the divine head. It is animated by one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. It professes one faith, shares one hope, and serves one King. It is the citadel of the truth and God’s agency for communicating to believers all spiritual blessings. The Church then is the

object of our faith rather than of knowledge. The name of our Church, “CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST” is supported by I Thessalonians 2:14 and other passages in the Pauline Epistles. The word “CHURCH” or “EKKLESIA” was first applied to the Christian society by Jesus Christ in St. Matthew 16:18, the occasion being that of his benediction of Peter at Caesarea Phillippi.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the second coming of Christ; that He shall come from heaven to earth, personally, bodily, visibly (Acts 1:11; Titus 2:11-13; St. Matthew 16:27; 24:30; 25:30; Luke 21:27; John 1:14, 17; Titus 2:11) and that the Church, the bride, will be caught up to meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians, 4:16-17). We admonish all who have this hope to purify themselves as He is pure.

DIVINE HEALING

The Church of God in Christ believes in and practices Divine Healing. It is a commandment of Jesus to the Apostles (St. Mark 16:18). Jesus affirms his teachings on healing by explaining to His disciples, who were to be Apostles, that healing the afflicted is by faith (St. Luke 9:40-41). Therefore, we believe that healing by faith in God has scriptural support and ordained authority. St. James’ writings in his epistle encourage Elders to pray for the sick, lay hands upon them and to anoint them with oil, and that prayers with faith shall heal the sick and the Lord shall raise them up. Healing is still practiced widely and frequently in the Church of God in Christ, and testimonies of healing in our Church testify to this fact.

MIRACLES

The Church of God in Christ believes that miracles occur to convince men that the Bible is God’s Word. A miracle can be defined as an extraordinary visible act of Divine power, wrought by the efficient agency of the will of God, which has as its final cause the vindication of the righteousness of God’s word. We believe that the works of God, which were performed during the beginnings of Christianity, do and will occur even today where God is preached, Faith in

Christ is exercised, The Holy Ghost is active, and the Gospel is promulgated in the truth (Acts 5:15; 6:8; 9:40; Luke 4:36, 7:14-15; 5:5-6; St. Mark 14:15).

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

It is generally admitted that for an ordinance to be valid, it must have been instituted by Christ. When we speak of ordinances of the church, we are speaking of those instituted by Christ, in which by sensible signs the grace of God in Christ, and the benefits of the covenant of grace are represented, sealed, and applied to believers, and these in turn give expression to their faith and allegiance to God. The Church Of God In Christ recognizes three ordinances as having been instituted by Christ himself and therefore, binding upon the church practice.

A. THE LORD’S SUPPER (HOLY COMMUNION)

The Lord’s Supper symbolizes the Lord’s death and suffering for the benefit and in the place of His people. It also symbolizes the believer’s participation in the crucified Christ. It represents not only the death of Christ as the object of faith which unites the believers to Christ, but also the effect of this act as the giving of life, strength, and joy to the soul. The communicant by faith enters into a special spiritual union of his soul with the glorified Christ.

B. FEET WASHING

Feet Washing is practiced and recognized as an ordinance in our Church because Christ, by His example, showed that humility characterized greatness in the Kingdom of God, and that service, rendered to others gave evidence that humility, motivated by love, exists. These services are held subsequent to the Lord’s Supper; however, its regularity is left to the discretion of the Pastor in charge.

C. WATER BAPTISM

We believe that Water Baptism is necessary as instructed by Christ in St. John 3:5, “UNLESS MAN BE BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT.” However, we do not believe that water baptism alone is a means of salvation but is an

outward demonstration that one has already had a conversion experience and has accepted Christ as his personal Savior. As Pentecostals, we practice immersion in preference to “SPRINKLING”, because immersion corresponds more closely to the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord (Colossians 2:12). It also symbolizes regeneration and purification more than any other mode. Therefore, we practice immersion as our mode of Baptism. We believe that we should use the Baptismal Formula given us by Christ for all “...**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.**” (St. Matthew 28:19)

Doctrinal Breakdown by Category

THE BIBLE

- **Belief:** The Bible as the Word of God, fully inspired and the only authority in all matters.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Inspiration:** **2 Timothy 3:16-17** states, "*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.*" This underlines the belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.
 - **Authority:** **Hebrews 4:12** describes the Word of God as "*living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword,*" emphasizing its authority and relevance.
 - **Harmonious Doctrine:** The concept of a harmonious system of doctrine can be seen in **2 Peter 1:20-21**, which highlights the unity and purpose of Scripture as divinely inspired.
 - **Critical Analysis:** The belief in the Bible's authority positions it as the **foundational text** for *doctrine* and *practice*. However, this raises questions regarding interpretation and the role of church tradition. Consideration should be given to how various

denominations interpret Scripture differently, and how this can lead to differing doctrines.

- **Sola Scriptura**

- The phrase ***sola scriptura*** is from the Latin: ***sola*** having the idea of "alone," "ground," "base," and the word ***scriptura*** meaning "writings," referring to the **Scriptures**. Sola-scriptura means that **Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of the Christian**. The Bible is **complete**, **authoritative**, and **true**. **"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).**
- **"All Scripture is God-breathed [given by divine inspiration] and is profitable for instruction, for conviction [of sin], for correction [of error and restoration to obedience], for training in righteousness [learning to live in conformity to God's will, both publicly and privately—behaving honorably with personal integrity and moral courage];" 2 Timothy 3:16 AMP**
- **"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness," 2 Timothy 3:16 CSB**
- Sola scriptura was the rallying cry of the Protestant Reformation. For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church had made its ***traditions superior*** in authority to the Bible. This resulted in many practices that were in fact **contradictory** to the Bible. Some examples are prayer to saints and/or Mary, the immaculate conception (The Immaculate Conception is a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church regarding Mary, Jesus' mother. The official statement of the doctrine reads, "*The blessed Virgin Mary to have been, from the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Savior of Mankind, preserved free from all stain of original sin*" (Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, December 1854). Essentially, the Immaculate

Conception is the belief that Mary was protected from original sin, that Mary did not have a sin nature and was, in fact, sinless.

- The principle is strongly indicated by verses such as **Acts 17:11**, ***”The people here were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, since they received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”*** **Acts 17:11 CSB** - which commends the Bereans for testing doctrine—taught by an apostle, no less—to the written Word. *Sola scriptura* is all-but-explicitly indicated in **1 Corinthians 4:6**, ***”Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying: “Nothing beyond what is written.” The purpose is that none of you will be arrogant, favoring one person over another. “1 Corinthians 4:6 CSB***, where Paul warns not to *“go beyond what is written.”*
- Jesus Himself criticized those who allowed traditions to override the explicit commands of God in **Mark 7:6–9**. ***“So, the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders, instead of eating bread with ceremonially unclean hands?” He answered them, “Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines human commands. Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition.” He also said to them, “You have a fine way of invalidating God’s command in order to set up your tradition!”*** **Mark 7:5-9 CSB**
- ***” You nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many other similar things.”*** **Mark 7:13 CSB**
- ***”so, you nullify the [authority of the] word of God [acting as if it did not apply] because of your tradition which you have handed***

down [through the elders]. And you do many things such as that.” Mark 7:13 AMP

THE FATHER

- **Belief:** God as the Father, Creator of all things, revealed through the Old and New Testaments.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Creator:** Genesis 1:1 states, "**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,**" establishing God as the Creator.
 - **Revelation:** The Old Testament gives a multifaceted view of God (**Exodus 34:6-7**), while the New Testament reveals God as *Father* through *Jesus* (**John 14:6-7**).
 - **Fatherhood:** Matthew 6:8 emphasizes God’s relational aspect, where Jesus teaches to pray to "**Your Father in heaven.**"
 - **Critical Analysis:** The portrayal of God as Father emphasizes *intimacy* and *relationship*, yet there is a potential risk of *anthropomorphizing* God.
 - The word **anthropomorphism** comes from two Greek words, **anthropos**, meaning “**man**,” and **morphe**, meaning “**form**.” In theological terms, anthropomorphism is making God in some way into the **form of man**. Mostly, it is the process of assigning human characteristics to God. Human traits and actions such as talking, holding, reaching, feeling, hearing, and the like, all of which are chronicled throughout both the Old and New Testaments, are ascribed to the Creator. We read of God’s actions, emotions, and appearance in human terms, or at least in words we normally accept and associate with humans.
 - *Anthropomorphisms* can be helpful in enabling us to at least partially comprehend the incomprehensible, know the unknowable, and fathom the unfathomable. **But God is God,**

and we are not, and all of our human expressions are intrinsically inadequate in explaining fully and properly the divine. But human words, emotions, features, and knowledge are all that our Creator provided us, so these are all that we can understand in this earthly world at this time. ***Yet anthropomorphisms can be dangerous*** if we see them as sufficient to portray God in ***limited*** human traits and terms, which could unintentionally serve to diminish in our minds His incomparable and incomprehensible power, love, and mercy. Christians are advised to read God's Word with the realization that He offers a small glimpse of His glory through the only means we can absorb. As much as anthropomorphisms help us picture our loving God, He reminds us in **Isaiah 55:8-9**: **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."**

- A ***balanced understanding*** of God's ***transcendence*** (*existence above - outside of humanity's full experience, perception, or grasp*) and ***immanence*** (*present in all creation, while remaining distinct from it*) is crucial in teaching about His nature.

THE SON

- **Belief:** Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, born of a virgin, and the mediator between God and man.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Eternal Nature: John 1:1** affirms Jesus' eternal existence: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."**
 - **Virgin Birth: Matthew 1:18-25** details the miraculous birth of Jesus, fundamental to Christological beliefs.

- **Mediator: 1 Timothy 2:5** states, "**For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,**" affirming His role in salvation.
- **Critical Analysis:** The belief in Jesus as both fully divine and fully human is critical for understanding the nature of salvation. However, clarity is needed on the implications of the virgin birth and its significance in the context of sin and redemption.
 - **Belief in Jesus as Fully Divine and Fully Human**
 - **Statement:** "The belief in Jesus as both fully divine and fully human is critical for understanding the nature of salvation."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement accurately highlights a foundational Christian doctrine known as the ***hypostatic union***, which asserts that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. This belief is essential because it underpins the efficacy of Jesus' atoning sacrifice. As fully divine, Jesus has the authority and power to forgive sins and reconcile humanity to God. As fully human, He can represent humanity and bear the penalty for sin on our behalf (Hebrews 2:17).
 - **Implications of the Virgin Birth**
 - **Statement:** "However, clarity is needed on the implications of the virgin birth and its significance in the context of sin and redemption."
 - **Evaluation:** This part of the analysis correctly identifies an area that often requires further explanation. The virgin birth, as described in **Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38**, signifies that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and

born of the Virgin Mary. This doctrine is significant for several reasons:

- **Sinless Nature:** The virgin birth underscores Jesus' sinless nature. By being conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus did not inherit the sinful nature passed down from Adam (Romans 5:12-19).
- **Fulfillment of Prophecy:** The virgin birth fulfills Old Testament prophecies, such as Isaiah 7:14, which speaks of a virgin bearing a son called Immanuel ("God with us").
- **Divine Initiative:** The virgin birth highlights the divine initiative in salvation. It shows that salvation is a work of God, not of human effort.
- This critical analysis correctly identifies the importance of Jesus' dual nature for understanding salvation. It also rightly points out the need for clarity on the virgin birth's implications. Expanding on these points can help believers appreciate the depth of these doctrines and their significance in the broader context of Christian theology.

THE HOLY GHOST

- **Belief:** The Holy Spirit as the third person of the **Trinity**, equal in power and glory.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Trinity:** **Matthew 28:19** mentions **the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, *affirming* the **triune** nature of God.
 - **Role:** **John 16:13** describes the Holy Spirit as the "**Spirit of truth**" who guides believers into all truth.
 - **Empowerment:** **Acts 1:8** states, "**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you,**" emphasizing

the Spirit's role in empowering believers to become effective witnesses in carrying out the **Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)**

- **Critical Analysis:** The belief in the Holy Spirit's active role in the life of believers is essential for understanding Christian living. However, discussions around the gifts of the Spirit and their manifestations (*demonstrations*) can lead to divisions within the church. Emphasizing unity in diversity is important.

- **The Holy Spirit's Active Role in Believers' Lives**

- **Statement:** "The belief in the Holy Spirit's active role in the life of believers is essential for understanding Christian living."

- **Evaluation:** This statement accurately underscores the importance of the Holy Spirit in the daily life of a Christian. The Holy Spirit is described in Scripture as the **Comforter, Helper, and Guide (John 14:26; Romans 8:14)**. The Spirit's role includes empowering believers for service (**Acts 1:8**), producing spiritual fruit (**Galatians 5:22-23**), and leading believers into all truth (**John 16:13**). Understanding the Holy Spirit's work is *crucial for living a life* that is *pleasing* to God and *effective* in ministry.

- **Gifts of the Spirit and Their Manifestations**

- **Statement:** "However, discussions around the gifts of the Spirit and their manifestations can lead to divisions within the church."

- **Evaluation:** This observation is valid, as debates over the nature, purpose, and operation of spiritual gifts have historically caused divisions within the Christian community. Passages such as 1 Corinthians 12-14 address the diversity of

spiritual gifts and their proper use within the church. Differences in interpretation and practice, particularly regarding more charismatic gifts like speaking in tongues and prophecy, can lead to disagreements and fragmentation.

- **Emphasizing Unity in Diversity**

- **Statement:** "Emphasizing unity in diversity is important."

- **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point. The Apostle Paul, in **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**, uses the metaphor of the body to illustrate how diverse gifts contribute to the unity and health of the church. Each member has a unique role, and all are necessary for the body to function properly. Emphasizing unity in diversity means recognizing and valuing the different gifts and roles within the church while maintaining a spirit of love and cooperation (**Ephesians 4:3-6**).

- This critical analysis rightly highlights the essential role of the Holy Spirit in Christian living and the potential for division over spiritual gifts. It wisely calls for an emphasis on unity in diversity, which is vital for the health and effectiveness of the church. By fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding, believers can celebrate their differences while working together for the common good.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST

- **Belief:** A subsequent experience to conversion characterized by speaking in tongues.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**

- **Subsequent Experience:** **Acts 2:4** describes the apostles being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. This is reiterated in **Acts 10:46** and **Acts 19:1-6**.
 - **Evidence:** The belief that tongue-speaking is a sign of this baptism aligns with **1 Corinthians 12:10**, which mentions various spiritual gifts including speaking in tongues.
- **Critical Analysis:** This doctrine is a distinctive feature of Pentecostalism, but it can be contentious. Emphasizing that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for empowerment rather than as a condition of salvation can help mitigate misunderstandings.
 - **Quick Overview of Pentecostalism**
 - **Pentecostalism** is a Christian movement that emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and modern-day miracles. It originated in the early 20th century and is characterized by its vibrant worship style and belief in the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - **Key Beliefs:**
 - **Baptism in the Holy Spirit:** Pentecostals believe in a distinct experience following salvation, often evidenced by speaking in tongues (glossolalia), which empowers believers for service and witness (**Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4**).
 - **Spiritual Gifts:** Emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, such as prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues, as described in **1 Corinthians 12-14**.
 - **Divine Healing:** Belief in the power of prayer for physical healing, based on the redemptive work of Christ (**James 5:14-16; Isaiah 53:5**).

- **Vibrant Worship:** Services often include expressive worship, spontaneous prayer, and a powerful sense of community and fellowship.
 - **Historical Background:**
 - **Azusa Street Revival (1906-1915):** A key event in Los Angeles, led by William J. Seymour, that sparked the global Pentecostal movement.
 - **Growth and Spread:** Pentecostalism has grown rapidly worldwide, particularly in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, becoming one of the largest and most dynamic Christian movements.
 - **Distinctive Practices:**
 - **Speaking in Tongues:** Seen as a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence and a means of personal edification and prayer.
 - **Prophetic Utterances:** Belief in receiving direct revelations from God for guidance and encouragement.
 - **Healing Services:** Regularly held to pray for the sick and expect miraculous healings.
- Pentecostalism's focus on the experiential and supernatural aspects of faith has made it a vibrant and influential force within Christianity.
- **Distinctive Feature of Pentecostalism**
 - **Statement:** "This doctrine is a distinctive feature of Pentecostalism, but it can be contentious."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement correctly identifies the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a hallmark of

Pentecostal theology. Pentecostals believe that this experience, often evidenced by speaking in tongues, is a subsequent act of grace following salvation. However, it is also true that this doctrine can be contentious, as not all Christian denominations share this belief. Some view it as a unique Pentecostal experience, while others may see it as unnecessary or even unbiblical.

▪ **Empowerment vs. Condition of Salvation**

- **Statement:** "Emphasizing that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for empowerment rather than as a condition of salvation can help mitigate misunderstandings."

- **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point for fostering understanding and unity among different Christian groups. Pentecostals typically teach that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is meant to empower believers for service and witness (**Acts 1:8**), rather than being a requirement for salvation. Salvation is understood to be by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). By clarifying that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is about empowerment, not salvation, it can help reduce theological tensions and promote a more inclusive dialogue.

- This critical analysis effectively highlights the distinctive nature of the Pentecostal doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and acknowledges its potential for contention. By emphasizing the purpose of this baptism as empowerment rather than a condition for salvation, it offers a way to mitigate misunderstandings and foster greater unity among Christians with differing views on this issue.

MAN

- **Belief:** Humanity created holy but fallen into sin.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Creation: Genesis 1:27** states humans were created in God's image, affirming their inherent dignity.
 - **Sinfulness: Romans 3:23** highlights, "**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**" establishing the need for *redemption*.
 - **New Birth: John 3:7** discusses the necessity of being "**born again,**" essential for salvation.
 - **Critical Analysis:** The emphasis on sin and the need for regeneration is crucial for understanding the Gospel. However, it's also important to affirm the value of human beings as created in God's image despite the fall.
 - **Emphasis on Sin and Regeneration**
 - **Statement:** "The emphasis on sin and the need for regeneration is crucial for understanding the Gospel."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement accurately highlights a fundamental aspect of the Christian Gospel. The recognition of sin and the need for regeneration (**spiritual rebirth**) are central to the message of salvation. Scriptures such as **Romans 3:23** ("**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**") and **John 3:3** ("**Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again**") underscore the necessity of acknowledging human sinfulness and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in bringing about new life in Christ.
 - **Affirming the Value of Human Beings**
 - **Statement:** "However, it's also important to affirm the value of human beings as created in God's image despite the fall."

- **Evaluation:** This is an essential complement to the emphasis on sin and regeneration. While the fall has marred human nature, it has not erased the inherent value and dignity of human beings as created in the *image of God (Imago Dei)*. **Genesis 1:27** states, "**So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.**" This belief affirms that every person has intrinsic worth and potential for redemption and restoration through Christ.
- This critical analysis effectively balances two crucial theological points:
 - **The Reality of Sin and Need for Regeneration:** Essential for understanding the Gospel and the necessity of salvation through Jesus Christ.
 - **The Value of Human Beings:** Despite the fall, humans retain their value as God's image-bearers, which underscores the redemptive purpose of the Gospel.
- By holding these truths together, we can present a holistic understanding of the Gospel that acknowledges human sinfulness while also affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

SIN

- **Belief:** Sin originated in the angelic realm and is transmitted through humanity.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Original Sin:** **Romans 5:12** states, "**Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin,**" establishing the concept of original sin.
 - **Definition of Sin:** **1 John 3:4** defines sin as "**lawlessness,**" highlighting its nature as a transgression against God's will.

- **Critical Analysis:** The doctrine of original sin is foundational but can be challenging to convey in a contemporary context. It is important to balance the understanding of sin with the message of grace and redemption through Christ.
 - **Doctrine of Original Sin**
 - **Statement:** "The doctrine of original sin is foundational but can be challenging to convey in a contemporary context."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement correctly identifies the doctrine of original sin as a core tenet of Christian theology. Original sin refers to the fallen state of human nature inherited from Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-19**). It explains the universal propensity towards sin and the need for salvation. However, conveying this doctrine in a contemporary context can be challenging due to varying cultural understandings of sin, human nature, and individual responsibility.
 - **Balancing Sin with Grace and Redemption**
 - **Statement:** "It is important to balance the understanding of sin with the message of grace and redemption through Christ."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point for effective theological communication. While the doctrine of original sin highlights humanity's fallen condition, it must be balanced with the message of grace and redemption offered through Jesus Christ. **Romans 5:20-21** states, "**But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace**

might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This balance ensures that the message of the Gospel is one of *hope* and *transformation*, not just *condemnation*.

- This critical analysis effectively addresses two key aspects:
 - **Foundational Nature of Original Sin:** Essential for understanding the human condition and the need for salvation.
 - **Message of Grace and Redemption:** Vital for presenting a holistic and hopeful Gospel message that emphasizes God's love and the transformative power of Christ's sacrifice.
- By maintaining this balance, we can communicate the depth of human sinfulness while also highlighting the abundant grace available through Jesus Christ, making the Gospel relevant and compelling in any context.

SALVATION

- **Belief:** Salvation as a comprehensive process involving repentance, faith, and the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Components:** **Ephesians 2:8-9** emphasize *salvation by grace through faith*, while **Romans 10:9-10** outlines the *necessity of confession* and *belief*.
 - **Regeneration:** **2 Corinthians 5:17** states, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come," affirming the *transformative* nature of *salvation*.
 - **Critical Analysis:** The comprehensive view of salvation underscores its relational aspect. However, it is important to clarify the roles of faith, works, and grace to avoid misunderstandings regarding the assurance of salvation.

▪ **Comprehensive View of Salvation**

- **Statement:** "The comprehensive view of salvation underscores its relational aspect."

- **Evaluation:** This statement highlights an important dimension of salvation, emphasizing that it is not merely a transactional or legalistic event but a relational one. **Salvation involves entering into a restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ.** This relational aspect is evident in passages such as **John 17:3**, which states, "**Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.**" Salvation is about **knowing God personally** and **being reconciled to Him.**

▪ **Clarifying the Roles of Faith, Works, and Grace**

- **Statement:** "However, it is important to clarify the roles of faith, works, and grace to avoid misunderstandings regarding the assurance of salvation."

- **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point for theological clarity. The roles of faith, works, and grace are often misunderstood, leading to confusion about the assurance of salvation. Key biblical teachings include:

- **Faith:** Salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 2:8-9** states, "**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.**"

- **Grace:** Salvation is a gift of God's grace, not something earned by human effort. **Titus 3:5** affirms, "**He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.**"
- **Works:** Good works are the evidence of genuine faith and the fruit of salvation, not the means to obtain it. **James 2:17** states, "**In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**" **Ephesians 2:10** also emphasizes that **we are created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**
- This critical analysis effectively underscores the relational nature of salvation and the need for clarity regarding faith, works, and grace. By clearly articulating these roles, we can help believers understand that ***salvation is assured through faith in Christ, grounded in God's grace, and evidenced by a transformed life of good works.***

ANGELS

- **Belief:** Angels as messengers of God, serving Him and assisting believers.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Role of Angels:** **Hebrews 1:14** states angels are "**ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.**"
 - **Creation:** **Colossians 1:16** affirms that all things, including angels, were created by Christ.
 - **Critical Analysis:** While beliefs about angels can inspire faith, there is a risk of ***overemphasis*** that could lead to distractions from

the centrality of Christ. Teaching should focus on their role in God's plan *without glorifying them beyond their purpose*.

▪ **Inspiration of Faith through Beliefs about Angels**

- **Statement:** "While beliefs about angels can inspire faith..."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement acknowledges that teachings about angels can strengthen and encourage believers. Angels are often seen as messengers and servants of God, playing significant roles in biblical narratives (e.g., **Gabriel announcing Jesus' birth in Luke 1:26-38**). Their presence and actions can remind believers of God's ongoing involvement in the world and His care for His people.

▪ **Risk of Overemphasis and Distraction**

- **Statement:** "...there is a risk of overemphasis that could lead to distractions from the centrality of Christ."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a valid concern. While angels are important, an overemphasis on them can divert attention from the core of the Christian faith, which is Jesus Christ. **Colossians 2:18** warns against the worship of angels, emphasizing that **Christ alone** is to be the **focus of our faith**. **Hebrews 1:4-14** also makes it clear that **Jesus is superior to the angels**, highlighting His unique role in God's redemptive plan.

▪ **Proper Teaching Focus**

- **Statement:** "Teaching should focus on their role in God's plan without glorifying them beyond their purpose."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a wise approach. Teaching about angels should be balanced and biblically

grounded, emphasizing their role as God's servants and messengers. They are part of God's creation and serve His purposes, but they are not to be glorified or worshipped. Proper teaching should highlight their function within God's plan, as seen in passages like **Psalm 103:20-21**, which describes angels as obedient servants of God.

- This critical analysis effectively addresses the potential benefits and risks associated with beliefs about angels. It rightly emphasizes the need to maintain the centrality of Christ in Christian teaching while acknowledging the role of angels within God's plan. By keeping the focus on Christ and His redemptive work, believers can appreciate the ministry of angels without being led astray.

DEMONS

- **Belief:** The existence and power of demons as adversaries of God.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Nature of Demons: Ephesians 6:12** refers to spiritual forces of evil, highlighting the spiritual battle believers face.
 - **Authority over Demons: Luke 10:19** emphasizes the authority believers have over demonic forces in Christ.
 - **Critical Analysis:** Awareness of spiritual warfare is crucial for believers, but this can lead to fear if not presented with the assurance of victory in Christ. Emphasizing the power of prayer and the authority of Jesus can provide comfort and strength.
 - **Awareness of Spiritual Warfare**
 - **Statement:** "Awareness of spiritual warfare is crucial for believers..."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement correctly identifies the importance of understanding spiritual warfare. The Bible teaches that believers are

engaged in a spiritual battle against forces of evil (**Ephesians 6:12**). Awareness of this reality helps Christians to be vigilant and prepared, recognizing the spiritual dimension of their struggles and the need for spiritual resources.

▪ **Risk of Fear**

- **Statement:** "...but this can lead to fear if not presented with the assurance of victory in Christ."

- **Evaluation:** This is a valid concern. Teaching about spiritual warfare without emphasizing the believer's victory in Christ can indeed lead to fear and anxiety. However, the New Testament consistently assures believers of their victory through Jesus. For example, **1 John 4:4** states, "**You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**" This assurance is crucial for maintaining a balanced and hopeful perspective on spiritual warfare.

▪ **Emphasizing the Power of Prayer and the Authority of Jesus**

- **Statement:** "Emphasizing the power of prayer and the authority of Jesus can provide comfort and strength."

- **Evaluation:** This is an essential aspect of teaching on spiritual warfare. **Prayer** is a **powerful weapon** in the **believer's arsenal**, as highlighted in **Ephesians 6:18**, which encourages believers to "**pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.**" Additionally, the authority of Jesus over all spiritual forces is a central theme in the

New Testament. **Colossians 2:15** declares that Jesus "**disarmed the powers and authorities**" and **triumphed** over them by the **cross**. Emphasizing these truths can provide believers with the confidence and strength they need to face spiritual battles.

- This critical analysis effectively balances the need for awareness of spiritual warfare with the assurance of victory in Christ. By emphasizing the power of prayer and the authority of Jesus, believers can be equipped to face spiritual challenges with confidence and peace. This approach ensures that the teaching on spiritual warfare is both realistic and encouraging, helping believers to stand firm in their faith.

THE CHURCH

- **Belief:** The Church as the body of Christ and the community of believers.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Body of Christ: 1 Corinthians 12:27** states, "**Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.**"
 - **Unity in Diversity: Ephesians 4:4-6** emphasizes the **unity of the Spirit**, calling believers to ***maintain this unity***.
 - **Critical Analysis:** The understanding of the Church as a community provides a solid foundation for fellowship and service. However, efforts should be made to address issues of division and to promote inclusiveness and love among believers.
 - **Understanding the Church as a Community**
 - **Statement:** "The understanding of the Church as a community provides a solid foundation for fellowship and service."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement correctly identifies the communal nature of the Church as foundational for fostering fellowship and service among believers. The New Testament frequently

describes the Church as the body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:12-27**), emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of its members. **Acts 2:42-47** provides a vivid picture of the early Church's communal life, highlighting their devotion to **teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer**. This communal understanding encourages believers to support one another and work together in service to God and others.

▪ **Addressing Issues of Division**

- **Statement:** "However, efforts should be made to address issues of division..."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point. Division within the Church can undermine its witness and effectiveness. The New Testament addresses this issue repeatedly, urging believers to strive for unity. For example, **1 Corinthians 1:10** appeals for unity among believers, "**that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.**" Addressing divisions involves promoting **reconciliation, understanding, and mutual respect** among members.

▪ **Promoting Inclusiveness and Love**

- **Statement:** "...and to promote inclusiveness and love among believers."
 - **Evaluation:** This is essential for the **health** and **growth** of the Church. Inclusiveness ensures that all members feel valued and accepted, regardless of their background or status.

Galatians 3:28 emphasizes this inclusivity: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Additionally, **love** is the **hallmark** of Christian community. Jesus commanded His followers to love one another as He has loved them (**John 13:34-35**), and this **love is to be the defining characteristic of the Church.**

- This critical analysis effectively highlights the importance of understanding the Church as a community while also addressing the need to tackle issues of division and promote inclusiveness and love. By fostering a sense of unity and mutual care, the Church can better fulfill its mission of fellowship and service, reflecting the love of Christ to the world.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

- **Belief:** The belief in the imminent and visible return of Christ.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Promise of Return: Acts 1:11** affirms that Jesus will return in the same way He ascended.
 - **Hope and Purity: 1 John 3:2-3** states that those who have this hope in Him purify themselves.
 - **Critical Analysis:** The doctrine of the second coming provides hope and motivation for holy living. Nonetheless, it is important to address various eschatological views within Christianity and focus on the call to be **prepared** rather than **speculation** about the timing.
 - **Hope and Motivation for Holy Living**
 - **Statement:** "The doctrine of the second coming provides hope and motivation for holy living."

- **Evaluation:** This statement accurately captures the essence of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. The promise of Jesus' return is a source of hope for believers, as it assures them of the ultimate fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. *This hope is meant to inspire and motivate Christians to live holy and godly lives in anticipation of Christ's return.* Passages such as **Titus 2:13-14** highlight this connection: **"while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."**
- **Addressing Various Eschatological Views**
 - **Statement:** "Nonetheless, it is important to address various eschatological views within Christianity..."
 - **Evaluation:** This is an important consideration. Within Christianity, there are diverse interpretations of eschatological events, including *premillennialism*, *amillennialism*, and *postmillennialism*, among others. Each view offers different perspectives on the sequence and nature of **end-time** events. Addressing these various views with respect and understanding can help foster unity and prevent division within the church. It is essential to acknowledge that while Christians may differ on the specifics of eschatology, they share a **common belief in the certainty of Christ's return.**

- **Focus on Preparedness Rather than Speculation**
 - **Statement:** "...and focus on the call to be prepared rather than speculation about the timing."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point for maintaining a balanced and healthy perspective on the second coming. Jesus Himself warned against speculating about the exact timing of His return (**Matthew 24:36**). Instead, He emphasized the importance of being **watchful** and **prepared (Matthew 24:42-44)**. The call to **readiness** involves living **faithfully** and **obediently**, knowing that Christ could return at any moment. This focus helps believers avoid the pitfalls of **date-setting** and **sensationalism**, which can lead to **disillusionment** and **distraction** from the core message of the **Gospel**.
- This critical analysis effectively highlights the hope and motivation derived from the doctrine of the second coming while also addressing the need to consider various eschatological views and emphasize **preparedness** over **speculation**. By maintaining this balanced approach, believers can be encouraged to live holy lives, respect differing interpretations, and remain focused on the essential call to be ready for Christ's return.

DIVINE HEALING

- **Belief:** The belief in and practice of divine healing as a part of faith.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Scriptural Support:** **James 5:14-15** encourages the elders to **pray** for the sick, promising **healing through faith**.

- **Jesus' Ministry: Luke 9:1-2** shows Jesus *empowering* His disciples to *heal*.
- **Critical Analysis:** The practice of divine healing can be a source of hope, but it also requires a careful theological framework to avoid disappointment and misunderstanding. **Emphasizing God's sovereignty in healing is essential.**
 - **Divine Healing as a Source of Hope**
 - **Statement:** "The practice of divine healing can be a source of hope..."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement acknowledges the positive impact that the belief in divine healing can have on believers. Divine healing, as seen in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles (**e.g., Matthew 8:16-17; Acts 3:6-8**), offers **hope** and **encouragement** to those who are suffering. It reinforces the belief in God's **power** and **compassion**, providing comfort and a sense of divine intervention in times of illness.
 - **Need for a Careful Theological Framework**
 - **Statement:** "...but it also requires a careful theological framework to avoid disappointment and misunderstanding."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point. Without a sound theological framework, teachings on divine healing can lead to **unrealistic expectations and potential disappointment if healing does not occur as anticipated**. A balanced theology should acknowledge that **while God can and does heal**, not every prayer for healing results in immediate or miraculous recovery. This framework should include an understanding of the mystery of God's will and

the reality of living in a fallen world where suffering and illness still exist (**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**).

▪ **Emphasizing God's Sovereignty in Healing**

- **Statement:** "Emphasizing God's sovereignty in healing is essential."

- **Evaluation:** This is an important aspect of a balanced theological approach to divine healing. Emphasizing God's sovereignty means recognizing that God is in control and His ways and timing are perfect, even when they are beyond human understanding. Passages like **Isaiah 55:8-9** remind us that **God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours**. Trusting in God's sovereignty helps believers maintain faith and hope, even when healing does not occur as expected. It also shifts the focus from the act of healing itself to the relationship with God and His overarching plan for our lives.

- This critical analysis effectively highlights the hopeful aspect of divine healing while also stressing the need for a careful theological framework to manage expectations and avoid misunderstandings. By emphasizing God's sovereignty, believers can find **comfort and strength**, trusting that God's will is ultimately for their good, whether or not physical healing occurs.

MIRACLES

- **Belief:** Miracles as acts of divine power affirming the truth of God's Word.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**

- **Purpose of Miracles: John 20:30-31** states that signs and wonders were written to inspire belief in Jesus as the Messiah.
 - **Continuity of Miracles: Acts 5:15** illustrates the ongoing presence of miracles in the early church.
- **Critical Analysis:** The belief in miracles can inspire faith but may raise questions about why some prayers for miracles seem unanswered. Focus on God's character and purpose in the miraculous can help navigate these discussions.
 - **Inspiration of Faith through Belief in Miracles**
 - **Statement:** "The belief in miracles can inspire faith..."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement acknowledges that belief in miracles can strengthen and encourage the faith of believers. Miracles, as recorded in the Bible (e.g., **Jesus' healings, the parting of the Red Sea**), demonstrate God's power and intervention in the world. They serve as signs that point to God's sovereignty and compassion, providing **tangible evidence of His presence** and **activity** in the lives of His people.
 - **Questions about Unanswered Prayers for Miracles**
 - **Statement:** "...but may raise questions about why some prayers for miracles seem unanswered."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a valid concern. When prayers for miracles go unanswered, it can lead to confusion, doubt, and even disillusionment. Believers may struggle to understand why God intervenes in some situations but not in others. This issue requires sensitive pastoral care and sound theological teaching to help believers navigate their questions and maintain their faith.

- **Focusing on God’s Character and Purpose in the Miraculous**
 - **Statement:** "Focus on God’s character and purpose in the miraculous can help navigate these discussions."
 - **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point for providing a balanced perspective on miracles. Emphasizing God's character—**His love, wisdom, and sovereignty**—helps believers trust in His **goodness**, even when they do not understand His ways. Additionally, understanding the purpose of miracles in the biblical narrative can provide context. **Miracles often serve to reveal God's glory, authenticate His messengers, and advance His redemptive plan (John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22)**. By focusing on these aspects, believers can find comfort and assurance in God's overarching purposes, even when specific prayers for miracles are not answered as hoped.
- This critical analysis effectively highlights the faith-inspiring aspect of belief in miracles while also addressing the challenges posed by unanswered prayers. By focusing on God's character and the purpose of miracles, believers can navigate these discussions with a deeper understanding and trust in God's sovereign plan.

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

- **Belief:** The recognition of ordinances instituted by Christ.
 - **Exegetical Analysis:**
 - **Lord’s Supper: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26** outlines the significance of the Lord’s Supper as a **remembrance** of Christ’s sacrifice.

- **Water Baptism: Acts 2:38** emphasizes the importance of baptism as an *outward sign of inward faith*.
 - **Feet Washing: John 13:14-15** shows Jesus washing His disciples' feet as an example of *humility* and *service*.
- **Critical Analysis:** The ordinances serve as vital expressions of faith and community. However, the practice and frequency of these ordinances can vary among denominations, and clarity on their significance can foster unity.
 - **Ordinances as Expressions of Faith and Community**
 - **Statement:** "The ordinances serve as vital expressions of faith and community."
 - **Evaluation:** This statement correctly identifies the importance of ordinances (such as baptism and the Lord's Supper) in the life of the church. These practices are **outward expressions of inward faith** and serve to strengthen the sense of community among believers. Baptism symbolizes the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (**Romans 6:3-4**), while the Lord's Supper commemorates Christ's sacrifice and fosters unity as believers partake together (**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**).
 - **Variations in Practice and Frequency**
 - **Statement:** "However, the practice and frequency of these ordinances can vary among denominations..."
 - **Evaluation:** This is an important observation. Different Christian denominations have varying practices and frequencies for observing ordinances. For example, some denominations practice infant baptism, while others only baptize professing believers. Similarly, the frequency of the Lord's Supper can range from

weekly to monthly or even less frequently. These differences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings or divisions among Christians.

- **Clarity on Significance to Foster Unity**

- **Statement:** "...and clarity on their significance can foster unity."

- **Evaluation:** This is a crucial point for promoting unity within the broader Christian community. By focusing on the theological significance and biblical foundations of the ordinances, believers can find common ground despite differences in practice. Understanding that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ***means of grace, symbols of faith, and acts of obedience to Christ*** can help bridge denominational divides. Emphasizing the shared beliefs behind these practices can foster a spirit of unity and mutual respect.

- This critical analysis effectively highlights the importance of ordinances as expressions of faith and community while acknowledging the variations in practice among denominations. By seeking clarity on the significance of these ordinances, believers can promote unity and strengthen their collective witness to the world.

Statement of Faith (Affirmation of Faith)

We believe the Bible to be the inspired and only infallible written Word of God.

We believe that there is only One God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and, God the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the blessed Hope, which is the rapture of the Church of God, which is in Christ, at His return.

We believe that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

We believe that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is absolutely essential for personal salvation.

We believe that the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross provides healing for the human body in answer to believing prayer.

We believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it.

We believe in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy and separated life in the present world.

Exegetical and Critical Analysis of Our Doctrinal Beliefs

▪ The Bible as the Inspired and Infallible Word of God

- **Statement:** "We believe the Bible to be the inspired and only infallible written Word of God."
 - **Exegesis:** This belief is rooted in passages such as **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, which states, "**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" The term "**God-breathed**" (Greek: θεόπνευστος, *theopneustos*) emphasizes the divine origin of the Scriptures, asserting that they are not merely human writings but are **inspired by God Himself**.
 - **Critical Analysis:** The doctrine of biblical inspiration and infallibility underscores the authority of Scripture in all matters of *faith* and *practice*. It implies that the Bible is free from error in its teachings and is the ultimate standard for truth. This belief necessitates a high view of Scripture, where its teachings are considered binding and authoritative for the believer's life.

▪ The Trinity

- **Statement:** "We believe that there is only One God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit."
 - **Exegesis:** The doctrine of the Trinity is derived from various scriptural passages. For instance, **Matthew 28:19** records Jesus' command to baptize "**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**" This triune formula reflects the *coexistence* and *coequality* of the three distinct persons within the one **Godhead**.
 - **Critical Analysis:** The Trinity is a central tenet of orthodox Christian theology, affirming the unity and diversity within the

Godhead. It maintains that while God is one in essence, He exists in three persons who are coequal and coeternal. This doctrine is essential for understanding the nature of God and His work in **creation, redemption, and sanctification.**

▪ **The Blessed Hope**

- **Statement:** "We believe in the blessed Hope, which is the rapture of the Church of God, which is in Christ, at His return."
- **Exegesis:** The concept of the "**blessed hope**" is found in **Titus 2:13**, which speaks of "**waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**" This hope is further elaborated in **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**, describing the rapture where believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
- **Critical Analysis:** The blessed hope emphasizes the eschatological expectation of Christ's return and the rapture of the Church. It provides believers with a future-oriented perspective, encouraging them to live in readiness and anticipation of Christ's imminent return. This belief also offers comfort and assurance of eternal life with Christ.

▪ **Cleansing from Sin**

- **Statement:** "We believe that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious Blood of Jesus Christ."
 - **Exegesis:** This belief is grounded in passages such as **1 John 1:7**, which states, "**the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin,**" and **Acts 3:19**, which calls for repentance: "**Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.**"
 - **Critical Analysis:** The emphasis on **repentance** and **faith** in the **blood of Jesus** highlights the necessity of **personal**

response to the **gospel**. It underscores the sufficiency of Christ's atoning sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and the transformative power of repentance. This doctrine is foundational for understanding the process of salvation and the believer's relationship with God.

- **Regeneration by the Holy Ghost**

- **Statement:** "We believe that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is absolutely essential for personal salvation."

- **Exegesis:** **John 3:5-6** records Jesus' words: "**Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**" This passage emphasizes the necessity of **spiritual rebirth** through the Holy Spirit.

- **Critical Analysis:** Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is crucial for personal salvation, as it signifies the new birth and transformation of the believer. It is the **work of the Holy Spirit** that brings about a change in the heart, enabling the individual to respond to God in **faith** and **obedience**. This doctrine highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in initiating and sustaining the believer's spiritual life.

- **Healing through Christ's Redemptive Work**

- **Statement:** "We believe that the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross provides healing for the human body in answer to believing prayer."

- **Exegesis:** **Isaiah 53:5** prophesies, "**by his wounds we are healed,**" and **James 5:14-15** instructs, "**Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well.**"

- **Critical Analysis:** The belief in healing through Christ's redemptive work affirms that physical healing is part of the atonement. It encourages believers to seek divine healing through prayer and faith, recognizing that God is sovereign and able to heal. This doctrine also emphasizes the holistic nature of salvation, encompassing both spiritual and physical well-being.

- **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**
 - **Statement:** "We believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to **Acts 2:4**, is given to believers who ask for it."
 - **Exegesis: Acts 2:4** describes the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit: "**All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.**" This event signifies the empowerment of believers for witness and service.
 - **Critical Analysis:** *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit* is a subsequent experience to salvation, providing believers with spiritual empowerment and gifts for ministry. It is often associated with speaking in tongues as an initial evidence. This doctrine emphasizes the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life and the importance of seeking His fullness.

- **Sanctifying Power of the Holy Spirit**
 - **Statement:** "We believe in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy and separated life in the present world."
 - **Exegesis: Romans 8:13-14** states, "**For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.**"

This passage highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctification.

- **Critical Analysis:** The sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit is *essential for the believer's growth in holiness and separation from sin*. It is through the Spirit's indwelling that Christians are enabled to live lives that reflect God's *character* and *purposes*. This doctrine underscores the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in conforming believers to the image of Christ.



All Saints Covenant Church

Certificate of Completion

This certifies that:

has successfully completed the

Membership Doctrinal Foundations Class

and is hereby recognized for their commitment to understanding and embracing the *doctrine, mission, vision, and values* of

All Saints Covenant Church.

"Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Psalms 50:5

Date: _____ Pastor: _____