

5. The Ministerial Office

I. Christ instituted one office in his church, the ministry of the gospel.

1. Christ assigned one task to his church: the office of preaching of the gospel.

a) The one task given to the church is preaching the word and administering the sacraments.

Mark 16:15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 26:26-28 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

John 20:21-23 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Acts 1:8 You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

1 Peter 2:9 You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

b) This work is called an office or a ministry, that is, a service or an administration.

Note: In biblical usage, the word “ministry” is a synonym of “service.” Like “service,” the word “ministry” can refer to a wide variety of functions and offices, both secular and spiritual. The NIV makes it difficult to recognize this wide range of usage of *διακονία*, the main Greek word for “ministry,” because of the variety of translations the NIV uses for this word and for other words based on the same Greek stem. The following arrangement of passages illustrates the various meanings of the biblical terms “ministry” and “minister.”

Examples of “ministry” in secular matters or physical things:

John 2:5 His mother said to the *servants*, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Luke 17:8 Would he not rather say, “Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and *wait on me* while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink”?

Mark 1:31 The fever left her and she began to *wait on* them. Also Luke 4:39

Luke 10:40 But Martha was distracted by all *the preparations* that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me *to do the work* by myself?”

Acts 6:2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the [ministry of] the word of God in order to *wait on tables*.”

Luke 8:3 These women were helping to *support them* out of their own means.

Romans 13:4 For [the ruler] is God’s *servant* to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s *servant*, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Examples of the ministry of Christians in general:

1 Peter 4:10-11 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to *serve others, faithfully administering* (διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι) God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone *serves*, he should do it with the strength God provides.

1 Corinthians 12:5 There are different kinds of *service*, but the same Lord.

Ephesians 4:12 [Pastors and teachers] prepare God’s people for works of *service*, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Examples of ministry or service with the Word:

Ministry of the Word in the abstract—the means of grace and the responsibility to use them:

2 Corinthians 3:7,8,9 Now if *the ministry that brought death*, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was,⁸ will not *the ministry of the Spirit* be even more glorious? ⁹If *the ministry that condemns men* is glorious, how much more glorious is *the ministry that brings righteousness!*

2 Corinthians 5:18,19 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the *ministry of reconciliation*:¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Ministry of the Word in the concrete—service by public ministers of the Word, who hold a specific office:

Acts 6:4 [We] will give our attention to prayer and *the ministry of the word*.

Acts 1:17,25 [Judas] was one of our number and shared in this *ministry*.²⁵ ... this apostolic *ministry*, which Judas left to go where he belongs.

Romans 11:13 Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my *ministry*.

Acts 20:24 I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the *task* the Lord Jesus has given me—the *task* of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

1 Timothy 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his *service*.

Acts 21:19 Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his *ministry*.

2 Timothy 4:5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your *ministry*.

Ephesians 3:7 I became a *servant* of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

1 Corinthians 3:5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only *servants* (διδάκονοι) through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

2 Corinthians 3:6 He has made us competent as *ministers* (διακόνους) of a new covenant.

2 Corinthians 6:4 Rather, as *servants* of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses.

1 Timothy 4:6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good *minister* of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and *deacons* (διακόνους).

Augsburg Confession V speaks of the ministry of the Word in the abstract, the means of grace.

Augsburg Confession, V, 1,2 That we may obtain this faith, *the Ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted*. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel.

Ut hanc fidem consequamur, *institutum est ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*.

Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott *das Predigtamt eingesetzt, Evangelium und Sakramente gegeben*.

Apology XXIV, p 404, 59-60: Because the priesthood of the New Testament is the ministry of the Spirit or an office (*Amt*) through which the Spirit works, as Paul teaches (2 Cor 3:6), it accordingly has but the one sacrifice of Christ, which is satisfactory and applied for the sins of others.... The ministry of the Spirit is that through which the Holy Spirit is efficacious in hearts.

Formula of Concord, T.D. XII, 30 II: the ministry of the Church, the Word preached and heard...

U. V. Koren (d. 1910): There is no reference in this article to the work of the public ministry, by which the office of the word is to be performed in the congregation by certain persons who have been called to it. That is discussed later in the 14th Article. Here the reference is to the essence, power, and effectual working of the means of grace (*Faith of Our Fathers*, p 118).

Francis Pieper (d. 1931): Our article tells how a person comes to faith. It is through the *Predigtamt*, which means, through the Means of Grace established by God, the Gospel and the sacraments (*Das Grundbekenntniss der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, p 17).

Adolf Hoenecke (d. 1908): We can speak of the ministry of the Word, *Predigtamt* (preaching office), abstractly, understanding the expression to refer to the means of grace. Scripture itself does that, for example, in 2 Corinthians 3:4-8, where the apostle Paul designates the law as the ministry of the letter and the gospel as the ministry of the Spirit. Article V of the Augsburg Confession also speaks of the ministry of the Word in this abstract sense (ELD, IV, p 187).

C. F. W. Walther (d. 1887): The Apology does not have Grabau's understanding according to which the office of the ministry (*Predigtamt*) is always equivalent to the office of pastor (*Pfarramt*). ...No, when our old teachers ascribe such great things to the office of the ministry, they thereby mean nothing else than the service of the Word in whatever way (*Weise*) it may come to us ("The True Visible Church," in *Essays for the Church*, I, p 102).

c) This office has been given to the church, that is, to every individual Christian as such; not in theory only, but to be put into practice.

1) Christ gave the keys to the church.

Matthew 18:17-20 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

1 Peter 2:5,9 You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to

God through Jesus Christ.⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Luther: Since the church owes its birth to the Word, is nourished and strengthened by it, it is obvious that it cannot be without the Word. If it is without the Word, it ceases to be a church. A Christian, thus, is born to the ministry of the Word in baptism (*zu dem Amt des Worts geboren ist* (“Concerning the Ministry,” *LW* 40, p 37; *SL* X, 1592-1593).

Luther: We maintain firmly that there is no other Word of God than that alone which all Christians are told to proclaim; that there is no other Baptism than that which all Christians may administer; that there is no other observance of the Lord’s Supper than that which belongs to every Christian and was instituted by Christ to be kept; also that there is no other kind of sin than that which every Christian may bind or loose, etc.... These are, however, always the priestly and the royal offices (“To The People At Prague,” *SL* X, p 1589f.).

Luther: Even though not everybody has the public office and calling, every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and whenever it is necessary. For example, father and mother should do this for their children and household; a brother, neighbor, citizen, or peasant for the other. Certainly one Christian may instruct and admonish another ignorant or weak Christian concerning the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer. And he who receives such instruction is also under obligation to accept it as God’s Word and publicly to confess it (*LW* 13, p 333).

Luther: The preaching office is no more than a public service which happens to be conferred on someone by the entire congregation, all the members of which are priests (*LW* 13, p 332).

Walther: Through holy baptism every Christian has been consecrated, ordained and installed into the ministry (*geweiht, ordinirt, eingestetzt in das Amt*). ...What good is it my friends if we highly extol the spiritual priesthood as a great privilege, but do not fulfill the obligations. What good is it to be called spiritual priests if when we come together we do not exercise the office, but rather abandon it? What good is the name without the deed? (Sermon: “Bringing Souls to Christ,” 1842; English in *Missio Apostolica* 6, 1998, p 10, 15).

This We Believe VII 7. We believe that every Christian is a priest before God (1 Peter 2:9). All believers have direct and equal access to the throne of grace through Christ, the mediator (Ephesians 2:17,18). God has given the means of grace to all believers. All Christians are to declare the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9). In this sense all Christians are ministers, or servants, of the gospel. God wants all Christians to share the message of salvation with other people (Matthew 28:19,20; 10:32).

2) When Christ committed the keys to the church, he gave no detailed instructions about the manner of their use.

John Schaller: From all of this it should be clear to us that God certainly has given no definite commands about the time, person and form of preaching as far as the vast majority of situations that call for gospel preaching are concerned. It is his concern that the gospel sound forth loudly in the world for the salvation of sinners. For this reason he provides his Christians, all of whom have been called and equipped to preach, with all kinds of opportunities to fulfill the commission of their Lord, giving one this kind of opportunity and another a different kind. And so the preaching activity of Christians each time assumes a form that corresponds to the circumstances. ... Nevertheless, Scripture does indeed speak of special forms of the evangelical preaching ministry, both in the time before Christ's birth as well as after (*WLQ*, 1981, p 41).

See the section on the Church, V, page 532 ff.

2. From the beginning of the church there were men specially appointed to discharge the duties of this one ministry publicly, as the representatives of the church (ministry *in concreto*).

a) This public ministry is of divine origin. It is a divine institution.

1) All Christians are equal before God, knowing neither superiors nor subordinates. The spirit of brotherhood must not be violated.

Matthew 23:8-11 But you are not to be called "Rabbi," for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.⁹ And do not call anyone on earth "father," for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.¹⁰ Nor are you to be called "teacher," for you have one Teacher, the Christ.¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant.

Luke 22:24-26 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.²⁵ Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves."

1 Peter 5:2,3 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours,²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours,²³ and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

2) God is a God of order. We are to conduct our affairs in an orderly way.

1 Corinthians 14:33,40 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. ⁴⁰But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Colossians 2:5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

3) Christians are not all equally qualified to perform publicly the functions of the ministry.

-a) God gives to the church people qualified for the various forms of the work required.

Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

1 Timothy 3:2-7 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Titus 1:5-9 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. ⁶ An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷ Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸ Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

-b) These gifts should be gratefully received and developed.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 7 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. ² Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ⁷ For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

1 Corinthians 12:31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

-c) These gifts should be used by the church for spiritual edification.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

Ephesians 4:8-16 This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." ⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we

will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Johann Bengel (d. 1752) comments on the significance of the word ἀγαλλιαθῆμαι (“enjoy”) in John 5:35, “John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to *enjoy* his light”: John was to be *used*, not *enjoyed*. The Jews confused the means with the end. Those who seek merely the fruit of internal or external feelings in the Word and the servants of God, and not Christ himself, make a very serious mistake (*Gnomen*, I, p 597).

4) Public ministers are appointed by God.

-a) God establishes the ministry.

Jeremiah 3:15 Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

1 Corinthians 12:28 In the church God has appointed (ἔθετο) first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave (ἔδωκεν) some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

1 Corinthians 9:14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded (διέταξεν) that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Quenstedt: God is the author of the New Testament ministry:

- I. by promising teachers to the church (Jr 3:15; 23:4; Jl 2:23);
- II. by giving what he promised (1 Cor 12:28; 2 Cor 5:18);
- III. by preserving the ministry to the end of the world (Eph 4:11);
- IV. by functioning in the office of teaching himself (He 1:1);
- V. by equipping the teachers of the church with the necessary gifts (2 Cor 3:5) (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XII, sect. I, thesis III, note, p 394).

-b) It is an error to trace the origin of the public ministry to mere expediency.

Johann Hoefling's *Grundsätze* (1852), contains much valuable material, but also the following error: As far as the ordaining of presbyters which was carried out or initiated by the apostles is concerned, it was nothing more than the fulfillment of a natural need for a leader, which becomes an imperative necessity not only for every fellowship but also for every kind of association (p 220 ff) (See the summary, Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, III, p 445-449.)

Francis Pieper: One is inclined to judge Hoefling less severely because his opponents (Muenchmeyer, Loehe, Kliefoth, etc.) taught a strongly Romanizing doctrine of the ministry, namely, that the office of the public ministry is not conferred by the call of the congregation as the original possessor of all spiritual power, but is a divine institution in the sense that it was transmitted immediately from the Apostles to their pupils, considered as a separate "ministerial order" or caste, and that this order perpetuates itself by means of the ordination. Some also spoke as if the means of grace exerted their full power and efficacy only when they were administered by men of this "order." Against this caricature of the public ministry Hoefling correctly argues that it makes the officiant a "means of grace" alongside Word and Sacrament: "The believers might see themselves with their spiritual needs referred not so much to Word and Sacrament as rather to the organ (the minister) divinely privileged to administer and distribute them. The full efficacy of the means of grace appears dependent on an external legal institution; the Holy Ghost now operates not so much in and through the means of grace as rather through the nomistic organs of their administration."...In short, Hoefling did not succeed in keeping his balance in opposing a coarse Romanizing error. Thoroughly to refute the immediate divine establishment of the public ministry as Loehe and others taught it, he thought it necessary to deny that the mediate establishment of this office through the congregation is God's ordinance or has divine command (*Christian Dogmatics*, III, p 447-448).

August Pieper: It does not follow from the spiritual priesthood of all believers that all Christians are *eo ipso* preachers for the congregation. That which all have in common, no one may take to himself ahead of the others. "No one should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments without an orderly call." Through the call to the office of preaching in the congregation the public administration of the priestly powers which are common to all are handed over to one or more individuals by a specific group of Christians. In this way the office of congregational preaching or the pastoral office comes into being. This is not to be regarded as a human, political arrangement, but as a divine ordinance. The pastoral office is mentioned in the Scriptures themselves along with the apostolate and office of evangelist as instituted (*eingerichtete*) species of the general office of preaching won and commanded by Christ. To this arrangement (*Aufrichtung*) the

Christian church of all time is ordinarily bound. Whoever despises this despises Christ (*WLQ*, 1912, p 34).

Carl Lawrenz: In contrast to Hoefling we hold on the basis of Scripture, that it is not the church but our divine Lord himself, who before the New Testament church was ever called into existence, took note of its future need, prophesying in advance that he would take care of it through the gift of the public ministry, that he has set forth the qualifications for this public ministry for us in his New Testament word and continues to give to his church men with all the needed talents required to carry out all the tasks of the public ministry (*WLQ*, 1982, p 132).

Note: Walther was also accused of being a Hoeflingite by Romanizing Lutherans. *Lehre. und Wehre*, 1858, p. 354.

This We Believe, VII 8: We believe that God has also established the public ministry of the Word (Ephesians 4:11), and it is the will of God that the church, in accordance with good order (1 Corinthians 14:40), call qualified individuals into this public ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 9:14). Such individuals minister publicly, that is, not because as individuals they possess the universal priesthood but because they are asked to do this in the name of fellow Christians (Romans 10:15). These individuals are the called servants of Christ and ministers of the gospel. They are not to be lords over God's church (1 Peter 5:3). We believe that when the church calls individuals into this public ministry, the Lord himself is acting through the church (Acts 20:28).

-c) That the public ministry is a special, God-ordained way of exercising the New Testament ministry of the Word is evident from the following points:

-1) Scripture speaks of the need for a call.

Romans 10:15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

-2) The qualifications for the ministry are established in Scripture.

1 Timothy 3:1-12 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become

conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.⁸ Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.¹¹ In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.¹² A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

-3) Called ministers are special gifts of God to his church.

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

-4) Those serving in the ministry are appointed by God.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

-5) The ministry is designated by various special names.

For example, the office of a "bishop" or overseer in 1 Timothy 3:1: Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

-6) The ministry is a means of livelihood for full-time servants of the Word.

1 Corinthians 9:7-14 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk?⁸ Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing?⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned?¹⁰ Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest.¹¹ If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we

reap a material harvest from you? ¹² If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Luke 10:7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages.

1 Timothy 5:17-18 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

Galatians 6:6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

b) There is, however, no direct word of institution for any particular form of the ministry.

1) Some claim Titus 1:5 is a specific institution of the parish pastorate.

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

2) A closer inspection will show that no divine institution of a specific form is spoken of.

-a) No command of the Lord is referred to, but a personal arrangement between Paul and his associate.

-1) Sometimes Luther is quoted to the contrary.

LW 36, 155: Whoever believes that here in Paul the Spirit of Christ is speaking and commanding will be sure to recognize this as a divine institution and ordinance, that in each city there should be several bishops, or at least one.

-2) But note Luther's point.

LW 36, 152: For this reason we are firmly convinced on the basis of the Holy Scriptures that there is not more than one office of preaching God's Word, and that this office is common to all Christians.... Since the Scriptures know of no other office of the Word of God.

LW 36, 156: The Holy Spirit appointed several bishops in one city, but each of you is over several cities, and a single pope wants to be bishop over all the cities of the world.

LW 29, p 16,17: First he gives Titus the general commission to appoint elders. Then he prescribes what kind of men they ought to be....Therefore it should be noted that it was Paul's ordinance that he should select "elders" [in the plural] in each city, and they are called bishops and elders. Therefore at the time of the apostles every city had numerous bishops. Then Christianity was in outstanding condition. This meaning of the word "bishop" disappeared, and it was subjected to very long and very distorted abuse. Now it is called the human ordinance by which a man is in charge of five cities. Every city ought to have many bishops, that is, inspectors or visitors. Such an inspector should be the parish clergyman along with the chaplain, so that they may share the duties and see how people live and what is taught. ...In every town, that is, many in each town.

-b) The words "what was left unfinished" (λείποντα) are alleged to imply the necessity of a specific form of ministry.

-1) This veiled reference is too general to draw from it a specific institution.

-2) It is sufficiently motivated in the context.

Titus 1:10ff For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group.

-c) If this was a word of institution of a specific form as the only divinely established form, then a sort of super-congregational form of church government was also instituted, and certain congregational boundaries were prescribed.

c) The public ministry and the common priesthood of all Christians are two species of the one genus, the ministry of the Word, since the same gospel is entrusted to both.

1) The public ministry is a special God-ordained way of practicing this one ministry of the gospel in the name of a group of Christians.

Luther: This is the way to distinguish between the office of preaching or the ministry and the general priesthood of all baptized Christians. The preaching office is no more than a public service which happens to be

conferred on someone by the entire congregation, all the members of which are priests (*LW* 13, p 332).

2) When anyone does not have a call to this ministry, he is a member of the Christian laity.

Augsburg Confession, XIV: Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the Sacraments unless he is regularly called.

3. The public ministry of the gospel may take on various forms, as circumstances demand.

a) Various functions and offices are mentioned in Scripture.

1) There are lists of duties and offices.

1 Timothy 4:13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach;⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

Ephesians 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

2) There are examples of duties and offices.

Shepherding and feeding

John 21:15-17 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

1 Peter 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.

Teaching and equipping

1 Timothy 3:2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.

1 Timothy 4:11 Command and teach these things.

1 Timothy 6:2 Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men (*ἀνθρώποις*) who will also be qualified to teach others.

Watching, oversight

Acts 20:28,31 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.³¹ So be on your guard!

Ruling

1 Timothy 3:5 If anyone does not know how to manage (*προστῆναι*) his own family, how can he take care of (*ἐπιμελήσεται*) God's church?

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct (*προεστῶτες*) the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Peter 5:3 ...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Rebuking

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

Titus 1:9-11 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.¹⁰ For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group.¹¹ They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain.

Titus 2:15 These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

3) However, it is not the function of the ministry in any form to decree articles of faith or to make church laws that go beyond or contrary to the Word, which is the sole source of doctrine.

Matthew 23:8 But you are not to be called “Rabbi,” for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

1 Peter 5:3 ...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Acts 15:19-21,28,29 It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.²¹ For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

Compare Galatians 2:4,5 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.⁵ We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

Apology XXVIII, p 446, 15-17 Although in the Confession we also have added how far it is lawful for them to frame traditions, namely, not as necessary services, but so that there may be order in the church, for the sake of tranquillity. And these traditions ought not to cast snares upon consciences, as though to enjoin necessary services; as Paul teaches when he says, Gal. 5: 1, “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”¹⁶¹ The use of such ordinances ought therefore to be left free,

provided that offenses be avoided, and that they be not judged to be necessary services; just as the apostles themselves ordained for the sake of good discipline very many things which have been changed with time. Neither did they hand them down in such a way that it would not be permitted to change them. For they did not dissent from their own writings, in which they greatly labor lest the church be burdened with the opinion that human rites are necessary services.^{17]} This is the simple mode of interpreting traditions, namely, that we understand them not as necessary services, and nevertheless, for the sake of avoiding offenses, we should observe them in the proper place.

b) In spite of the great diversity in the external form and in the titles of the ministry, the ministry is essentially one, since there is only one gospel.

1 Corinthians 3:5-8 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.⁸ The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

1 Corinthians 4:1, 6 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.⁶ Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

1 Peter 5:1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

c) Also today the public ministry may take different forms.

1) The most comprehensive is the pastorate.

This We Believe, VII 9: We believe that the church’s mission is to serve people with the Word and sacraments. This service is usually done in local congregations. We look upon the pastoral office as the most comprehensive form of the public ministry of the Word. Pastors are trained and called to provide such comprehensive spiritual oversight for the gathering and nurturing of souls in congregations (1 Peter 5:2).

2) We also may have, for example, head pastors, associate pastors, assistant pastors, staff ministers, school teachers, deacons, circuit pastors, missionaries, professors, and synodical executive officers.

This We Believe, VII 8b: We believe that the church has the freedom to establish various forms within the one ministry of the Word, such as pastors, Christian teachers, and staff ministers. Through its call, the church in Christian liberty designates the place and scope of service.

3) It is instructive, illustrating the flexibility of forms of the ministry, to compare the present pastorate with the forms of the office as developed in Corinth and other New Testament congregations.

1 Corinthians 12:1-14 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ...⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. ¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Ephesians 4:11 It was [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants (δούλοι) of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.

1 Timothy 3:1,8 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ⁸ Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Luther, comparing preaching arrangements at Corinth with those he practiced in Wittenberg: But I would not be in favor of restoring this custom [1 Cor 14:29] and doing away with the pulpit. ... For St. Paul is not so rigidly concerned about the one method, but he is concerned about order and decent procedure, and gives this method as an example.

We had better keep our custom in preaching since it more than the other will keep order among our stupid folk. In the days of the Apostle the custom of prophets sitting alongside each other was possible. For it was a habit of long standing and practiced daily among a well-disciplined people who had inherited it from Moses through the Levitical priesthood. It would hardly do to restore the practice among such uncouth, undisciplined, shameless people as ours (*LW* 40, p 392f)

Walther, “Address at the Installation of Two Academy Professors”:
Theme: What should comfort us when men who have prepared themselves for the office of saving souls, yes, who have already carried on that office with blessing, take over the teaching office at our educational institution at the call of the church? In answer, we should be comforted by this: 1.) that also their office is the office of our God; 2.) that also their concern is the concern of our Lord. “God has really ordained only one office, namely, the office which in his name gathers, builds, governs, cares for, and preserves his church on earth” (*Brosamen*, p 346ff).

Chemnitz discusses various forms of the public ministry and then says: 1) that there is no command in the Word of God, which or how many such ranks or orders there should be; 2) that there were not at the time of the apostles in all churches and at all times the same and the same number of ranks or orders, as can be clearly ascertained from the epistles of Paul, written to various churches; 3) that there was not, at the time of the apostles, such a division of these ranks, but repeatedly one and the same person held and performed all the duties which belong to the ministry, as is clear from the apostolic history. Therefore such orders were free at the time of the apostles and were observed for the sake of good order, decorum, and edification, except that at that time certain special gifts, such as tongues, prophecies, apostolate, and miracles, were bestowed on certain persons by God.... This example of the apostles the primitive church imitated for the same reason and in similar liberty. For the grades of the duties of the ministry were distributed, not however in identically the same way as in the church at Corinth or in that at Ephesus, but according to the circumstances obtaining in each church. From this one can gather what freedom there was in the distribution of the ranks (*Examination*, Part II, p 685, Kramer translation).

Carl Lawrenz (d. 1989): In his “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper,” for example, Luther says: “All who are engaged in the clerical office (*Pfarramt*) or ministry of the word are in a holy, proper, good and God-pleasing order and estate.” That the public ministry was a very wide and comprehensive concept for Luther, covering every form and phase of the ministry of the word can be exemplified from a quotation from his “Sermon on Keeping Children in School.” There Luther says: “The estate I am thinking of is rather one which has the office of preaching and the service of the word and sacrament and which imparts the Spirit and salvation, blessings that cannot be attained by any amount of pomp and pageantry. It includes the work of pastors (*Pfarramt*), teachers, preachers, lectors, priests (whom men call chaplains),

sacristans, schoolmasters, and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons.” It is significant that Walther offers also this quotation as he supplies support from Luther’s writings for Thesis I. Here Luther uses *Pfarramt* as a species of the genus public ministry. This gives us reason to conclude that Walther was not unaware of Luther’s understanding of the wide scope of the public ministry nor in disagreement with it (*WLQ*, 1982, p 126-127).

d) From the fact that the functions of all public ministers are not the same it does not follow that there is a divinely established difference of rank.

1) The idea of divinely established hierarchy in the church is foreign to Scripture.

Matthew 18:1-4 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”² He called a little child and had him stand among them.³ And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Mark 9:33-35 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?”³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.³⁵ Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

Mark 10:42-45 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Parallel Luke 22:24-26.

Quenstedt: In our churches we retain ranking (*ordinem*) among the ministers, so that some are bishops, some presbyters, some deacons, because also in the apostolic and early church there were distinct ranks (orders) of ministers, and indeed they were divinely instituted (*divinitus constituti*)(1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). Meanwhile we say that the same power of the ministry, consisting of the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, and the power of jurisdiction, consisting in the use of the keys, belongs to all ministers of the church (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XII, sect. I, thesis XIV, note, VI, p 396).

2) The area of responsibility that a minister has is spelled out in the call.

Acts 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I

have called them.”

Acts 22:21 Then the Lord said to me, “Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.”

Galatians 2:7-8 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews.⁸ For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles.

3) The Roman Catholic demands acceptance of three ranks: bishops, priests, and deacons.

Council of Trent, Sess. XXIII, Can. 6: If anyone says that in the Catholic church there is not a hierarchy instituted by divine ordination, which consists of bishops, presbyters, and ministers, let him be damned.

Can. 7: If anyone says that the bishops are not superior to presbyters or that they do not have the authority to confirm and ordain, or that the authority which they have belongs both to them and to the presbyters, or that ordination conferred by them without the call and consent of the people or secular authorities is not valid or that those who are not rightly ordained nor sent by canonical and ecclesiastical authority, but who come from elsewhere, are legitimate ministers of the Word and the sacraments, let him be damned.

Dominus Jesus (2000): Section 17. Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. ...On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not Churches in the proper sense.

Francis A. Sullivan, S.J.: Most Christian scholars from both sides of this divide agree that the threefold structure of ministry, with one bishop among a number of presbyters and deacons in each church, does not appear in the New Testament.... Hardly anyone doubts that the church of Rome was led by a group of presbyters for at least a part of the second century (*From Apostles to Bishops*, p 217). No doubt proving that bishops were the successors of the apostles by divine institution would be easier if the New Testament clearly stated that before they died the apostles had appointed a single bishop to lead each of the churches they founded (p. 223).

- e) **Note that the order of headship established by God at creation prevents women from functioning publicly in the church in any way which would violate this principle of headship. Women do possess the priesthood of all believers and can and should exercise this priesthood privately and may serve publicly in the church in any way that does not violate this principle.**

1 Corinthians 11:3-16 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.⁵ And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved.⁶ If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head.⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man;⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.¹⁰ For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.¹¹ In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.¹³ Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?¹⁴ Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him,¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.¹⁶ If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

1 Timothy 2:11-15 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.¹² do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man (*διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ ἀυθεντεῖν ἄνδρός*); she must be silent.¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

1 Corinthians 14:33-37 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints,³⁴ women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.³⁵ If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.³⁶ Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?³⁷ If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.

Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, 54-56, p 91: So Paul ordains, 1 Cor. 11:5, that women should cover their heads in the congregation, 1 Cor. 14:30, that interpreters be heard in order in the church, etc.^{55]} It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquillity, so far that one do not offend another, that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion, 1 Cor. 14:4; comp. Phil. 2:14;^{56]} but so that consciences be not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to judge that they sin when they break them without offense to others; as no one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head uncovered provided only that no offense be given.

Luther: Paul forbids women to preach in the congregation where men are present who are skilled in speaking.... Paul did not forbid this out of his own devices, but appealed to the law, which says women are to be subject....

Therefore order, discipline, and respect demand that women keep silent when men speak; but if no man were to preach, then it would be necessary for the women to preach (*LW*, 36, p 151f).

Luther: The second function, to baptize, they themselves [the Roman Catholics] have by usage allowed in cases of necessity even to ordinary women, so that it is hardly regarded any more as a sacramental function. Whether they wish or not we deduce from their own logic that all Christians, and they alone, even women, are priests, without tonsure and episcopal “character.” For in baptizing we proffer the life-giving Word of God, which renews souls and redeems from death and sins. To baptize is incomparably greater than to consecrate bread and wine, for it is the greatest office in the church—the proclamation of the Word of God. So when women baptize, they exercise the function of priesthood legitimately, and do it not as a private act, but as a part of the public ministry of the church which belongs only to the priesthood (*LW* 40, p 23).

Walther: Women as well as men, young as well as old—all Christians are spiritual priests and teachers of the word (Sermon: “Bringing Souls to Christ,” 1842; English in *Missio Apostolica* 6, 1998, p 13).

This We Believe VII 10: We believe that women may participate in offices and activities of the public ministry except where that work involves authority over men (1 Timothy 2:11,12). This means that women may not serve as pastors nor participate in assemblies of the church in ways that exercise authority over men (1 Corinthians 11:3; 14:33-35).

LCMS: The Synod affirms that women on the basis of the clear teaching of Scripture may not serve in the office of pastor nor exercise any of its distinctive functions, and that women may serve in humanly established offices in the church as long as the functions of these offices do not make them eligible to carry out “official functions [that] would involve public accountability for the function of the pastoral office (Resolution 3-08A, 2004 Convention).

Ted Peters (ELCA): Given all I have said about eschatology and the open future, it is logical for me to stress that—regarding ordination of women as well as of gay and lesbian persons—there is room to be creative and to make changes even where traditions have long been ensconced (*God and the World’s Future*, p 316).

- 4. The purpose of the public ministry is to build up the church.**
- a) It is the edification of the church by serving with the means of grace and by equipping others to serve.**

1 Corinthians 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

Ephesians 4:11-14 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son

of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

¹¹Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, ¹²πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ

b) Therefore, ministers, recognizing their great responsibility, should discharge the duties of their office to the best of their ability.

Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

1 Timothy 4:12-16 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Timothy 5:21 I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

1 Peter 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

c) Similarly, congregations should be diligent that the training of future ministers is as thorough as possible.

1 Timothy 5:22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men (πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις) who will also be qualified to teach others.

II. No one may assume the functions of the public ministry except through a legitimate call.

1. A call is necessary.

a) The necessity is expressed as an axiom: *nisi rite vocatus*.

Romans 10:15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Hebrews 5:4-6 No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was.⁵ So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”⁶ And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

Jeremiah 23:21 I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied.

Augsburg Confession, XIV Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called.

August Pieper: The Lord has purchased the office of the Word, the New Testament preaching office, through his blood and expressly commanded it for his congregation. Along with the gospel he has entrusted his believers with the office of the keys, which is to be used by them. They should practice it in the whole world. The public preaching office is both inwardly and outwardly God’s command and order for the Christian church. But it does not follow from the spiritual priesthood of all believers that all Christians are *eo ipso* preachers for the congregation. That which all have in common, no one may take to himself ahead of the others. “No one should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments without an orderly call” (*WLQ*, 1912, p 33).

b) The need for a call is clear from the fact that all Christians are brothers. The minister represents all who have called him in the public discharge of certain duties which were originally given to all.

1) Individuals may represent the church on a special occasion.

Acts 15:2,25,27 This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.

2 Corinthians 8:18,19 And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel.¹⁹ What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help.

2) They may represent them in preaching the Word to others.

-a) It is the nature of every Christian to share the Word with others.

Acts 4:20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

Acts 8:1, 4 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ⁴Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Acts 11:19-21 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 4:13 It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak.

-b) But individuals may also be appointed to represent certain churches.

Acts 8:14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.

Acts 11:22 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

Acts 13:1-3 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:26,27 From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. ²⁷ On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

3) Called ministers have a special relationship with those who have called them.

-a) Bonds of love unite all Christians in congregations.

Colossians 3: 12-14 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

-b) The most intimate relation exists between pastor and flock.

1 Thessalonians 2:6-8, 11, 12 As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, ⁷ but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸ We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹²encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

-c) It would be contrary to love to usurp the ministry to oneself without the consent (call) of the congregation.

-d) On the other hand, this relationship, once established, may not ruthlessly be severed. Just causes for dismissing a called worker are false doctrine, neglect of duty, inability to perform the duties of the office, and moral disqualification.

Chemnitz: Moreover, just as there is a lawful method for calling someone into the ministry of the church, so also there is a lawful method for removing someone or for transferring him from one church to another. ...In our churches many also do not understand this matter correctly. For just as, when one hires a servant, he has the power to dismiss him when he wishes, so some think that they have authority also to dismiss a preacher, though they have no just cause. ...Just as the one God properly claims for himself the right to call even when the call takes place mediately, so also is it properly of God to remove a person from the ministry. Therefore, as long as God endures in the ministry his minister who teaches correctly and lives blamelessly, the church does not have authority to remove someone else's servant. But when he no longer edifies the church by doctrine or life, but destroys it, then God himself removes him. ...And then also the church not only can but also should remove such a one from the ministry (*Loci*, Pt III, Ch IV, Sect I, Vol. II, Preus translation, p 703).

2. Some men were called by God directly (*vocatio immediata*).

a) Scripture gives examples of such calls.

1) Prophets and apostles were called by God.

Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Jeremiah 1:4-10 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” ⁶ “Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” ⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. ⁹ Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Exodus 3:10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.

Matthew 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Mark 3:14 He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.

Matthew 4:21-22 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

Acts 22:21 Then the Lord said to me, “Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.”

2) Paul was very emphatic in pointing to his direct call when his apostolic authority was questioned.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

2 Corinthians 12:12 The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.

3) Often those who received a direct call could substantiate their claim by signs and miracles.

Exodus 4:1-9 Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you’?” ² Then the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” “A staff,” he replied. ³

The LORD said, “Throw it on the ground.” Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. ⁴ Then the LORD said to him, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.” So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. ⁵ “This,” said the LORD, “is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you.” ⁶ Then the LORD said, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow. ⁷ “Now put it back into your cloak,” he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh. ⁸ Then the LORD said, “If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second. ⁹ But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.”

Deuteronomy 18:21,22 You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?” ²² If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, ² and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, “Let us follow other gods” (gods you have not known) “and let us worship them,” ³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵ That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

Acts 14:3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

2 Corinthians 12:12 The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.

4) The direct call did not confer generically different functions on the apostles. All pastors have the same means of grace and treat each other as brothers.

-a) Note, for example, the brotherly relationship between Paul and Timothy and others.

2 Timothy 1:6,11,14 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ¹¹And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Colossians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother...

1 Thessalonians 3:2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.

1 Peter 5:1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.

-b) The apostles, however, possessed the special gift of inspiration and extra-congregational authority in the church.

1 Corinthians 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

2 Peter 1:19-21 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

John Brug: The apostles are distinguished from all other ministers of the gospel by being given the special title of Apostle by Jesus, by having a unique role as a foundation of the church, by being assigned a special role as leaders of Israel, and by being specially designated witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. They are distinguished from subsequent ministers of the gospel by a direct call from Christ, by the special gifts of healing and power over demons, and by the gift of inspiration. These gifts were, however, shared with contemporaries of the apostles, who were in direct contact with Christ or the apostles. With the possible exception of Ananias, only the apostles were able to give these gifts to others. The apostles had a special calling as world missionaries. We have a detailed account of how that calling was fulfilled for only one apostle, Paul. We do not know if the other apostles were missionaries-at-large or whether they had territorial assignments from Christ, from the church, or by mutual agreement (*WLQ* Summer 1995, p 176).

3. Ministers of the gospel today are called by Christ through the church (*vocatio mediata*).

a) Scripture speaks of mediate calls.

1) Paul, recognizing a call “by men,” appointed ministers and instructed his disciples to do the same.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed (*χειροτονήσαντες*) elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint (*καταστήσης*) elders in every town, as I directed you.

1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when (*μετά*) the body of elders laid their hands on you.

2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through (*διά*) the laying on of my hands.

2) The right of congregations to appoint ministers is implied in their possession of the keys.

Matthew 18:18 I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

1 Corinthians 3:21 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours.

Ephesians 4:8,11 This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.”¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

Smalcald Articles, Tractate, 67-69, p 522: For wherever the church is, there is the authority to administer the gospel. Therefore it is necessary for the church to retain the authority to call, elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift which in reality is given to the church, which no human power can wrest from the church, as Paul also testifies to the Ephesians when he says, Eph 4:8, He ascended, He gave gifts to men. And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the church

pastors and teachers, and adds that such are given for the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Hence, wherever there is a true church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity even a layman absolves and becomes the minister and pastor of another; as Augustine narrates the story of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the catechumen, who after baptism then absolved the baptizer.^{68]} Here belong the statements of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the church, and not merely to certain persons, Matt. 18:20, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, etc.”^{69]} Lastly, the statement of Peter also confirms this, 1 Pet. 2:9, You are a royal priesthood. These words pertain to the true church, which certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers since it alone has the priesthood.

Smalcald Articles, Tractate, 72, p 524: From all these things it is clear that the church retains the right to elect and ordain ministers. And the wickedness and tyranny of bishops afford cause for schism and discord, therefore, if the bishops either are heretics or will not ordain suitable persons, the churches are in duty bound before God, according to divine law, to ordain for themselves pastors and ministers. Even though this be now called an irregularity or schism, it should be known that the godless doctrine and tyranny of the bishops is chargeable with it, because Paul (Gal. 1:7f), enjoins that bishops who teach and defend a godless doctrine and godless services should be regarded as accursed.

3) Ministers so appointed have been appointed by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

4) Exercising the functions which were originally entrusted to the whole church, ministers are the servants of God and of the congregation.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.

1 Corinthians 4:1,6 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.⁶ Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

1 Corinthians 3:5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

Colossians 1:25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness.

2 Corinthians 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

2 Corinthians 2:10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,

1 Peter 5:3 ...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

b) No mode of election and calling is prescribed in Scripture.

1) Scripture mentions mediate calls.

-a) Two “elections” are described.

Acts 6:1-6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.³ Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 1:15-26 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)¹⁶ and said, “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—¹⁷ he was one of our number and shared in this ministry.”¹⁸ (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.¹⁹ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)²⁰ “For,” said Peter, “it is written in the book of Psalms, “‘May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’ and, “‘May another take his place of leadership.’²¹ Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,²² beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”²³ So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.²⁴ Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen²⁵ to take over this apostolic

ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.”²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias (ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κληρὸς ἐπὶ Μαθθ(αν)); so he was added to the eleven apostles. [There is some question if the reference is to casting lots or voting, *WLQ*, Summer 98, p 212-214.]

-b) Others are merely noted in passing.

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed (χειροτονήσαντες) elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint (καταστήσης) elders in every town, as I directed you.

2) Sometimes it may be expedient for the church to delegate the actual calling to a committee or board, for example in the calling of professors and mission workers and the assigning of seminary graduates.

3) It would be disorderly and inconsiderate if a congregation while calling did not avail itself of the advice of experienced pastors, for example, the district officials, as is the agreement in our synod.

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

Smalcald Articles Tractate, 13,14, p 506: Again the Council of Nicea determined that bishops should be elected by their own churches, in the presence of some neighboring bishop or of several.¹⁴⁾ The same was observed for a long time, not only in the East, but also in the West and in the Latin churches, as Cyprian and Augustine testify.

4. In opposition to the scriptural doctrine of the call we find two extremes.

a) Roman Catholics assert the authority of bishops to assign pastors without the consent of the congregation.

Council of Trent, Sess. XXIII, Can. 7: If anyone says that the bishops are not superior to presbyters or that they do not have the authority to confirm and ordain, or that the authority which they have belongs both to them and to the presbyters, or that ordination conferred by them without the call and consent of the people or secular authorities is not valid or that those who are not rightly ordained nor sent by canonical and ecclesiastical authority, but who

come from elsewhere, are legitimate ministers of the Word and the sacraments, let him be damned. Cp. 4: Moreover, the most holy Synod teaches that in the ordination of bishops, priests and other clergy neither the consent, call, or authority of the people or of any secular authority or magistrate is required in such a way that ordination without these would be invalid.

b) Enthusiasts deny the necessity of the call.

Racovian Catechism: Do not those who teach in the church and who watch over the upholding and preserving of order need to be sent in some special way? By no means, for they now bring no new or previously unheard doctrine. But what do you say about these apostolic words, “How shall they preach except they be sent” (Ro 10:15)? Since the preaching of present-day teachers is not of the same kind as that of apostolic times, as we taught a little earlier, a sending of the same kind is by no means necessary for this present-day preaching (505, 506).

c) The Confessions reject both extremes.

Apology XII, p 254, 10-13 Nor do we have another priesthood like the Levitical,¹¹ as the Epistle to the Hebrews sufficiently teaches. But if ordination be understood as applying to the ministry of the Word, we are not unwilling to call ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God’s command and glorious promises, Rom. 1:16, “The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.” Likewise, Is. 55:11, “So shall My Word be that goes forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.”¹² If ordination be understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. For the church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in the ministry¹³ And it is of advantage, so far as can be done, to adorn the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical men, who dream that the Holy Spirit is given not through the Word, but because of certain preparations of their own, if they sit unoccupied and silent in obscure places, waiting for illumination, as the Enthusiasts formerly taught, and the Anabaptists now teach.

5. Ordination is not necessary for conferring the office, which is conferred by the call.

a) “Ordination” (that is, laying on of hands) is frequently referred to in Scripture. Note: This laying on of hands is not limited to pastors. See *WLQ*, Fall 1995, p 267-269.

Acts 6:6 They presented these men [the deacons] to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 13:3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Compare Acts 14:26 From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

1 Timothy 5:22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when (*μετα*) the body of elders laid their hands on you.

2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through (*δια*) the laying on of my hands.

- b) Ordination or installation is a public declaration and testimonial that the called person possesses the required qualifications and the call was properly executed. It is a liturgical form for recognizing fitness for office and the legitimacy of the call and for invoking God's blessing on the minister.**

Smalcald Articles, Tractate, 70, p 524: And this also a most common custom of the church testifies. For formerly the people elected pastors and bishops. Then came a bishop, either of that church or a neighboring one, who confirmed the one elected by the laying on of hands, and ordination was nothing else than such a ratification.

Chemnitz: Therefore, although ordination does not make the call, yet, if someone has been legitimately called, then that ceremony is a declaration and public confirmation that the call which preceded it is legitimate (*Loci*, Pt III, Ch IV, Sect I, p 137; Preus translation, II, p 705).

- c) It is an confusing to ordain a person who has not been called (*ordinatio absoluta*).**

Chemnitz: But what we have said above about the apostolic calling, that it should stretch into the whole world, we cannot say also now about those who are called mediately. For teachers, pastors, bishops, and presbyters are called to certain churches and do not have authority to teach everywhere or in all churches. Thus in Acts 14:23 elders are ordained for individual churches, and in Titus 1:5 Titus is left in Crete to establish churches in every city. And thus God, through a special call, ordinarily shows where he wants someone's labor to be used. Therefore by virtue of this call they do not have authority to teach in other churches to which they do not have a special call. Hence in the Council of Chalcedon, in Canon 6, and in Gratian, Canon 16 [*CIC*, p. 256, dist. 70], it states that absolutely no one should be ordained except to a specific and particular church (*Loci*, Pt III, Ch IV, Sect I, Vol. II, Preus translation, p 703).

H. Orton Wiley: The Scriptures clearly teach that the early church ordained elders or presbyters, by a formal setting apart to the office and work of the ministry. While it may be true that no particular form is prescribed, it seems evident from numerous references that the elders were set apart by the imposition of hands. Furthermore, it is evident from the Scriptures that the power of ordination rested in the eldership itself; and that all candidates were to be adjudged as worthy or unworthy of the office only by those who had been themselves ordained. Ordination, therefore, is to be regarded as in some sense, a divinely authorized and prescribed form of investiture or inauguration to a particular order. But ordination does not make the elder an officer in a

particular church. This can be done only as he is elected by the church, and freely accepts this election. Thus, the eldership is an order of the ministry, from which only pastors can be elected, but until so elected they are not pastors of particular churches. . . . We may safely maintain, therefore, that there is one order in the ministry, but many and various offices (*Christian Theology*, p 135f)

d) Roman Catholics falsely claim that ordination is a sacrament conferring an indelible character. The Orthodox view is similar.

Council of Trent, Sess. XXIII, Can. 3: If anyone says that order (“holy orders”) or holy ordination is not truly and properly a sacrament, instituted by the Lord Christ, or that it is a certain human invention thought up by men unskilled in ecclesiastical affairs, or that it is only a ceremony by which ministers of the Word and the sacraments are chosen, let him be damned.

Council of Trent Sess. XXIII, ch. 4: Since in the sacrament of ordination . . . a recognized official rank (*character*) is impressed which cannot be erased or taken away, the holy Synod rightly condemns the opinion of those who assert that those who were once correctly ordained can again become laymen if they no longer carry out the ministry of the Word of God. *Can. 4*: If anyone says that through holy ordination the Holy Spirit is not given . . . or that through it a recognized official rank (*character*) is not impressed, or that he who was once a priest can again become a layman, let him be damned.

Pomazansky (Orthodox): Thus the Church hierarchy is composed of the three degrees. None of the three stages can be seized solely by one’s personal desire; they are given by the Church, and the appointment to them is performed by the blessing of God through the ordination of a bishop (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, p 251).

Apology XIII, p 310, 11-12 But if ordination be understood as applying to the ministry of the Word, we are not unwilling to call ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God’s command and glorious promises. . . .¹²¹ If ordination be understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. For the church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry.

Chemnitz: This reminder must, however, be added, that the rite of ordination must be distinguished from the ceremony of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, for ordination is not a sacrament in the same way as Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The difference is plain. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are means or instruments through which God applies and seals the promise of reconciliation or forgiveness. . . . There is therefore a difference between the promises which are added to ordination and those which are added to baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Besides, there is also a difference in the ceremony or external rite. For in baptism and the Lord’s Supper the Son of God himself prescribed and commanded a certain external element, a certain ceremony or rite. In ordination, however, such as we now understand it, Christ himself applied an external sign just once, when on the day of his resurrection he breathed on his disciples (John 20:22). He did not, however, add a command that the church

should imitate that rite of breathing upon the ministers at their ordination. Now the ministry of the Word and the sacraments has divine promises, and the prayer at ordination rests on these, but these promises are not to be tied to the rite of the imposition of hands, about which there is neither a command of Christ nor such a promise as there is about baptism and the Lord's Supper. This reminder must be added, because the papalists contend that ordination is truly and properly a sacrament of the New Testament, just as are baptism and the Lord's Supper (*Examination*, II, Ninth Topic, Section III, Kramer translation p 694-695).

e) Some Lutherans have a Romanizing view of ordination.

Grabau and the Buffalo Synod: Ordination is a part of the divine ordinance by which a person is legitimately taken into the ministry ("3rd Synodical Report, p 7).

David Scaer (LCMS): I personally find it very difficult to designate as a human rite or adiaphoron any ceremony in which God is the Giver and the Holy Spirit is the recipient [sic], which can only be administered under certain stringent conditions, which carries with it a threat, which makes the acting participant in the rite responsible for the activities of the recipient of the rite, and which gives the recipient a gift which remains (*Ordination: Divine Rite or Human Ordinance*, p 12).

Office of the Church: An Orientation by the theological commission of SELK (1995): [Christ] himself calls into this office even today through his church by the rite of ordination (p 20). He irreversibly takes the office-holder with his whole life for this charge (p 20). In ordination, the ordinand receives the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands to equip him for ministry. This petitioned gift is effectively given, not simply prayed for (p 23).

Adolf Hoenecke: Many Lutherans walk in the footsteps of the papacy when they take away from the church the right to call and have the preacher become a preacher through ordination as a sacrament, not through the call. That is what they do when...to a greater or lesser degree, they ascribe to ordination decisive importance and efficacy, so only through ordination does anyone become a pastor. Their reason is that the office actually rest with the incumbents of the office, and thus they are the ones who confer it on the called person. In this connection several go so far as to attribute to ordination sacramental value and the effect of impressing on the recipient a permanent mark (*ELD*, IV, p 204).

6. The Antichrist

I. Holy Scripture prophesies the coming of antichrists and one great Antichrist.

1. Adversaries of Christ will arise.

a) All people are either friends or opponents of Christ.

Matthew 12:30 He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. Parallel Luke 11: 23

b) Included among the enemies of Christ are some people who are externally members of the church.

1) Heretics and schismatics, who divide the church.

Titus 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.

Matthew 7:15 Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

1 Timothy 1:3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer.

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching,⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions⁵ and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

2) Unionists and syncretists, who mix false doctrine with the truth.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."¹⁷ "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

Jude 4, 12-13 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.¹² These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—

twice dead. ¹³ They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

Exodus 23:32,33 Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods. ³³ Do not let them live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

3) Pseudo-Christ, who claim to be Christ.

Matthew 24:5,24 For many will come in my name, claiming, “I am the Christ” and will deceive many. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. Parallel Mark 13:22.

Luke 21:8 He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them.”

4) Antichrists, who usurp Christ’s place.

1 John 2:18,22 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ²² Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:3 But every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

2 John 7 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.

c) They oppose Christ while pretending to preach his name.

1) Christ’s instructions are to hold to the truth.

Matthew 28:20 [Teach] them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

John 8:31,32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God

provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

2) **Their methods spread falsehood.**

1 Timothy 6:3-5 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴ he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵ and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

2. **One of these enemies is called the Antichrist *par excellence*.**

a) **He is clearly distinguished from ordinary antichrists.**

1 John 2:18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist (*ἀντίχριστος*, no article, capitalization added) is coming (*ἔρχεται*), even now many antichrists have come (*γεγόνασιν*). This is how we know it is the last hour.

Hollaz: The name “antichrist” is used 1) in a general way for any heretics who disseminate doctrines that are false and opposed to the doctrine of Christ and stubbornly fight for these.... These are commonly called “little antichrists” and 2) in a special way and *κατ’ ἐξοχήν* for that outstanding adversary of Christ ... whom for the sake of differentiation we call “the great Antichrist” (*Exam. Pt III, Sect. II, Cap.X, p 1270*).

Note: The decision to favor John’s name “Antichrist” rather than Paul’s name “Man of Sin” was made by the early church fathers.

b) **The Antichrist is presented under various names.**

1) **He is called the Man of Sin or Lawlessness.**

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness [variant: sin] is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁵ Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷ For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in

accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,¹⁰ and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

2) More figuratively, he is described as the Little Horn, the King of the North, the Beast, and the Great Prostitute.

Daniel 7, selected verses: ⁷ After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.¹¹ Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire.¹² (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)¹⁶ I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things:¹⁷ “The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth.”¹⁹ Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.²⁰ I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.²¹ As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,²² until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.²³ He gave me this explanation: “The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.²⁴ The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.²⁵ He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.²⁶ But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.²⁷ Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”

Daniel 11, selected verses: ¹¹ Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large

army, but it will be defeated. ¹³ For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped. ¹⁵ Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. ...³⁶The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. ³⁷ He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. ³⁸ Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price. ⁴⁰ At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. ⁴¹ He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. ⁴² He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. ⁴⁴ But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

Revelation 13:11-18: Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. ¹² He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³ And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. ¹⁴ Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶ He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, ¹⁷ so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. ¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

Revelation 17:1-18: One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. ² With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with

the wine of her adulteries.”³ Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns.⁴ The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.⁵ This title was written on her forehead: Mystery Babylon The Great The Mother Of Prostitutes And Of The Abominations Of The Earth.⁶ I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.⁷ Then the angel said to me: “Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns.⁸ The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.⁹ “This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.¹⁰ They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while.¹¹ The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.¹² “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast.¹³ They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast.¹⁴ They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”¹⁵ Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages.¹⁶ The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.¹⁷ For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God’s words are fulfilled.¹⁸ The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

II. The Pope in Rome is the prophesied Antichrist.

1. He shows the characteristics by which Antichrist is to be known.

a) He is a “man of sin.”

1) Paul calls the Antichrist: “man of sin/man of lawlessness,” “son of perdition.”

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. *ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας*

2) His sin is not ordinary sin.

-a) It is a “falling away,” rebellion (ἀποστασία) against the revealed truth. He is against Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

-b) It is a usurpation of divine authority. He takes Christ's place.

Note: The Greek preposition *ἀντί* not only means “against” but also “instead of,” so that “Antichrist” denotes both an enemy of Christ and a “substitute Christ.”

-1) The Antichrist opposes Christ in both church and state.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God (ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεόν) or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

-2) His main sphere of operation, however, is the church.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple (εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ), proclaiming himself to be God.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

-c) His is a rebellion in which he acts like God.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God (ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν ὅτι ἔστιν θεός).

Compare Ezekiel 28:2 Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘In the pride of your heart you say, “I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.” But you are a man and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god.’”

Smalcald Articles, Tractate, 40: Moreover, it is manifest, in the first place, that the Pope rules in the Church, and by the pretext of ecclesiastical authority and of the ministry has established for himself this kingdom. For he assigns as a pretext these words: “I will give to you the keys.” Secondly, the doctrine of the Pope conflicts in many ways with the gospel, and thirdly the Pope assumes to himself divine authority in a threefold manner. First, because he takes to himself the right to change the doctrine of Christ and services instituted by God, and wants his own doctrine and his own services to be observed as divine; secondly, because he takes to himself the power not only of binding and loosing in this life, but also the jurisdiction over souls after this life; thirdly, because the Pope does not want to be judged by the church or by any one, and puts his own authority ahead of the decision of councils and the entire church. But to be unwilling to be judged by the church or by any one is to make oneself God.

b) These passages paint a portrait of the pope.

1) He is a man of sin.

-a) The secret of his power is the sin-troubled conscience.

-b) Instead of relieving consciences, he fastens burdens on them by his false doctrines of justification, repentance, purgatory, etc.

-c) He increases sin by burdening consciences with his ordinances and prohibitions.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ²Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. ³They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

-d) He is thus the archtypical representative of the sin-principle in humanity—negatively as unbelief, positively as *opinio legis*.

2) The pope’s sin is apostasy.

-a) He curses justification by grace alone by faith alone, the central doctrine of the gospel.

Council of Trent. Sess. VI, Can. 11: If anyone says that men are justified either alone by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or alone by the remission of sins, to the exclusion of that grace and love, which is infused into their hearts by the Holy Spirit

and inheres in them, or that the grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God, let him be damned.

-b) The pope claims to be Christ's vicar (substitute) on earth.

-1) Christ emphatically taught the brotherhood of all Christians.

Matthew 23:8-12 But you are not to be called "Rabbi," for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.⁹ And do not call anyone on earth "father," for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.¹⁰ Nor are you to be called "teacher," for you have one Teacher, the Christ.¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant.¹² For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Mark 9:33-35 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?"³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.³⁵ Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Mark 10:42-45 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Parallel Luke 22:24-26

-2) The pope contends that he is supreme and infallible.

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, Cp. 1: [He is] himself the vicar of God on earth.

Tridentine Profession of Faith (1564): I acknowledge the Holy and Apostolic Roman Church as the mother and teacher of all churches, and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman pope as the successor of blessed Peter, prince of apostles, and the vicar of (substitute for) Jesus Christ.

Vatican I, Decree on Primacy (1870): And so, if any one says that the Roman pontiff has only the office of inspection or direction, but not the full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, not only in matters that pertain to faith and morals, but also in matters that pertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the whole world, or if anyone says that he has only a more important part and not the complete fullness of this supreme power; or if anyone says that this power is not ordinary and immediate either over each

and every Church or over each and every one of the pastors and the faithful: let him be anathema.

Vatican II: All this teaching about the institution, the perpetuity, the force and reason for the sacred primacy of the Roman pontiff and of his infallible teaching authority, this sacred Synod again proposes to be firmly believed by all the faithful. (*Documents*, p 38).

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Par. 882: The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful. "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.

Par. 883: The college or body of bishops has no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, as its head. As such, this college has supreme and full authority over the universal Church; but this power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman Pontiff.

-c) The pope claims infallibility in decreeing articles of faith and rules of conduct as a divine prerogative.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Par. 891: The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful who confirms his brethren in the faith, he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals.... The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium, above all in an Ecumenical Council. When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine for belief as being divinely revealed, and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions must be adhered to with the obedience of faith. This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself. Par. 892: Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles, teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and, in a particular way, to the bishop of Rome, pastor of the whole Church, when, without arriving at an infallible definition and without pronouncing in a "definitive manner," they propose in the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium a teaching that leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals. To this ordinary teaching the faithful are to adhere to it with religious assent which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it.

Note: The Orthodox Church makes the same claims of hierarchical supremacy and infallibility for its bishops and patriarchs, who are antichrists.

Timothy Ware (Kallistos): Unlike Protestantism, Orthodoxy insists upon the hierarchical structure of the Church, upon the Apostolic Succession, the episcopate, and the priesthood; it asks the saints for their prayers and intercedes for the departed. Thus far Rome and Orthodoxy agree—but where Rome thinks in terms of the supremacy and the universal jurisdiction of the Pope, Orthodoxy thinks in terms of the five Patriarchs and of the Ecumenical council; where Rome stresses papal infallibility, Orthodox stress the infallibility of the Church as a whole (*The Orthodox Church*, p 239).

The Orthodox Church is a hierarchical Church. An essential element in its structure is the Apostolic Succession of bishops. “The dignity of the bishop is so necessary in the Church,” wrote Dositheus, “that without him neither the Church nor the name Christian could exist or be spoken of at all. . . . He is a living image of God on earth. . . and a fountain of all the sacraments of the catholic church, through which we obtain salvation.” “If any are not with the bishop,” said Cyprian, “they are not in the Church.” At his election and consecration an Orthodox bishop is endowed with the threefold power of (1) ruling, (2) teaching, and (3) celebrating the sacraments (*The Orthodox Church*, p 248-249).

-d) The pope demands submission to himself under penalty of eternal damnation. He claims that the Catholic Church is the only church in which one can be saved.

Boniface VIII (*Unam Sanctam*, 1302): We are compelled with a firm faith to believe [in] the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church itself and to hold that . . . outside of it there is no salvation or remission of sins. . . . Furthermore we declare, say, define and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human being should be subject to the Roman pope.

Dominus Jesus (2000): Section 17. Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches. Therefore, the Church of Christ is present and operative also in these Churches, even though they lack full communion with the Catholic Church, since they do not accept the Catholic doctrine of the Primacy, which, according to the will of God, the Bishop of Rome objectively has and exercises over the entire Church. On the other hand, the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not Churches in the proper sense; however, those who are baptized in these communities are, by Baptism, incorporated in Christ and thus are in a certain communion, albeit imperfect, with the Church.

2. The history of the papacy corresponds to the outline given by Paul regarding the Antichrist.

a) Paul mentions various stages.

1) They are:

- a) Secret beginnings in Paul's own day.**
- b) Emerging to an open display of power.**
- c) Serious setback.**
- d) Destruction at the Lord's coming.**

2 Thessalonians 2: 7,8 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

2) Compare the development of the papacy:

- a) Gradual acceptance and operativeness of hierarchical and popish ideas without a dominant pope.**
- b) Emerging from the shadow of the Roman Emperor and successful struggle against the Holy Roman Emperor for supremacy.**
- c) Set back by secession of East and by Luther's Reformation.**
- d) Survival after the Reformation.**

b) Paul mentions lies as the Antichrist's chief source of strength.

1) The Antichrist's coming is:

- a) In accordance with the working of Satan.**
- b) Achieved through counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders.**
- c) And through deceit of unrighteousness.**

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie.

2) **The history of the papacy is one of lies.**

- a) **He tells not only comparatively small lies: historical falsifications, forgeries, pseudo-documents, such as the Donation of Constantine, an 8th century forgery, in which Constantine allegedly transfers ecclesiastical and temporal power to the pope..**

The Donation of Constantine: ... We ordain and decree that he shall have the supremacy as well over the four chief seats Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem, as also over all the churches of God in the whole world...In imitation of our own power, in order that for that cause the supreme pontificate may not deteriorate, but may rather be adorned with power and glory even more than is the dignity of an earthly rule, behold we are giving over to the oft-mentioned most blessed pontiff, our father Sylvester the universal pope, both our palace, as has been said, and also the city of Rome and all the provinces, districts and cities of Italy or of the western regions, and we are relinquishing them by our inviolable gift to the power and sway of himself or to the pontiffs his successors do decree, by this our godlike charter and imperial constitution, that it shall be so arranged; and do concede that these possessions shall lawfully remain with the holy Roman church.

- b) **But especially the satanic lie that a sinner is saved by his own efforts.**

3. **Many in the church recognized the Pope as the fulfiller of the prophecies of the Antichrist even before the Reformation.**

Arnulf of Rheims, Bishop of Orleans (991 A.D.), Gallican Synod, protested against papal corruption and said: “What would you say of such a one, when you behold him sitting upon the throne glittering in purple and gold? Must he not be the ‘Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself as God’?” (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. IV, pp 290–291).

Philip Schaff: As for the papacy, no one has used more stinging words against individual popes as well as against the papacy as an institution than did Wyclif (1324–1384). In the treatises of his last years and in his sermons, the pope is stigmatized as anti-Christ. His very last work, on which he was engaged when death overtook him, bore the title, “Anti-christ, meaning the pope.” He went so far as to call him the head-vicar of the fiend. He saw in the papacy the revelation of the man of sin. The office is wholly poisonous—*totum papale officium venenosum*. (*History of the Christian Church*, Vol. VI, p 332).

Dante (ca. 1321): Of such as you was the Evangelist’s vision
when he saw her who sits on many waters
locked with the kings of the earth in fornication....
Gold and silver are the gods you adore!
In what are you different from the idolator,
save that he worships one, you a score.
Ah Constantine, what evil mark the hour—

not of your conversions, but of the fee
the first rich Father took from you in dower (*Inferno*, XIX, 100-
111).

4. Many object to the identification of the pope as the Antichrist.

Objection a) Since he is called a king, the Antichrist must be a political oppressor like Nero, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, or an end-time figure, because rebellion is spoken of.

Response: Paul speaks of an apostasy and of spiritual tyranny.

Response: The Pope has been a political oppressor and persecutor and is still a head of state.

2 Thessalonians 2:4, 9-12 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. ⁹The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ¹⁰and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹²and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Objection b) The Antichrist must be an individual because Paul speaks of him in the singular, as a man of lawlessness.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

Response: Paul speaks of secret beginnings in his own day, and yet places the destruction at the end of the world. This cannot refer just to the lifetime of one person.

Response: Paul speaks also of the power which checks the rise of the Antichrist as a person of his day (*ὁ κατέχων* = the Roman emperor or perhaps the Christians by the Word), yet Paul also speaks of this person as an institution (*τὸ κατέχον* = *what is holding him back*, the empire or the church).

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 And now you know *what is holding him back*, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but *the one who now holds it back* will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. For the secret power of lawlessness is *already at work*; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy *by the splendor of his coming*.

Response: These considerations show that the names are to be understood as collective nouns denoting an institution led by

an individual. We may say the Antichrist is the pope or the papacy.

Daniel 7:17 The four great beasts are four kingdoms [Aramaic="kings"] that will rise from the earth.

Objection c) The pope cannot be the Antichrist because there is not a complete "falling away." The Roman Catholic Church adheres to many fundamental articles, for example the Trinity, the person and natures of Christ.

Response: This agrees with the statement of Paul that the Antichrist "sits in the temple of God."

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Response: When justification by grace is rejected, such articles as those mentioned cannot save a sinner.

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

Galatians 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Objection d) The papacy cannot be the "man of sin" because some popes were pious men.

Response: Pharisaism, externally righteous, was the most bitter opponent of Jesus.

Response: Paul calls special attention to the deceptiveness of Antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:9,10 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,¹⁰ and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

Response: Many popes were openly wicked men.

Objection e) At least, this must not be preached as an article of faith. It is at most an open question or "historical judgment."

Iowa Synod, Madison Declaration, 3: In regard to the Antichrist all true Lutherans should agree with the judgment expressed in the Confessions of our Church that the character of the papacy is antichristian. But we cannot declare the statement: "The Pope is the Antichrist" to be a doctrine of faith and cannot make it a condition of church fellowship to find the final and complete fulfillment of the prophecy, 2 Thess. 2, in the Pope (*Quellen und Dokumente*, p 332).

Charles Arand, LCMS: We must be cautious about making an absolute once-and-for-all times, never to be altered verdict. The identification of the papacy as the Antichrist in the confessions takes place in an apocalyptic climate in which the Reformers also considered other candidates for the title of the Antichrist, the most prominent of which was the Turks (*Concordia Journal*, Oct. 2003, p 402).

-First reason: Because the name Pope is not mentioned.

Response: Note the nature of prophecies. The Messiah is not named as Jesus of Nazareth in the Old Testament, but we can recognize that Jesus fits the marks.

Acts 18:28 For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

-Second reason. When did this become an article of faith? Paul himself places the identification of Antichrist in the future.

Response: When did it/does it become an article of faith that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ?

Matthew 11:2-4 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples ³ to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" ⁴ Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

5. Confessional Lutherans therefore hold, before God and the church, that the pope is the very Antichrist.

a) Roman Catholics naturally deny the antichristian character of the Roman pontificate.

Bellarmino: With very great lack of shame the heretics declare the Roman pope to be the Antichrist (*Disputations*, Vol. I, Bk. II, Ch. I, 5, p. 392).

1) Some Catholics hold the preterist view also held by liberals: Nero or some other figure in "John's" day was the Antichrist (Luis de Alcazar of Spain, d. 1613)

2) Some hold the futurist view held by millennialists: the Antichrist is an individual who will appear shortly before the

return of Christ is the Antichrist (Francisco Ribera of Spain, d. 1591).

b) Lutheran statements identify the pope as the Antichrist.

Apology XV (VIII), p 318, 18: And what need is there of words on a subject so manifest? If the adversaries defend these human services as meriting justification, grace, and the remission of sins, they simply establish the kingdom of Antichrist. For the kingdom of Antichrist is a new service of God, devised by human authority rejecting Christ, just as the kingdom of Mohammed has services and works through which it wishes to be justified before God; nor does it hold that men are gratuitously justified before God by faith, for Christ's sake. Thus the Papacy also will be a part of the kingdom of Antichrist if it thus defends human services as justifying.

Smalcald Articles, II, IV, p 474, 10-14 This teaching shows forcefully that the Pope is the very Antichrist, who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, and is neither ordained nor commanded by God. ¹¹¹ This is, properly speaking to exalt himself above all that is called God as Paul says, 2 Thess. 2:4, Even the Turks or the Tartars, great enemies of Christians as they are, do not do this, but they allow whoever wishes to believe in Christ, and take bodily tribute and obedience from Christians. ¹²¹ The Pope, however, prohibits this faith, saying that to be saved a person must obey him. This we are unwilling to do, even though on this account we must die in God's name. ¹³¹ This all proceeds from the fact that the Pope has wished to be called the supreme head of the Christian church by divine right. Accordingly he had to make himself equal and superior to Christ, and had to cause himself to be proclaimed the head and then the lord of the church, and finally of the whole world, and simply God on earth, until he has dared to issue commands even to the angels in heaven. ¹⁴¹ And when we distinguish the Pope's teaching from, or measure and hold it against, Holy Scripture, it appears plainly that the Pope's teaching, where it is best, has been taken from the imperial and heathen law and treats of political matters and decisions or rights, as the Decretals show; furthermore, it teaches of ceremonies concerning churches, garments, food, persons and similar puerile, theatrical, and comical things without measure, but in all these things nothing at all of Christ, faith, and the commandments of God. Lastly, it is nothing else than the devil himself, because above and against God he urges and disseminates his papal falsehoods concerning masses, purgatory, the monastic life, one's own works and fictitious divine worship, upon each of which the Papacy is altogether founded and is standing, and condemns, murders and tortures all Christians who do not exalt and honor these abominations of the Pope above all things. Therefore, just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God, we can endure his apostle, the Pope, or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill, and to destroy body and soul eternally, that is wherein his papal government really consists, as I have very clearly shown in many books.

Smalcald Articles, Tractate, p 514, 39-41 Now, it is manifest that the Roman pontiffs, with their adherents, defend and practice godless doctrines and godless services. And the marks all the vices of Antichrist plainly agree with

the kingdom of the Pope and his adherents. For Paul, in describing Antichrist to the Thessalonians, calls him in 2 Thess. 2:3, an adversary of Christ, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he as God sits in the temple of God. He speaks therefore of one ruling in the church, not of heathen kings, and he calls this one the adversary of Christ, because he will devise doctrine conflicting with the Gospel, and will assume to himself divine authority.^{40]} Moreover, it is manifest, in the first place, that the Pope rules in the church, and by the pretext of ecclesiastical authority and of the ministry has established for himself this kingdom. For he assigns as a pretext these words: I will give to you the keys. Secondly, the doctrine of the Pope conflicts in many ways with the Gospel, and thirdly, the Pope assumes to himself divine authority in a threefold manner. First, because he takes to himself the right to change the doctrine of Christ and services instituted by God, and wants his own doctrine and his own services to be observed as divine; secondly, because he takes to himself the power not only of binding and loosing in this life, but also the jurisdiction over souls after this life; thirdly, because the Pope does not want to be judged by the church or by any one, and puts his own authority ahead of the decision of Councils and the entire church. But to be unwilling to be judged by the church or by any one is to make oneself God. Lastly, these errors so horrible, and this impiety, he defends with the greatest cruelty, and puts to death those dissenting.^{41]} This being the case, all Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded, Matt. 7:15, Beware of false prophets. And Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and execrated as cursed, Gal. 1:8; Titus 3:10. And he says, 2 Cor. 6:14: Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion has light with darkness?

Quenstedt: These characteristics of the Antichrist must not here be considered separately and point by point but jointly and together, and when they are considered in this way they correspond exactly with the Roman pope. From this follows the conclusion: Therefore the Roman pope is that great Antichrist predicted by the Holy Spirit (*Systema*, Pt IV, chap. XIV, sect. I, thesis VIII, p 526).

“Statement on the Antichrist” adopted by representatives of the four synods of the Synodical Conference and by the Wisconsin Synod, 1959:

IV. Therefore on the basis of a renewed study of the pertinent Scriptures we reaffirm the statement of the Lutheran Confessions, that “the Pope is the very Antichrist” especially since he anathematizes the doctrine of the justification by faith alone and sets himself up as the infallible head of the church. We thereby affirm that we identify this “Antichrist” with the Papacy as it is known to us today, which shall, as 2 Thessalonians 2:8 states, continue to the end of time, whatever form or guise it may take. This neither means nor implies a blanket condemnation of all members of the Roman Catholic church, for despite all the errors taught in that church the Word of God is still heard there, and that Word is an effectual Word. ...

We reject the idea that the fulfillment of this prophecy is to be sought in the workings of any merely secular political power (2 Th 2:4; cf. Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope 39).

We reject the idea that the teaching that the Papacy is the Antichrist rests on a merely human interpretation of history or is an open question. We hold rather that this teaching rests on the revelation of God in Scripture which finds its fulfillment in history. The Holy Spirit reveals this fulfillment to the eyes of faith (cf. *The Abiding Word*, Vol. 2, p. 764). Since Scripture teaches that the Antichrist would be revealed and gives the marks by which the Antichrist is to be recognized (2 Th 2:6,8), and since this prophecy has been clearly fulfilled in the history and development of the Roman Papacy, it is Scripture which reveals that the Papacy is the Antichrist (*Doctrinal Statements*, p 22).

c) Lutherans were not alone in this confession.

Westminster Confession, XXV vi (1646): There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the pope in Rome be in any sense the head thereof, but is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition.

Hodge: The common opinion, however, among Protestants is that the prophecies concerning Antichrist have special reference to the papacy (*Systematic Theology*, p 813)

III. The proper way of opposing the Antichrist is proclaiming the gospel.

1. A Christian cannot be indifferent about the Antichrist.

a) The danger posed by the Antichrist demands our attention.

- 1) Although not Satan himself or an incarnation of him, the Antichrist is an agent of Satan.**
- 2) He is doing many counterfeit miracles.**
- 3) His doctrine is highly deceptive.**

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

b) A Christian's faith impels him to act.

- 1) He gratefully acknowledges God's grace in his own election.**

2 Thessalonians 2:13,14 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 2) He recognizes in the Antichrist a judgment of God for indifference.**

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

3) This impels him to work out his own salvation with “fear and trembling.”

2 Thessalonians 2:15-17 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. ¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

1 John 2:24,28 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. ²⁸ And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall,

c) The doctrine about the Antichrist is not a matter of concern only for advanced Christians. Paul taught the Thessalonians about him when they were new to the faith.

1) Knowledge of the truth that the pope in Rome is the Antichrist is not essential to salvation.

-a) The Antichrist has his throne in the very temple of God, that is, in the hearts and consciences of Christians.

-b) Hence some Christians remain Christians although they submit to the yoke of the Antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

2) Yet the absolute antagonism of the antichristian principles to Christian faith can be felt even by a beginner in the faith.

2 Thessalonians 2:5 Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

Francis Pieper: Does the doctrine that the Pope is the Antichrist belong to the “fundamental articles” of the Christian faith? It certainly does not, for a person is a Christian solely through his knowledge of Christ and not his knowledge of the Antichrist. Before and after the unveiling of the Antichrist there have been many sincere Christians who have not recognized the Pope as the Antichrist. But every teacher in the Christian Church who is familiar with the historical phenomenon called the Papacy and still does not recognize in this Papacy the Antichrist prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2 is weak in Christian theology (*Christian Dogmatics*, III, p 469).

2. The only effective weapon against the Antichrist (the pope) is the gospel.

a) The Antichrist (the pope) is a political and a spiritual oppressor.

1) He is a political oppressor.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Revelation 17 selected verses: ²With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.” ⁶I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. ¹¹The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction. ¹⁵Then the angel said to me, “The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. ¹⁶The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God’s words are fulfilled. ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

Gregory VII (1073–1085) *Dictatus*: ¹²That he has the right to depose emperors. ²⁷. That he can release citizens from obedience to wicked [rulers].

2) However, the pope’s stronghold is the Christian heart.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

3) Therefore, in order to defeat him decisively we must dislodge him from the hearts. Political victory may spell actual defeat by drawing the attention away from the main issue and leading to carnal security—or to the opposite, despair.

b) There is but one instrument to liberate the heart.

1) This is the truth of the gospel.

John 8:31,32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

2) This must be constantly applied to our own hearts.

2 Thessalonians 2:5,6,16,17 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

1 John 2:24-28 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is what he promised us—even eternal life. ²⁶ I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him. ²⁸ And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

3) The gospel must be used in the spirit of prayer.

2 Thessalonians 2:13,16,17 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁶ May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

4) The gospel must be witnessed to the world for salvation and also for freedom from the Antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

2 Thessalonians 3:1,2 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. ² And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith.

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

E. ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology treats of the end of the present age of grace and of the conditions which follow:

The end of the individual life on earth, physical death.

The end of the world.

The final conditions in eternity, hell and heaven.

General Remarks

Our salvation will not be fully experienced in this life, but its consummation is reserved for a future life. When we describe the blessings we receive through Christ, there is a tension between “the already” and “the not yet.” We can say that we receive “salvation” at Calvary, in our baptism, at our death, and on the last day.

Liberal eschatology is realized in the past or present either through inner existential meaning or through outward liberation of society.

Dispensational eschatology takes place entirely in a future age.

Biblical eschatology involves both the “already” and the “not yet” of our salvation.

1. The life to come will be radically different from our present life.

a) In this present life our joy is not complete.

1) We indeed have perfect justification, adoption, and so on.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:1,2 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Ephesians 2:6 God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

2) Other phases of the *ordo salutis*, however, are far from perfect.

-a) Our sanctification is incomplete.

Romans 7:18,19 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Galatians 5:17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

-b) Our joy is exposed to attack, and it is mingled with fear.

John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Acts 14:22. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.

2 Corinthians 6:4-10 As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; ⁵ in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶ in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸ through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹ known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

b) The conditions and manner of the life to come will be very different.

1) We are at present not equipped to share the future life.

1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

1 Corinthians 15:50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

2 Corinthians 12:4 [He] was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

2) We will be changed.

Luke 20:34-36 Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.³⁵ But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,³⁶ and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection.”

1 Corinthians 15:42-44,50 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

2. We are taught to hope for complete salvation in the life to come.

a) Building this hope is the chief purpose of the doctrine of eschatology.

1) Our curiosity would like a full description of the future life.

-a) But we lack the experience needed to understand fully the last things.

2 Corinthians 5:7 We live by faith, not by sight.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known.

-b) Hence we must exercise great moderation in our statements about eschatology.

Acts 1:7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.”

Matthew 24:36 No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

2 Corinthians 12:4 He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

2) Nevertheless, we need this hope to face death.

-a) Death is not the end of our existence.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

1 Corinthians 15:32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

-b) There is a future life with full salvation.

Matthew 24:13 He who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

2 Timothy 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

b) This hope strengthens us in our Christian life.

1) It strengthens us in earnest endeavors in sanctification.

Matthew 24:42 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. Parallel Matthew 25:13

Luke 21:34-36 Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

2 Peter 3:11-12 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

2) It strengthens us in patience and endurance.

Luke 21:19 By standing firm you will gain life.

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

3) It strengthens us in comfort.

1 Thessalonians 4:13,18 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁸Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Matthew 24:22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

4) It strengthens us in greater zeal in mission work.

Acts 1:7,8,11 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Matthew 24:14,45-51 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. ⁴⁵ Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, “My master is staying away a long time,” ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1. Death

I. Temporal death is the separation of the soul from the body.

1. The word “death” occurs in Scripture in various meanings.

a) It is used figuratively in connection with spiritual life and death.

1) It may refer to the spiritual life of Christians: dead to sin, that is separated from sin.

Romans 6:2,11 We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

Romans 7:1-4 Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? ² For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³ So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. ⁴ So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

Galatians 2:19 For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.

Colossians 2:20 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules.

Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

2) It may refer to the spiritual condition of unbelievers: dead in sin, separated from God's grace.

Genesis 2:17 You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

Ephesians 2:5 [God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ.

1 Timothy 5:6 But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

3) It may refer to the condition of those in hell: the second death, eternal death, eternal separation from God's grace.

Revelation 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Revelation 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

b) It may refer to bodily death.

1) “Death” is used literally: of physical death, the separation of body and soul.

Genesis 5:5,8,11 Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.⁸ Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.¹¹ Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died. Etc.

2) It is used metonymically, for the condition of death or as a personification.

Hosea 13:14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?

1 Corinthians 15:54,55 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

Revelation 20:13,14 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

Romans 5:12,14 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

2. Other terms (euphemisms, circumlocutions, and metaphors) are used for physical death.

a) Being gathered to one’s people or gathered to one’s fathers.

Genesis 25:8,17 Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.¹⁷ Altogether, Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people.

Genesis 15:15 You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age.

Genesis 49:33 When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

b) Going the way of all the earth.

1 Kings 2:2 “I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, show yourself a man.”

Joshua 23:14 Now I am about to go the way of all the earth.

c) The end.

Matthew 10:22 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. Parallel Matthew 24:13

Hebrews 11:22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

d) Departing.

Luke 2:29 Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart (*ἀναλῦσαι*) and be with Christ, which is better by far.

2 Timothy 4:6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure (*ἀναλύσεως*).

2 Peter 1:13-15 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, ¹⁴ because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort to see that after my departure (*ἐξόδου*) you will always be able to remember these things.

2 Corinthians 5:4,8 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

e) Going to the eternal home.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 When men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred, then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets.

f) Sleep (of the body not the soul).

1) “Sleep” or “rest” refers to death in general, especially of believers.

שָׁכַב (LXX, κοιμάμαι):

Deuteronomy 31:16 And the LORD said to Moses: “You are going to rest with your fathers.”

2 Samuel 7:12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.

1 Kings 2:10 Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. 1 Kings 11:43 Then [Solomon] rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king. Also 1 Kings 14:20,31, 1 Kings 15:8,24

יָשַׁן (LXX, ύπνόςω):

Job 3:13 For now I would be lying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest.

Psalms 13:4(3) Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death.

Jeremiah 51:39,57 “But while they are aroused, I will set out a feast for them and make them drunk, so that they shout with laughter— then sleep forever and not awake,” declares the LORD. ⁵⁷ “I will make her officials and wise men drunk, her governors, officers and warriors as well; they will sleep forever and not awake,” declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty.

2) “Sleep” may also refer to the death of the wicked.

1 Kings 16:6,28 Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. And Elah his son succeeded him as king. ²⁸ Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. And Ahab his son succeeded him as king. 1 Kings 22:40 Ahab rested with his fathers. And Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king.

2 Kings 21:18 Manasseh rested [slept] with his fathers and was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzza. 2 Chronicles 33:12-20 v12-18 describe Manasseh’s repentance. ¹⁹ His prayer and how God was moved by his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself—all are written in the records of the seers. ²⁰ Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in his palace. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.

3) The point of comparison is the awakening in the resurrection.

Mark 5:39 He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” Parallel Luke 8:52,53

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep (נִשְׁכָּוִים) in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

1 Thessalonians 4:13,14 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

3. **Death is the tearing apart of the human being, the separation of body and soul.**

Note that the NIV is not consistent in its renderings of the various words for soul or spirit, which can sometimes also mean “life” or “breath.” In the original, all of the following passages refer to the departure or loss of “soul” or “spirit.” Review the study of these words at pages 362-369 of the middler dogmatics notes.

a) **At death the soul/spirit leaves the body.**

Ecclesiastes 12:7 The dust returns to the ground it came from, and *the spirit returns* to God who gave it.

Genesis 35:18 As she *breathed her last*—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin.

Matthew 27:50 When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he *gave up his spirit*.

Luke 12:20 But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your *life will be demanded* from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?”

John 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and *gave up his spirit*.

Acts 5:5,10 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and *died*. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and *died*. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Psalms 31:5 Into your hands I *commit my spirit*; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.

Luke 23:46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I *commit my spirit*.” When he had said this, he *breathed his last*.

Acts 7:59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit*.”

1 Kings 17:21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this boy’s *life* return to him!”

Luke 8:55 *Her spirit returned*, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat.

Quenstedt: “Death,” understood literally, means the separation of the soul from the body and the loss of animate life. To it all, both good and bad, are ordinarily subject. And this is what it means here (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XVI, sect. I, thesis VI, p 535).

b) Death is not annihilation.

1) The body disintegrates, but it is not lost.

Genesis 3:19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.

Isaiah 26:19 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

John 5:28 Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice.

Job 19:26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God.

2) The soul will continue to exist. In this sense, it is “immortal.”

-a) Scripture clearly states this continued existence.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. ⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷ We live by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.

-b) Among those who deny this truth are Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, liberal Lutherans, and some Evangelicals.

Jehovah's Witnesses: The dead are shown to be "conscious of nothing at all," and the death state is one of complete inactivity (Ec. 9:5,10, Ps 146:4)... In both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures death is likened to a sleep, a fitting comparison not only because of the unconscious condition of the dead but also because of the hope of awakening through the resurrection (*Insight on the Scriptures*, I, 1988, p 597). When a person is dead, he is completely out of existence. He is not conscious of anything (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, 1982, p 88).

Seventh Day Adventists: Death is not complete annihilation; it is only a state of temporary unconsciousness while the person awaits the resurrection. The Bible repeatedly calls this intermediate state a sleep (*Seventh Day Adventists Believe*, p 352).

Samuele Bacchiocchi (Adventist): Human beings do not possess a mortal body and an immortal soul; they have a wholistic mortal body and soul which can become immortal. Immortality or eternal life is God's gift to those who accept His provision of salvation. Those who reject God's plan for their salvation ultimately will experience eternal destruction, not eternal torment in an ever-burning hellfire (*Immortality or Resurrection?* p 24).

Gilbert Thiele (LCMS): We think it is consequently fair to say, to put it very bluntly, that when a man dies he is dead. The Bible when examined in its length and breadth knows of no disembodied condition in which a man lives, temporarily and certainly not permanently; it knows of neither a temporary or permanent human immortality as such ("Easter Hope," *The Seminarian*, March 1958, p 18).

Hans Schwartz (ELCA): In recent years, especially under the impact of renewed listening to the biblical documents, the idea of an immortal soul has become increasingly suspect. A human being is again seen as a unity. Karl Barth perhaps over-stated the case when he claimed that the notion of immortality is a typical thought engendered by fear. Karl Rahner put the issue more correctly when he states that there is no rectilinear continuation of our empirical reality beyond death. In this regard death puts an end to the whole man (Braaten and Jensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, II, p 566).

Ted Peters (ELCA): The Bible clearly states that we humans are mortal. We really do die and cease to exist. We will not be saved by a heroic soulechtsomy, that is, by extracting an immaterial soul from our material body. Sin is a cancer that eats away at the

totality of human existence leaving no organ, whether physical or spiritual, uninfected. The resulting death means true extinction (*God—The World's Future*, p 323).

- c) **The state of the soul between death and resurrection will be discussed in IV, p 638.**

See “The Old Testament Concept of the Soul,” *WLQ*, 1964, pp 33ff.

II. The cause of death is sin.

1. **The cause of death is not the composite nature of man, that is, death is not “natural,” as evolutionary theory and Pelagian theology claim. This would deny the punitive character of death and violate the vicariousness of Christ's death.**

Augustine: [The Pelagians] say that Adam himself would have experienced physical death even if he had not sinned. He was not mortal because of guilt but as a condition of nature (*Lib. de haereses, ad Quodvultd.*, 88).

Hans Schwartz: First, we must recognize that death is a basic order of God's creation. ... Only God is immortal and everyone else must die (1 Tim. 6:16). Even Christ became a life-giving being only through death and resurrection. Death and finitude indicate the basic difference between the Creator and the created. Thus is it difficult to think that biological death is a result of sin and the fall (Braaten and Jenson, *CD II*, p 562).

Ted Peters: It is out of love, then, that God separates Adam and Eve from the tree of life. Death is a gift of divine grace because it marks the point at which the consequences for sin come to an end. There is no suffering in the grave. Death is the door that God slams shut on evil and suffering within creation (*God—The World's Future*, p 322).

2. **Various effective causes of death are mentioned.**

- a) **Personal causes of death are:**

- 1) **The devil.**

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.

- 2) **God.**

- a) **By his decree.**

Psalm 90:3,5,7,8 You turn men back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, O sons of men.”⁵ You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—⁷ We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation.⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

-b) By setting a general limit on the length of human life.

Psalm 90:10 The length of our days is seventy years— or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

-c) By conditioning length of life on our conduct.

Deuteronomy 5:16 Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you. Parallel Exodus 20:12

Deuteronomy 4:40 Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.

Proverbs 3:1,2 My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,² for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

Isaiah 57:1,2 The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil.² Those who walk uprightly enter into peace

Leviticus 26:25 And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands.

Psalm 55:23 But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.

b) Physical (direct) causes of death are:

1) Internal (old age, disease)—Natural death, “wearing out”.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

2) External (accident, murder)—Violent death.

3. In every case sin is the underlying cause of death.

a) This is true of death in general.

Genesis 2:17 You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

Genesis 3:3,17-19 God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Numbers 16:29,30 If these men die a natural death (כְּמֹת כָּל־אָדָם) and experience only what usually happens to men, then the LORD has not sent me.³⁰ But if the LORD brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt.

Numbers 27:3 Our father died in the desert. He was not among Korah’s followers, who banded together against the LORD, but he died for his own sin and left no sons.

Psalms 90:7-9 We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation.⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.⁹ All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.

John 8:24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

b) This is true also of the vicarious death of Christ.

Romans 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Compare 2 Corinthians 5:14 For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

c) Sin is the cause of the fear and anger that death brings with it.

1 Corinthians 15:56: The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

Shakespeare/ Hamlet: To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consumation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To Sleep? Perchance to dream! aye there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause....
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.

Dylan Thomas (d. 1953): Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

d) When the guilt of sin is removed, death is deprived of its terrors.

John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Luke 2:29 Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

Philippians 1:21,23 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Apology, Art. VI, p 298, 56 Death itself serves this purpose, namely, to abolish this flesh of sin, that we may rise absolutely new. Neither is there now in the death of the believer, since by faith he has overcome the terrors of death, that sting and sense of wrath of which Paul speaks 1 Cor. 15:56, "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law." This strength of sin, this sense of wrath, is truly a punishment as long as it is present. Without this sense of wrath death is not properly a punishment..

Jesus Christ, my sure defense and my Savior, now is living.
Knowing this my confidence rests upon the hope he's giving,
Though the night of death be fraught still with many an anxious thought (CW 167).

III. Death ends the time of grace for every person.

1. For the deceased the next event of importance after death is the resurrection to judgment.

Hebrews 9:27-28 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

2. This life is the only time for preparation.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

a) For the believer this time of preparation is not to be followed by another period of preparation, but by a period of fulfillment.

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Philippians 1:21,23 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

b) For unbelievers death is followed by final damnation.

Luke 16:22-26 The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.²³ In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.²⁴ So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire."²⁵ But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony."²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."

3. Objections to the finality of judgment at death are raised particularly on the basis of two passages.

a) The first is 1 Peter 3:19: "[Christ] went and preached to the spirits in prison."

- 1) **Argument: Christ preached to the spirits in prison.**
- 2) **Response: But what was the subject of his proclamation?**

- a) **κηρύσσειν may refer to any sort of proclamation, not necessarily to a preaching of the gospel unto salvation.**

Romans 2:21 You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

Galatians 5:11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.

Acts 15:21 For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

- b) **According to the context, Christ’s descent was a triumphal procession. He proclaimed his victory. He did not offer a second chance to believe the gospel.**

1 Peter 3:18-19 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

- b) **The second alleged support for this objection to the finality of hell is found in 1 Peter 4:6.**

- 1) **Argument: “The gospel was preached even to those who are [now] dead” [The NIV adds the word “now” to the text—this is a correct understanding, but this word is not in the text].**
- 2) **Response: No time is specified, yet the preaching evidently preceded their death.**

IV. Few details are revealed about the state of departed souls between the moment of death and final judgment. We know, however, that believers are at peace with Christ in heaven. Unbelievers suffer in hell.

1. Death affects the whole person.

- a) **By creation the soul was designed to function in union with the body.**

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

b) Persons are said to die.

Genesis 2:17 But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

Genesis 5:5,8,11, etc. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died. ⁸Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died. ¹¹ Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

2. Death is treated as a terrible reality, which even Christians may dread.

2 Samuel 22:5,6 The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. ⁶ The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.

Psalms 55:4 My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me.

Matthew 26:38 Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

2 Corinthians 5:2,4 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, ⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

3. Dead persons are said to sleep.

Job 3:11,13 Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb? ¹³ For now I would be lying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13,15 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁵ According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

Psalms 13:3 Look on me and answer, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death.

4. Yet many passages seem to refer to awareness during a “time between” death and resurrection.

Luke 20:37,38 But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”³⁸ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.

Revelation 6:9-10 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”

Revelation 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Luke 16:22-31 selected verses: The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.²³ In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side....²⁷ He answered, “Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house,²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.”²⁹ Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.”³⁰ “No, father Abraham,” he said, “but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.”³¹ “He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

Isaiah 24:21-22; In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below.²² They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days.

1 Peter 3:19 He went and preached to the spirits in prison.

2 Peter 2:9 If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

Pieper: These texts surely make it evident that the departed souls of the believers are in a state of blessed enjoyment of God, even though we know nothing further as to the manner of their blessed communion with God. Deductions from the nature of the soul, e. g., that it cannot be inactive, are uncertain and therefore not to be urged in theology. A soul sleep which excludes a blessed enjoyment of God [psychopannychism] must be definitely rejected on the basis of Phil. 1:23 and Luke 23:43. A sleep of the soul which includes enjoyment of God (says Luther) cannot be called a false doctrine (*CD III*, p 512).

5. For practical purposes, since no change of spiritual condition is possible after death, the end of our earthly life bring us to the day of judgment.

- a) **Scripture speaks of an immediacy of judgment as well as of an immediate enjoyment of glory or an immediate suffering of damnation.**

1 Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Hebrews 9:27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Philippians 1:23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.”

Luke 16:22-24 “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.”

Acts 1:25 ...this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.

b) The attention of Christians, therefore, is constantly directed to the coming of the Lord.

1) Their hopes will then be fulfilled.

1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

Philippians 3:20,21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Colossians 3:2-4 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. ¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Titus 2:13 We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

2) Final judgment of the unbelievers will take place on that day.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

c) The dead are not conscious of specific events taking place on earth, nor do they return to earth as ghosts.

Isaiah 63:16 But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

Note some possible exceptions.

1 Samuel 28:11-20 Then the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" "Bring up Samuel," he said. ¹² When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!" ¹³ The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?" The woman said, "I see a spirit coming up out of the ground." ¹⁴ "What does he look like?" he asked. "An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. ¹⁵ Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

“I am in great distress,” Saul said. “The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do.”¹⁶ Samuel said, “Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has turned away from you and become your enemy?”¹⁷ The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David.¹⁸ Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today.¹⁹ The LORD will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines.”²⁰ Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel’s words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and night.

Matthew 17:3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

V. As biblical terms for the state of death we find the following.

1. In the Old Testament:

a) מָוֶת = death.

Psalm 89:49(48) What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave?

Psalm 116:3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.

Psalm 18:5(4),6(5) The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me.

b) לְאֵשׁ = the state of death, the grave.

Genesis 37:35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “in mourning will I go down to the *grave* to my son.”

Genesis 42:38 But Jacob said, “My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the *grave* in sorrow.” Parallel Genesis 44:29,31

Job 17:13 If the only home I hope for is *the grave*, if I spread out my bed in darkness.

Concerning לְאֵשׁ with a connotation of punishment, see further discussion of the term in the section on hell, page 699.

Deuteronomy 32:22 For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the *realm of death* below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains.

Psalm 9:17 The wicked return to the grave, all the nations that forget God.

Psalm 31:17 Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave.

Psalm 49:14,15 Like sheep they are destined for the grave, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions. ¹⁵ But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.

Psalm 55:15,16 Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave, for evil finds lodging among them. ¹⁶ But I call to God, and the LORD saves me.

Psalm 63:8,9 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. ⁹

c) בֹּרַח = **the pit=the grave.**

Psalm 30:4 (3) O LORD, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit.

Psalm 88:5 (4), 7 (6) I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like a man without strength. You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths.

Psalm 28:1 To you I call, O LORD my Rock; do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who have gone down to the pit.

Psalm 143:7 Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.

d) **Other terms.**

Ps 88:11(10),12(11) Is your love declared in the grave, your faithfulness in Destruction? ¹²Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?

Psalm 16:10 You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

2. **In the New Testament: θάνατος and ἄδης.**

a) **Note especially ἄδης as a translation of לֹאֵשׁ.**

Acts 2:27,31 You will not abandon me to the *grave*, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of

the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. Cites Ps 16:10

1 Corinthians 15:55 “Where, O death (θάνατος), is your victory? Where, O death (θάνατος; Variant ἄδης), is your sting?” Cites Hosea 13:14 Where, O death (מוֹת), are your plagues? Where, O grave (לִישׁוֹן), is your destruction?

b) Hades is used in various ways, like לִישׁוֹן in the Old Testament.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of *Hades* will not overcome it.

Luke 16:23 In *hell*, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

Revelation 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and *Hades*.

Revelation 19:18 If I took the book, and they will go down to the depths of the earth. Death, and *Hades* was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Revelation 20:13,14 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and *Hades* gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.¹⁴ Then death and *Hades* were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.

Matthew 11:23 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the *depths*. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. Parallel Luke 10:15

VI. The Roman Catholic Church (and to a lesser degree, the Orthodox Church) teaches an elaborate system of permanent and intermediate states besides heaven and hell.

1. Purgatory

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Par. 1031: The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

Gregory the Great (594): As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come (Mt 12:31). From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come (*Dialogia*, IV.xli.3).

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Par. 1032: This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.” From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

John Chrysostom: Let us help and commemorate them. If Job’s sons were purified by their father’s sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them (*Homilia in 1 Corinthos*, xli, 5).

Timothy Ware: Orthodox are convinced that Christians here on earth have a duty to pray for the departed, and they are confident that the dead are helped by such prayers. But precisely in what way do our prayers help the dead? What exactly is the condition of souls in the period between death and the resurrection of the Body on the Last Day? Here Orthodox teaching is not entirely clear, and has varied somewhat at different times. In the seventeenth century a number of Orthodox writers—most notably Peter of Moghila and Dositheus in his *Confession*—upheld the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory or something very close to it. ... Today most if not all Orthodox theologians reject the idea of Purgatory, at least in this form. The majority would be inclined to say that the faithful departed do not suffer at all. Another school holds that perhaps they suffer, but, if so, their suffering is of a purificatory but not an expiatory character; for when a person dies in the grace of God, then God forgives him all his sins and demands no more expiatory penalties: Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, is our *only* atonement and satisfaction. Yet a third groups would prefer to leave the whole matter entirely open (*The Orthodox Church*, p 254-255).

a) The origins of purgatorial teaching lie in the heathen philosophers and poets (Plato, Virgil). This influence came into the church through the speculations of such church fathers as Origen.

Chemnitz: Eusebius, *De praeparatione evangelica*, Bk. 1, last chapter, transcribes a lengthy discussion of Plato from the book *De Anima*, where, after having described the rivers of the underworld on the basis of the traditions of the poets, he finally says: “Those who, on account of the magnitude of their sins, such as temple robberies, unlawful killing, and similar things, appear to be incurable, these are cast into Tartarus, whence they can never escape. But those who are judged to have indeed perpetrated great sins yet to be capable of being cured or healed, if for instance they committed a murder in a fit of anger, or perpetrated some violent act against their parents, but spent the remainder of their life in penitence, these, according to the measure of their transgression, are cast into various rivers of fire to burn. Finally, after a year and more, they approach the Acherusian lake; there they shout to those whom they have injured and beg as suppliants to be permitted to go out and be received. If they manage to persuade their adversaries of this, they come out and cease to suffer punishment. If not, they are cast about in these rivers of fire until they obtain this from those whom they injured (*Examination*, III, p 231).

Virgil: Therefore they are engaged in punishments

And pay the penalties of old wrongs:
Some are spread out, unfed, suspended to the winds.
For others, the crime that stains them is washed out
Under an immense raging flood or burnt out by fire;
We each suffer what we have deserved.
From there we are sent to Elysium,
And a few of us possess the happy fields
Until the long day, when the circle of time has elapsed,
Has banished the hardened transgression
And left the ethereal soul pure, a fire of pure gold (*Aeneid*, 6).

Origen: If, after the foundation has been laid, you build on it not only gold but also wood and stubble, what is it you want done to you when the soul shall be separated from the body? Do you want to enter the holy place with your wood and stubble so that you may pollute the kingdom of God? Or do you want to dwell outside on account of your stubble, and receive no reward for your gold? But this also is not fair. What follows, therefore, except that first fire is applied to you on account of the wood, which consumes the stubble? (*Homily 12 on Jeremiah*)

Origen: Whoever spurns the purifications of God's Word reserves himself for sad and penal purifications, that the fire of gehenna may amid torments purge him whom neither the apostolic doctrine nor the preaching of the Gospel has cleansed. But how long this cleansing, which is applied through the punishment of fire, is to endure and how many ages of torment it may require of sinners only he can know to whom the Father has given all judgment, who so loves his creature that he humbled himself for it (Phil. 2:8). But understandings of this kind, like the mystery of God, must be passed over in silence and not proclaimed everywhere (*Homily on Romans 11*).

b) As alleged proof for purgatory Catholics offer the following support.

1) From the Old Testament: a reference to sacrifices for the dead.

2 Macc. 12:42-45. [They] betook themselves unto prayer, and besought him that the sin committed might wholly be put out of remembrance. Besides, that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forso much as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain. ⁴³ And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: ⁴⁴ For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. ⁴⁵ And also in that he perceived that there was great favor laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.

Response: This is apocryphal.

2) Alleged proof from the New Testament:

-a) A reference to purging fire.

1 Corinthians 3:12 –15 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Response: Not souls, but works, pass through fire.

-b) Alleged references to payment after death.

Matthew 12:32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Matthew 5:26 I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

2 Timothy 1:18 May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day!

Response: None of these speaks of forgiveness granted after death.

c) Note the close relation between the idea of purgatory and the doctrine of justification by works and repentance.

Catherine of Genoa (1490): The basis of all the pains of purgatory is sin whether original or actual. ... Because the souls in purgatory are without guilt of sin, there is no obstacle between them and God except their pain which holds them back. ... For this reason a fierce fire comes into being which is like that of hell except for the guilt.... As for guilt, these souls are just as they were when they were originally created by God... Only the corrosion of sin is left, and they are cleansed from this by pain in the fire (*Treatise on Purgatory*, iii, v).

Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article II, p 464, 11,12 In addition to all this, this dragon's tail (I mean the Mass) has begotten a numerous vermin-brood of manifold idolatries. ¹²¹ First, purgatory. Here they carried their trade into purgatory by masses for souls, and vigils, and weekly, monthly, and yearly celebrations of obsequies, and finally by the Common Week and All Souls Day, by soul-baths so that the Mass is used almost alone for the dead, although Christ has instituted the Sacrament alone for the living. Therefore purgatory, and every solemnity, rite, and commerce connected with it, is to be regarded as nothing but a specter of the devil. For it conflicts with the chief article which teaches that only Christ, and not the works of men, are to help set free souls. Not to mention the fact that nothing has been divinely commanded or enjoined upon us concerning the dead. Therefore all this may be safely omitted, even if it were not error and idolatry.

Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article III, p 484, 21 As to satisfaction, this is by far the most perplexing part of all. For no man could know how much to render for a single sin, not to say how much for all. Here they have resorted to the device of imposing a small satisfaction, which could indeed be rendered, as five Paternosters, a day's fast, etc.; for the rest that was lacking of the repentance they were directed to purgatory.

2. Limbo: limbus patrum and limbus infantium or puerorum

Catholic Encyclopedia: "Limbo" (Late Lat. *limbus*) a word of Teutonic derivation, meaning literally "hem" or "border," as of a garment, or anything joined on (cf. Italian *lembo* or English limb). In theological usage the name is applied to a) the temporary place or state of the souls of the just who, although purified from sin, were excluded from the beatific vision until Christ's triumphant ascension into Heaven (the "*limbus patrum*"); or b) to the permanent place or state of those unbaptized children and others who, dying without grievous personal sin, are excluded from the beatific vision on account of original sin alone (the "*limbus infantium*" or "*puerorum*"). ...The question therefore arises as to what, in the absence of a clear positive revelation on the subject, we ought in conformity with Catholic principles to believe regarding the eternal lot of such persons [unbaptized babies]. Now it may confidently be said that, as the result of centuries of speculation on the subject, we ought to believe that these souls enjoy and will eternally enjoy a state of perfect natural happiness; and this is what Catholics usually mean when they speak of the *limbus infantium*, the "children's limbo" (Online Edition, 1999).

Chemnitz: The theologians of Ingolstadt distinguish hell, purgatory, the circle of infants who are not baptized, and the limbo of the fathers in this way, that the fire of hell which rages in the center of the earth torments the damned; flowing out from there upward it cleanses the faithful of the second circle; afterward perhaps, in the third circle, the smoke from it attacks the children; finally, in the fourth circle, the limbo of the fathers is heated and lighted by its heat and light as in steam baths (*Examination*, III, p 229).

VII. Mormons also have four compartments for eternity:

1) Hell for the Sons of Perdition (Satan, his angels, and a small portion of humans); 2) the Celestial Kingdom for the Church of the Firstborn who will procreate on the new earth (the best Mormons); 3) The Terrestrial Kingdom in another world for weak Mormons and others who tried to do right [no procreation here], 4) the Telestial Kingdom on another world for the bad who are not bad enough for hell (Hoekema, *Four Cults*, p 71-74).

2. The End of the World

I. The end of the world will be marked by a visible return of Christ in glory.

1. Christ will return in visible form.

a) Scripture declares the certainty of Christ's return.

2 Peter 3:3,4,10 First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Mark 13:37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!”

b) The basic outline of events is provided by Jesus’ Olivet Discourse.

Matthew 24:1-35 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” ³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Signs of the End

⁴ Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹ “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Destruction of Jerusalem

¹⁵ “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. ¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. ²³ At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great

signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. ²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time.

Christ's Appearance

²⁶ “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹ “Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ ³⁰ “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. ³² “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³³ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁴ I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Parallels in Luke 21 and Mark 13

c) **Scripture describes the manner of Christ's return.**

1) **It will be visible.**

Acts 1:9,11 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Matthew 24:27,30 For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁰ At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

Luke 17:24 For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other.

2) **Christ will be accompanied by the holy angels.**

-a) **They will be with him.**

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

Mark 8:38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

-b) They will serve as his ministers.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Matthew 24:31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Matthew 13:41,42,49,50 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

d) The purpose of Christ's return is stated.

Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Hebrews 9:26-28 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

1 Peter 4:5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Matthew 25:31-32, 46 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ⁴⁶ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge.

2. Christ's return will bring about the end of the present world.

a) This world will come to an end.

Matthew 13:39-43 The enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰ As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Matthew 25:31, 46 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ⁴⁶ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:23,24 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

b) The time of the end is fixed but not yet revealed.

1) The exact time is not revealed.

Matthew 24:36-44 No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴² Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Mark 13:32 No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Matthew 24:44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

1 Thessalonians 5:2,3 For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

Jehovah's Witnesses: The "battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's present rulership, is already commenced (*Studies in Scripture*, 1906 edition, p 101).

Jehovah's Witnesses: We may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old...to the condition of human perfection (*Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, 1920, p 89-90).

Jehovah's Witnesses: According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 (*Life Everlasting—In the Freedom of the Sons of God*, 1966, p 29).

2) Disastrous conditions, foreboding the collapse of the world, are signs pointing to Christ's return. They occur throughout the New Testament era during the regular course of daily life until the appearance of the final signs in the heavens.

-a) Signs in society:

Luke 17:26-30 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹ But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰ It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

Matthew 24:10,12 At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.

Luke 21:9,10 "When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." ¹⁰ Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

2 Timothy 3:1-7 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. ⁶ They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, ⁷ always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

-b) Signs in nature:

Matthew 24:7,29 There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ²⁹ Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

Luke 21:25,26 There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. Compare Genesis 8:22 As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.

-c) Signs in the church:

Matthew 24:9 Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

John 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.

Luke 18:8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

Matthew 24:11,24 Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

Acts 20:30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

2 Thessalonians 2:11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie.

2 Timothy 4:3,4 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-12 [Do not] become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ... ⁹ The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ¹⁰ and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹² and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ² Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. ³ They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Mark 13:10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

Compare Romans 5:20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

3) All predicted signs have appeared and are occurring in the world.

-a) The destruction of Jerusalem with its attending horrors was a prelude to the world catastrophe.

Matthew 24:1-3 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." ³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Luke 21:20,21,24 “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹ Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. ²⁴ They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

George Stoeckhardt (d. 1913): The destruction of Jerusalem appears, on the one hand, as a sign of Judgment Day, on the other hand, as the beginning of the final judgment (*Bibl. Geschich. d. N. T.*, p 256).

-b) The gospel has penetrated to all nations.

1 Timothy 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

Colossians 1:23 If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

-c) Paul speaks of Christ’s return as possible in his lifetime.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

1 Corinthians 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

Titus 2:13 We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

c) This should teach us to live in constant readiness.

Matthew 24:42-51 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also

must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵ Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, “My master is staying away a long time,” ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25:13 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Mark 13:33,35,37 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁵ “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁷ “What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!”

Luke 21:36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Acts 1:6-11 So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

2 Peter 3:11-12 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

3. There will be but one visible return of Christ to end the New Testament era and inaugurate a new heavens and a new earth.

a) This is implied in all passages speaking of his return.

1) His return is predicted for the end of this present age.

Matthew 24:3, 29,30: As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this

happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"²⁹ "Immediately after the distress of those days 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'³⁰ At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory."

2) One passage enumerates the advents of Christ.

Hebrews 9:28 Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

b) Millennialism (chiliasm) in its various forms inserts an intervening age between the New Testament era and eternity.

1) Pre-millennialism believes Christ will return and a resurrection will take place before (pre-) the millennium.

-a) Historic or covenant premillennialism does not make a sharp distinction between the church and Israel. Most adherents of this view place the rapture of believers after the tribulation (post-trib). Many of the early church fathers held a version of this view (Papias, Irenaeus, Tertullian; today Millard Erickson, George Ladd).

Tertullian (207): We also hold that a kingdom has been promised to us on earth, but before heaven, but in another state than this, as being after the resurrection. This will last for a thousand years, in a city of God's own making.... For it is indeed right and worthy of God that his servants should also rejoice in the same place where they suffered for his names. This is the purpose of that kingdom, which will last a thousand years, during which the saints will rise sooner or later, according to their merit. When the resurrection of the saints is completed, the destruction of the world and the conflagration of judgment will be effected. We shall be changed in a moment to the angelic substance...and we shall be transferred to the heavenly kingdom (*Against Marcion*, III, xxiv.3-6).

-b) Dispensational premillennialism applies the fulfillment of prophecy only to Israel, not to the church. Usually this view places the rapture of believers before the tribulation (pre-trib). This theory rose in the 19th century and became the popular form of millennialism among 20th century Fundamentalists and many Evangelicals (John Darby, Edward Irving, Moody Bible Institute, the Scofield Reference Bible, John Walvoord, Dallas Theological Seminary, Hal Lindsey). This form of millennialism is the focus of the following discussion.

Clarence Larkin: When we take the Old Testament promises and apply them to the Church we rob the Jew of that which is exclusively his (*The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World*, p 19).

- 2) **Post-millennialism believes that the millennium is a golden age for the church at the end of this present age. Christ returns after (post-) the millennium. This view was popular in the late 19th century and is being revived in theonomy, reconstructionism, and dominion theology (Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge; Gary North, David Chilton). Liberal post-millennialism puts more emphasis on changing society than on personal conversion and is thus akin to the Social Gospel.**

Loraine Boettner: We have defined post-millennialism as the view of the last things which holds that the Kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of individuals, that the world eventually is to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ is to occur at the end of a long period of peace and righteousness commonly called the “Millennium” (*The Millennium*, p 14).

David Chilton: The Christian goal for the world is the universal development of Christian theocratic republics, in which every area of life is redeemed and placed under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the rule of God’s law (*Paradise Restored: An Eschatology of Dominion*, p 226).

David Chilton: Our goal is world dominion under Christ’s Lordship, a “world takeover” if you will; but our strategy begins with reformation, reconstruction of the church. From that will flow social and political reconstruction, indeed a flowering of Christian civilization (*Ibid.*, p 214).

- 3) **A-millennialism literally means “no millennium.” The 1000 years of Revelation refers to the New Testament era. There will be only one return of Christ. This is the scriptural view (Augustine, Luther).**

Augsburg Confession, Article XVII, p 50: Of Christ’s Return to Judgment.

Also they teach that at the Consummation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; he will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils he will condemn to be tormented without end.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils.

They condemn also others who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.

- 4) **Millennialists consider Revelation 20 to be their stronghold, but it actually describes three events of the New Testament era.**

-a) The binding of Satan.

Revelation 20:1-3 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ²He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

This “binding” is defined as Satan’s not being able to deceive the nations anymore. This binding occurred as a result of Christ’s first coming.

Luke 10:17-18 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” ¹⁸ He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

John 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

Revelation 12:10-11 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

-b) The first resurrection.

Revelation 20:4- 6 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

This resurrection is described as the rule of souls at the throne of God. This rule begins at conversion and continues for the believer even after the death of the body.

-1) These martyrs have suffered for Christ.

Romans 8:36 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

2 Corinthians 6:9 ...dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed

2 Corinthians 4:10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

-2) These saints live and reign with Christ.

John 5:24-29 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

Ephesians 2:4-6 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

-c) The loosing of Satan.

Revelation 20:7-12 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing

before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

This is the “short season” which is followed by Christ’s return and judgment.

Matthew 24:29-30 Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”³⁰ At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

Luke 18:8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

5) Millennialism, which finds no basis in Revelation 20, results from a distorted interpretation of Old Testament prophecy.

Clarence Larkin: The whole teaching of the Old Testament as to the Coming of the Messiah is Pre-millennial. The only use the Premillennialites have for the Thousand Year passage in Rev. 20:1-7 is to fix the length of that “Age of Righteousness and Peace” (*The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World*, p 4).

-a) Millennialists expect Jerusalem to be the seat of Christ’s earthly kingdom.

-1) They claim this passage supports this.

Isaiah 2:2,3 In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. ³ Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

-2) Response: this is the new Jerusalem, the church on earth and in heaven.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,

-b) Millennialists expect a political restoration of the nation of Israel in the Promised Land, which is theirs forever.

-1) They claim the following passages support this.

Amos 9:11-15 “In that day I will restore David’s fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be,¹² so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,” declares the LORD, who will do these things.¹³ “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.¹⁴ I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.¹⁵ I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God.

Joel 3:18 In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD’s house and will water the valley of acacias.

Jeremiah 31:35-36, 40 This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD Almighty is his name: “Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,” declares the LORD, “will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me....⁴⁰ The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished.”

-2) Response: Israel is built up when Gentiles are brought in through the gospel.

Acts 15:13-18 When they finished, James spoke up: “Brothers, listen to me.¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself.¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:¹⁶ ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,¹⁷ that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord who does these things’¹⁸ that have been known for ages.”

-3) Response: the possession of the land was conditioned on faith and obedience.

Jeremiah 17:4 Through your own fault you will lose the inheritance I gave you. I will enslave you to your enemies in a

land you do not know, for you have kindled my anger, and it will burn forever.

-4) See also the following points about the real Israel and the new Jerusalem.

-c) Millennialists expect a widespread conversion of the Jews.

-1) They claim this passage supports this.

Romans 11:25-26 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so (οὕτως) all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.”

Note: A *manner* of restoration is referred to (“so,” “in this way”), not a *time* (“then”). All of this Israel which Paul is describing is converted.

-2) Response: The Israel of prophecy is the Israel of faith, not the Israel of the flesh.

a) Not all Jews are part of the Israel of promise.

Romans 9:6-8 It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ⁸ In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.

Romans 2:28,29 A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God.

John 8:31-47 Jesus said: “I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. ³⁸ I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.” ³⁹ “Abraham is our father,” they answered. “If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰ As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.

⁴¹ You are doing the things your own father does.” ⁴² Jesus

said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here.⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.”

Romans 11:7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 For you, brothers, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews,¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men¹⁶ in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.

b) All believers in Christ are part of the Israel of promise.

Romans 4:11-13 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.¹² And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.¹³ It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

Galatians 6:16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

Philippians 3:3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

Galatians 3:7, 26-29 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Ephesians 2:11-20 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in

the body by the hands of men)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.¹⁵ His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

-d) Millennialists expect universal peace on earth.

-1) They claim these passages support this.

Isaiah 2:4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Isaiah 11:6-9 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest.⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Zechariah 9:10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

-2) Response: This is the peace of the gospel.

Luke 12:51-53 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.⁵² From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. Parallel Matthew 10:34

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Ephesians 6:15 ...with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 9:2-6 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. ³ You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. ⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. ⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 11:1-9 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD— ³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. ⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Note the way in which prophetic language combines temporal and eternal images. Temporal blessings and judgments are sometimes described with terms appropriate to the last things. The new heavens and the new earth are described in terms taken from earthly life.

-e) Millennialists expect Christian knowledge to fill the world.

-1) Passages allegedly supporting this.

Isaiah 11:9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Joel 2:28 And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Seventh Day Adventists teach unrestricted knowledge of God in the millennium: Through this tangle of conflicting millennial expectations William Miller and his associates cut a clean swath in the direction of a new and different concept. “No temporal millennium,” they said. By that they meant that the millennial reign was not in “time,” with death, decay, and sin still present, but was the first portion of the *eternal* state. They held that when Christ comes again the day of human probation is ended, that all the sinners are slain by the overpowering brightness of the second advent, and all the redeemed are resurrected and/or transformed for eternity. They taught that the earth is renewed by fire, and that on it begins the kingdom of eternity—which is merely punctuated at the end of a thousand years by the final disposal of “the rest of the dead.” That is, the sinners will be resurrected and, led by the released Satan, will attempt to take the Holy City, which has become down out of heaven to the earth; and then comes the final judgment and the execution of the sentence on the wicked (*Seventh Day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, p 479).

-2) Response: This is fulfilled now through the gospel

Acts 2:16-18 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

-f) The rapture expected by millennialists (whether of the pre-, mid-, or post-tribulation variety) is based on a misunderstanding of certain passages which clearly speak of

the gathering of believers to meet Christ on the the last day. The believers will be separated from the unbelievers so that they can welcome Christ at his return for the final judgment. They will then be with him eternally.

1 Thessalonians 4:16- 17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Matthew 24:31, 37-41 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. ³⁷As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man ⁴⁰Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

Matthew 13:30,41,47-50 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”” ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

6) Millennialism contradicts the following clear teachings of Scripture:

-a) Christ’s kingdom is spiritual.

John 18:36,37 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” ³⁷ “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

Luke 17:20-21 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,²¹ nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”

-b) Scripture constantly speaks of but one general resurrection of the body.

John 5:28,29 Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

John 6:40 For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 11:24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

-c) The church on earth is a kingdom of the cross and must pass through great tribulation.

Acts 14:22 [They were] strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must (δεῖ) go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.

Revelation 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from (σε τηρήσω ἐκ) the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

John 17:15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from (τηρήσης αὐτοὺς ἐκ) the evil one.

-d) The time of grace is the whole New Testament era. There will be no other time of grace on earth.

Isaiah 59:20 “The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the LORD. See Romans 11:25-27.

Jeremiah 31:33,34 “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my

law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.³⁴ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." See Hebrews 10:16.

Mormons teach the millennium as a new time of grace: The Millennium is the period of time that represents the 1,000 years following the return of Christ, and is what Latter-day doctrine refers to as the final period before the last judgment. LDS doctrine teaches that the millennium is a time to catch up on any unfinished business from world history, such as teaching the gospel to those who never had a chance to hear it during mortality. During the final millennium, LDS doctrine teaches that Jesus will personally preside over his church here on earth. During this sort of transitional period, Jesus and those who followed him throughout the ages will be working to establish divine order throughout the world. This period of time is when the earth will be prepared for its eventual transition back into a glorified world (as it was when Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden of Eden), prior to the end of the First Resurrection (Drew Williams, *Understanding Mormonism*, p 44).

-e) The only means of grace is the gospel. We are not to look for any other way of salvation in the millennial dispensation as some forms of millennialism do.

Clarence Larkin: The Scripture mentions seven great "Dispensational Tests" of man from his creation until the New Heaven and the New Earth appear. He was tested in "Innocence" in the Garden of Eden; under "Conscience" before the Flood; under "Human Government" at Babel; under the "Headship of the Family" under the Patriarchs; under "Law" before Christ; he is now being tested under "Grace;" he will have one more test before God gives him up as hopelessly, incurably, incorrigibly God-hating and disobedient, and that test will be final and deprive him of his last shadow of excuse. ... The principle under which God will deal with men in those days will not be Law, Grace, or Judgment, but Righteousness. ... As Satan will be bound at that time, the character of the Millennial Dispensation will be entirely different from all preceding Dispensations (*The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World*, p 41, 43).

-f) Christ is ruling now, contrary to millennial claims that his kingdom will come only in the future.

Matthew 28:18–20: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching

them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Hebrews 2:8-9 In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Clarence Larkin: The Office Work of Christ is threefold, that of Prophet, Priest, and King. But He does not hold these offices conjointly but successively. His Prophetic work extended from Creation to His Ascension; His Priestly Work extends from His Ascension to the Rapture of the Church; His Kingly Work from His Revelation at the close of the Tribulation Period until He surrenders the Kingdom to the Father (*The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World*, p 47).

II. In the resurrection at the end of the present world all dead bodies will be reunited with their souls and transformed and adapted to their future environment.

1. The Greek word ἀνάστασις (ἐγείρω, συνεγείρω)

is used in various ways.

a) It is used figuratively.

1) Metaphorically, for regeneration (the first resurrection).

Ephesians 5:14 It is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Colossians 2:12 ...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Colossians 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

2) Metonymically (cause for effect): Christ himself.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”

b) It is used literally, referring to the bodily resurrection at the end of the world.

John 6:40 For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 11:24 Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

1 Corinthians 15:12,13 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

2. Resurrection is an assured fact to faith.

a) Some may doubt but without reason.

1 Corinthians 15:12,32 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

Acts 17:18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

Acts 17:32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.”

Acts 26:8 Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

Matthew 22:29 Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.”

b) Both the Old Testament and the New Testament teach the resurrection.

1) The New Testament teaches the resurrection.

-a) In many brief references:

Matthew 22:31-32 But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ³² “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

John 5:28,29 Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

John 6:39,40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son

and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 11:24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Acts 4:2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

Acts 23:6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead."

Acts 24:15 I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

-b) In an elaborate argument:

1 Corinthians 15: 1-11; 12-34; 35-50; 51-58.

2) The Old Testament teaches the resurrection.

-a) Directly:

Job 19:25-27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Psalm 17:15 And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

Isaiah 26:19 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.

Daniel 12:2,13 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.¹³ As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.

Hosea 13:14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?

-b) By implication:

Genesis 17:7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

Genesis 26:24 That night the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.” Parallels Genesis 28:13 and Exodus 3:6

Compare Mark 12:26,27 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”?²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!

Ezekiel 37:1-14, the vision of the dry bones, assumes a knowledge of the concept of the resurrection.

3) This doctrine is central to the gospel message.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

2 Timothy 2:17,18 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,¹⁸ who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

1 Timothy 1:19,20 Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.²⁰ Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

c) In the resurrection the whole person who lived before will be restored to life.

1) Consider the following points concerning the resurrection.

-a) The subjects of resurrection are “the dead.”

John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them

life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

John 11:23,24 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

1 Corinthians 15:15,16 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

Hollaz: The resurrection of the dead essentially consists 1) in the restoration or repair of the same body which perished in death from its atoms and particles that have been scattered and dispersed here and there; 2) in the reunion of the same body with the soul (*Exam.* p 1245).

-b) Christ was the same person after his resurrection.

John 20:16-18 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).¹⁷ Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!”

1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

-c) Note the analogy of sleep: the person who awakes is the one who fell asleep.

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Psalm 17:15 And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

2) Scripture teaches the identity of the pre- and post-resurrection body.

-a) It will be the same in number and substance.

Romans 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Philippians 3:21 [Christ] by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Corinthians 15:53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

Luke 24:39,40 “Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

Quenstedt: The *subjectum quod* of resurrection (the subject which rises) is the whole man previously dead and turned to ashes; the *subjectum quo* (the subject by which he rises) is the body, identical in number and substance with that body which we had in this present life (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XVII, sect. I, thesis x, note, p 582).

Symbolum Apostolicum: Credo in carnis resurrectionem.
Das Erste Bekenntnis: Ich glaube an Auferstehung des Fleisches.
Symbolum Nicaenum: Exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum.
Das Andere Bekenntnis: Ich warte auf die Auferstehung der Toten.

Ted Peters: When reciting the Nicene Creed we say that we believe in the “resurrection of the dead”...What does this mean? It does not mean resuscitation of a corpse in the sense that one recuperates from surgery and goes back to the daily routine of life. Nor is this referring to a soulehtomy. ...If resurrection is neither a resuscitation of a corpse nor a soulehtomy, could that which is resurrected look like a *ka* depicted on frescoes in Egyptian pyramids? Or might it resemble the occult understanding of the astral (star) body? ...If there is resuscitation, it is a new creation. Therefore, the resurrected body of the New Testament must be something different from the astral body as ordinarily understood (*God—The World’s Future*, p 324-325).

-b) It will, however, be a “transformed” body.

Philippians 3:21 [Christ] by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies (μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως) so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Corinthians 15:37,47-49,51 When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed (ἀλλαγῶμεθα).

-c) Such transformation is necessary before we can live in the changed environment of the new heavens and the new earth.

1 Corinthians 15:50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

-d) Our transformed bodies will possess: imperishability—glory—power—spirituality.

1 Corinthians 15:42-46,53 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

⁴²οὕτως καὶ ἡ ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. σπείρεται ἐν φθορᾷ, ἐγείρεται ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ· ⁴³σπείρεται ἐν ἀτιμίᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ· σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει· ⁴⁴σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν.

Revelation 7:16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

2 Corinthians 5:4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

1 Corinthians 15:41,43 The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

Hollaz: The bodies we carry around in this life differ from our resurrected bodies not so far as their substance is concerned but 1) in respect to duration: the former decay and perish, these endure forever immune to all decay; 2) in respect to their outward form: the former were deformed, pale, stinking corpses, these will be glorious, shining, and very beautiful; 3) in respect to vigor: the former are sown into the earth weak, without feeling or motion, the latter will be lively, strong, capable of exquisite feelings, free from every defect; 4) in the way in which they work and feel: the former generate children, are nourished, grow, move from place to place; they need drink, food, marriage; the latter will be completely devoted to spiritual activities, nor will they need nourishment nor conjugal society (*Examen*, p 1243).

-e) A corresponding change in the opposite direction will affect the unbelievers.

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Isaiah 66:24 And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.

-f) Scripture is silent on the question of stature and sex of the raised bodies.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

Luke 20:35-36 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. Parallel Matthew 22:30

Augustine: All will rise as young people (Hoenecke IV, *ELD*, p 258).

Quenstedt: Together with Gerhard and Brochmann, we accept this opinion as the most probable one [that each one will rise in the form which he had at the time of death] (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XVIII, sect. II, qu IV, p 604).

d) The resurrection will be general. It will include all the dead.

1) This is expressly stated in various ways.

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Revelation 20:12,13 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

John 5:28,29 Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

Acts 24:15 I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Axiom of the Dogmaticians: The object or material of the resurrection [that which is raised] consists of all the dead, both believers and unbelievers.

2) Resurrection is the crowning act of Christ's work of salvation.

-a) Restoring life (like giving and preserving it) is a creative act of God.

2 Corinthians 1:9,10 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.

Romans 4:17 God ... gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were (*τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα*). [Alternate rendering: calls things that are not so that they come into being.]

1 Corinthians 6:14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

-b) In a special way, the work of resurrection is ascribed to Christ.

John 5:28 Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice.

John 6:39,40,54 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Philippians 3:21 [Christ] who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."

Quenstedt: The principal efficient cause of resurrection is the Triune God alone, but in a very special way the divine-human Redeemer ...since he is in a very special way our Goel or our Redeemer (Jb 19:25f) and the Father has given him authority for this action of restoration to life as well as of judgment, because he is the Son of Man (Jn. 5:25,27) (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XVIII, sect. I, thesis VI, p 580).

-c) The resurrection will be the last act in Christ's work of salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:20-26 Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

2 Timothy 1:10 But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

-d) It will be preliminary to judgment, the final segregation of the believers from the unbelievers.

John 5:28,29 Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

1 Corinthians 15:23,24,28 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught

up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Friedrich Balduin (d. 1627): The ungodly will not be raised by the power of the resurrection of Christ but because of the unchangeable decree by which it is appointed unto men once to die but after this judgment (He 9:27) (*Commentarius*, p 510).

Konrad Dannhauer (d. 1666): Resurrection in the absolute sense, insofar as one ignores the difference between a resurrection to salvation and to damnation, is not a result of the merit of Christ, 1) because whatever is a result of the merits of Christ does not happen without the intervention of the merits of Christ; but the damned would rise even if the Son of God had never become incarnate; 2) because no fruit of the resurrection of Christ ever comes to a man unless he accepts it by faith (in the absence of the acceptance of faith). But those who are damned will rise even if they did not by faith make the resurrection of Christ their own. Yet the resurrection of Christ is the cause of resurrection to life even though in reality few obtain it (*Hodosophia*, p 745). [Note: "Resurrection" is ascribed to all, "life" only to believers. Unbelievers rise to eternal death, an existence in which they are eternally separated from God, the source of all life.]

III. Immediately following the resurrection a general judgment of the world will be held.

1. The last day is a day of judgment.

a) Judgment is a fact.

Matthew 25:31-46 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"⁴⁰ The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."⁴¹ Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in

prison and you did not look after me.”⁴⁴ They also will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?”⁴⁵ He will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”⁴⁶ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Matthew 10:15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Matthew 11:23,24 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.

Revelation 20:12,13 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

b) The reality of judgment is used as a basis for exhortation.

Acts 17:30,31 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

2 Corinthians 5:9,10 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Revelation 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

c) The reality of judgment is held out as a warning.

Matthew 12:36-37 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.

Mark 3:29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.

John 5:29 Those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

John 12:47,48 As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Hebrews 10:27 [What remains is] only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

James 5:9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

d) Natural reason opposes this truth.

Qoheleth: All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth? (Ec 3:20-21).

Aeschylus: When the dust drinks up a man's blood, once he has died, there is no resurrection (*Eumenides* 647).

Isaac Asimov: Although the time of death is approaching for me, I am not afraid of dying and going to Hell, or (what would be considerably worse) going to the popularized version of Heaven. I expect death to be nothingness and by removing from me all possible fears of death, I am thankful to atheism (*Science Fiction Magazine*, January 1992).

Blood, Sweat, and Tears: I'm not scared of dying and I don't really care. If it's peace you find in dying well then let the time be near... Now troubles they are many, they're as deep as a well. I can swear there ain't no heaven but I pray there ain't no hell. Yes I swear there ain't no heaven and I pray there ain't no hell. But I'll never know by living, only my dying will tell. Yes only my dying will tell (Song: "And when I die").

e) The time of judgment for all is the end of the world. This is one day called by various names, not the multiple judgments of millennialism.

1) The day of judgment

Matthew 10:15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

2 Peter 2:9 If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

2 Peter 3:7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2) **The day of the Lord—the last day—the great day**

1 Corinthians 1:8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 5:5 Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

John 12:48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. (Compare 6:39,40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.)

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

3) **“That day”**

Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?”

Matthew 24:36 No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

2 Timothy 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

2 Timothy 4:8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

2 Thessalonians 1:10 ...on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.

2. The judge will be Jesus Christ.

a) Authority to judge has been given to him.

1) Judicial power is vested in God.

Genesis 18:25 Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Psalms 9:7,8 The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. ⁸ He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.

Romans 2:16 This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

2) Jesus will be the judge by appointment of the Father.

Acts 10:42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

Acts 17:31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

Romans 2:16 This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Matthew 25:31,32 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

2 Timothy 4:8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Thessalonians 1:7,8 [He will] give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

3) Jesus will be the judge because he is the Savior.

John 5:27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

1 Corinthians 15:21-24 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

Isaiah 22:22 I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. See Revelation 3:7.

4) **There will be associate judges and witnesses.**

1 Corinthians 6:2,3 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

Psalms 149:6-9 May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, ⁷to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, ⁸to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, ⁹to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints.

Revelation 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Matthew 19:28 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Parallel Luke 22:30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthew 12:41,42 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?

Baier: But the saints will be witnesses who approve of the judgment of Christ (*Compendium*, pt I, ch X, para X, p 79).

Quenstedt: Therefore it should rather be said that on the last day in their own way the saints will judge the world and evil spirits 1) by sitting with Christ, the Judge, 2) by publicly approving the sentence of the Judge by their own judgment, 3) by testifying, insofar as they bring testimony concerning the kindness and generosity shown to them by the godly and other good works, and 4) by condemning the ungodly and the evil angels by the example of their constancy of faith (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XII, sect. I, thesis VII, note vii, p 608).

b) The standard according to which Jesus will judge the world is his gospel.

1) This is expressly stated.

John 3:17-19 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

John 12:48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

2) This is clear also from the following considerations.

-a) Jesus sent his disciples to preach the gospel.

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

John 20:21-23 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

-b) The gospel is a proclamation of justification.

Romans 3:24,28 [All] are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Romans 4:5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Galatians 2:16 Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

-c) This verdict of the gospel will stand on Judgment Day.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Romans 8:1,33,34 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Micah 7:19 You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Isaiah 38:17 Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Isaiah 44:22 I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.

3) Every person is judged by his or her response to the gospel.

John 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

4) Warnings of judgment are addressed to Christians because of their sinful flesh.

Matthew 12:36,37 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

5) Unbelievers, who reject the gospel, place themselves under the judgment of the law.

-a) This fact is stated.

John 5:45 But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set.

Romans 2:12 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

-b) Their damnation is a foregone conclusion because of their unbelief.

John 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

-c) Note the double set of record books, which reflect the judgment according to the gospel and the law.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and *books* were opened. *Another book* was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

Daniel 7:10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and *the books* were opened.

Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from *the book of life*, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in *the book of life* belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. Also Revelation 17:8

Revelation 21:27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in *the Lamb's book of life*.

Philippians 4:3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in *the book of life*.

Exodus 32:32,33 “But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of *the book you have written*.”³³ The LORD replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of *my book*.”

Psalms 69:28 May they be blotted out of *the book of life* and not be listed with the righteous.

Daniel 12:1 At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in *the book*—will be delivered.”

Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. *A scroll of remembrance* was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.

Luke 10:20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are *written in heaven*.

Hebrews 12:23 ...the church of the firstborn, whose names are *written in heaven*. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.

6) Our dogmaticians speak of the norm of judgment.

Gerhard: The godly will be judged by the gospel, specifically and properly so-called, the ungodly by the law illumined by the gospel (*Loci*, vol XIX, ch V, par LXX, 217).

Quenstedt: The norm of this judgment, in so far as men are to be judged, generally speaking, is the whole heavenly doctrine (Jn 12:48; Ro 2:16); but specifically speaking, so far as the godly are concerned the norm is the gospel understood in the strict sense as distinct from the law (Ga 3:9,12; Mt 25:34), but so far as the unbelievers are concerned the norm is the law (Ga 3:10; Ro 2:12; 1 Cor 6:9,10; Ga 5:19,20,21; the law, I say, but not the law as seen alone and by itself, but to the extent that it is illumined by the gospel (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XIX, sect. I, thesis X, p 611).

3. All people will have to appear in the final judgment.

a) All people, living and dead, will appear at the judgment.

Matthew 25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Acts 17:31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Romans 14:10,12 ¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹² So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Acts 10:42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

2 Timothy 4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

1 Peter 4:5 But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

b) Also the fallen angels will be judged.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.

4. The judgment will fully reveal God's righteousness and mercy.

a) God's ways are not fully understood on earth.

Ezekiel 18: 25-30 Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is not just." Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ²⁶ If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. ²⁷ But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. ²⁸ Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is not just." Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ³⁰ Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

Romans 2:5,6 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done."

2 Thessalonians 1:5-8 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 73:16,17 When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me ¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

Romans 11: 33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

b) Believers will not be confronted with their sins, which have been removed by Christ.

Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Isaiah 38:17 Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Isaiah 44:22 I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you.

Micah 7:19 You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Matthew 25:34-36 Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

Hollaz: Question: Whether also the sins of believers will be examined and made public on the day of the Last Judgment?

Answer: It is not likely that individual sins of believers will on the last day be investigated and specially judged by Christ. Evidence for this answer:

- 1) From the divine promise. God has promised to blot out our sins as a cloud (Is 44:22), to cast them behind his back (Is 38:17), to sink them in the depths of the sea (Mi 7:19), that he will no longer remember them (Is 43:25). But what God does not want to remember, he will not publicize.
- 2) From the immutability of God. His will is unchangeable (Mal. 3:6). And so, since God in this life has forgiven sins to believers, it is unlikely that the same God will recall for rigid examination sins that have been forgiven.
- 3) From what the Judge has done in the past. Christ will come to judgment as our Redeemer (Lk 21:28). He who presented the church to himself as a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph 5:27), will not bring up the spots of his saints (*Examen*, pt III, sect II, ch X, qu 13, p 738).

Quenstedt: Question: Whether also the sins of the elect will be made manifest at the last judgment? The sins of the elect and godly will not be made manifest before the world of men in the last judgment in the same way as those of the ungodly and unbelievers.

Question: Whether the godly and believers will undergo judicial examination on the day of final judgment? The pious and believers will not undergo any divine judicial examination in their own consciences, but without examination, discussion, or debate they will pass over to eternal life. Therefore there will be no arguing of the case of those who come into the presence of the judge with certainty of their own salvation and blessedness, yes, they are already blest. The sins of those who do not come into judgment, but have eternal life,

will not be published nor examined (Jn 5:24) (*TDP*, Pt IV, chap. XIX, sect. II, qu 6,7, p 629).

c) Christ will deliver the kingdom, fully restored, to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.²⁷ For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

5. On Judgment Day the present universe will be destroyed and replaced by a new heaven and new earth.

a) The present world is under the curse of sin.

1) It was created for the benefit of man.

Genesis 1:26,28,29 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”

Psalms 115:16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.

Isaiah 45:18 For this is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

2) Because of man’s sin it is now cursed.

Genesis 3:17-19 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Romans 8:20,22 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

b) Hence the universe will disappear.

1) The world will be destroyed in a mighty catastrophe.

Psalms 102:25-27 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶ They will perish (יִטּוּאִי), but you remain; they will all wear out (יִבָּלֵי) like a garment. Like clothing you will change them (תִּשְׁלַחֲנָם) and they will be discarded (תִּפְּוֹדוּ). ²⁷ But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Hebrews 1:10-12 He also says, “In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹They will perish (ἀπολοῦνται), but you remain; they will all wear out (παλαιωθήσονται) like a garment. ¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed (ἀλλαγῆσονται). But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”

2 Peter 3:10-12 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar (οἱ οὐρανοὶ ῥοιζήδον παρελεύσονται); the elements will be destroyed by fire (στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται), and the earth and everything in it will be *laid bare* (καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται). [Note also the many variants which seem to be attempts to remove the difficulty of εὐρεθήσεται including οὐχ εὐρεθήσεται and εὐρεθήσεται λυόμενα] ¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat (οὐρανοὶ πυρούμενοι λυθήσονται καὶ στοιχεῖα καυσούμενα τήκεται).

2) It does not seem that this will cause a material annihilation.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away (παρελεύσεται), but my words will never pass away.

Matthew 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear (παρέλθῃ), not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

1 John 2:17 The world and its desires pass away (ὁ κόσμος παράγεται), but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Revelation 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled (ἔφυγεν) from his presence, and there was no place for them (τόπος οὐχ εὔρεθη αὐτοῖς).

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (ἀπῆλθαν), and there was no longer any sea.

Isaiah 34:4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved (נִמְקוּ) and the sky rolled up (יִגָּל) like a scroll; all the starry host will fall (יִפֹּט) like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

Isaiah 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish (יִחַל) like smoke, the earth will wear out (יִטָּח) like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

3) More likely a renovation will take place.

-a) Some expressions used imply a restoration or rebirth.

1 Corinthians 7:31 For this world in its present form is passing away (παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου).

Matthew 19:28 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things (ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ), when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Romans 8:21 The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth (συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει) right up to the present time.

Acts 3:21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything (ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων), as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

-b) The Lutheran dogmaticians had different opinions about the meaning of these terms.

F. Pieper: Our old Lutheran theologians are not agreed on whether this passing away is to be defined more specifically as a total annihilation (*interitus mundi secundum substantiam, κατ' οὐσίαν*) or only as a transformation or conversion (*interitus mundi secundum accidentia, κατὰ ποιότητα*). Luther, Brenz, Althammer, Ph. Nicolai, and others teach a transformation, principally on the basis of Rom. 8:21: “The creation itself also shall be freed from the

bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Most of the earlier Lutheran theologians join Gerhard, Quenstedt, and Calov in assuming that the world will perish *quoad substantiam*. Gerhard (*Loci*, “*De consummatione seculi*,” § § 37–63) treats the subject extensively. He quotes the arguments pro and con and then gives his reasons why he regards a destruction according to the substance as corresponding more fully to the statements of Scripture. Nevertheless Gerhard says (*ibid.*, § 38): “We do not defend our opinion of the destruction of the world according to its substance as an article of faith, but we assert that this opinion is more in conformity with the emphatic statements of Scripture concerning the end of the world. Hence we do not rashly accuse those of heresy who are of the opposite opinion and describe the destruction of the world as a transformation. Many therefore would rather reserve judgment in this question [ἐπέχειν] and leave this matter to future experience than take a definite stand now.” All who assume a transformation of the creation must teach a change whereby the world in its entire present outward form really passes away on Judgment Day or comes to an end (τέλος). 1 Cor. 7:31: “The fashion (σχῆμα, form) of this world passes away.” Luther: “In short, whatever belongs to the nature of these temporal goods, whatever constitutes this transitory life and activity, shall all cease” (St. L. VIII: 1222) (*CD*, III, p 542-543).

c) We expect a new heaven and a new earth.

2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Isaiah 65:17 Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

Isaiah 66:22 “As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure.”

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Siegbert Becker: Moreover, there are several passages in the Bible that seem to indicate that the fire of the last day will not annihilate but rather purify the earth and restore it to its original perfection. Perhaps the clearest of these passages is found in Romans, chapter eight, where the apostle Paul says that the created world will be set free from the bondage of corruption to participate in the glorious liberty of the children of God (Ro 8:21). Some orthodox Lutheran commentators have even concluded from this that there will be animals in heaven, but who can speak of such things with any kind of certainty? These words, however, may be very significant when we read of the passages that speak of a new heaven and a new earth. Peter, after telling his readers that this world will be burned up, speaks of such a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pe 3:13). Already the prophet Isaiah records the words of God in which He says, “The new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me”(Is 66:22). It should be

pointed out that in all these passages the word heaven is used as it was used in the first chapter of Genesis. The new heaven is a new sky above this new earth. The most detailed description of this new heaven and new earth we find in the last two chapters of the Bible, where we have also a detailed description of the place where God's people will live through all eternity. John first tells us that he had a vision of a new heaven and a new earth.... What more can we say to add anything to that picture of endless bliss and glory? We can only join in the prayer of St. Bernard, "Jesus, in mercy bring us to that dear land of rest" (Essay "Heaven and Hell," 1978, *Our Great Heritage*, III, p 668-670).

3. Eternity

I. The wicked, persistently rejecting Christ, will suffer eternal damnation in hell.

1. Eternal damnation is a fact.

a) Man's conscience testifies to this.

Romans 2:15,16 They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them. ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Knowledge of hell is preserved in human conscience, Tartarus, etc.

Virgil: And now wild shouts, and wailings dire,
 And shrieking infants swell the dreadful choir.
 Here sits in bloody robes the Fury fell,
 By night and day to watch the gates of hell.
 Here you begin terrific groans to hear,
 And sounding lashes rise upon the ear.
 On every side the damned their fetters grate,
 And curse, 'mid clanking chains, their wretched fate (*Aeneid*
 6).

b) Scripture has many names for hell.

1) Sheol (occasionally)

Proverbs 15:11 *Death and Destruction* lie open before the LORD—
 how much more the hearts of men! שְׂאוֹל וְאַבְדוֹן

Deuteronomy 32:22 For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that
 burns to the *realm of death* below. It will devour the earth and its
 harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains.

כִּי־אֵשׁ קָדְחָהּ בְּאֶפְי וְתִיקַד עַד־שְׂאוֹל תַּחְתִּית

Psalm 139:7-8 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

2) Gehenna was Jesus' main name for the place of the damned. Gehenna is literally "valley of Hinnom," the valley south of Jerusalem where human sacrifice was performed.

Matthew 5:22,29,30 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, "Raca," is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, "You fool!" will be in danger of the *fire of hell*. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into *hell*. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into *hell*. ἔνοχος ἔσται εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in *hell*.

Matthew 23:15,33 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of *hell* as you are. ³³ You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to *hell*

James 3:6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by *hell*.

3) Fire, eternal fire, unquenchable fire

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the *eternal fire* prepared for the devil and his angels. εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον

Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into *hell*, where *the fire never goes out*. εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον

4) Hades (Greek parallel of Sheol)

Luke 16:23,28 In *hell*, where he was in *torment*, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁸ "For I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of *torment*." ἐν τῷ ᾄδῃ ἐν βασάνοις,

5) The Abyss

Luke 8:31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον

Romans 10:7 Who will descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον

6) Tartarus (The place of torment in the Greek version of the underworld, the lowest part of Hades.

See [Hesiod, Theogony](#); [Homer, Odyssey, XI, 576 ff](#); [Virgil, Aeneid, VI, 539-627](#))

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but *sent them to hell*, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment. ταρταρώσας

7) Darkness, outer darkness

Matthew 22:13 Then the king told the attendants, “Tie him hand and foot, and throw him *outside, into the darkness*, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον·

2 Peter 2:4, 17 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into *gloomy dungeons* to be held for judgment (σειραῖς ζόφου—bonds of darkness; variant: σιροῖς ζόφου—pits of darkness) ¹⁷*Blackest darkness* is reserved for them. ὁζόφος τοῦ σκότους.

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept *in darkness*, bound *with everlasting chains* for judgment on the great Day. ὑπὸ ζόφον δεσμοῖς αἰδίους

8) Destruction, judgment

2 Thessalonians 1:9 They will be punished with *everlasting destruction* and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power οἵτινες δίκην τίσουσιν ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου

1 Thessalonians 5:3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

Hebrews 10:27 [What remains is] only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Φοβερὰ δὲ τις ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως καὶ πυρὸς ζῆλος

Hebrews 6:2 [We should go on to] instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and *eternal judgment*. Κρίματος αἰωνίου.

9) The Lake of Fire / The Second Death

Revelation 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death. ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. Τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος

c) The duration of eternal damnation is parallel to eternal salvation.

Matthew 25:46 Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.

2. Critics raise ethical objections to the doctrine of eternal damnation.

a) Objection: “Hell conflicts with God’s infinite love.”

William Crockett cites Celsus’ words of God becoming a “cosmic cook” (*Four Views on Hell*, p 50).

Jehovah’s Witnesses: The fiendish concepts associated with a hell of torments slander God and originate with the chief slanderer of God (the Devil) (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, p 175).

Clark H. Pinnock (Evangelical): Let me say at the outset that I consider the concept of hell as endless torment in body and mind an outrageous doctrine, a theological and moral enormity, a bad doctrine of the tradition which needs to be changed. How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness whose ways include inflicting everlasting torture upon his creatures, however sinful they may have been? Surely a God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God, at least by any ordinary moral standards, and by the gospel itself. ... Surely the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is no fiend; torturing people without end is not what our God does (*Criswell Theological Review*, Spring 1990, p 246-47, 253).

These passages answer the objection:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Romans 11:33,34 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”

1 Timothy 6:16 [God] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

- b) Objection: “It is unfair to give eternal punishment for temporal sin. Fairer punishments would be immediate annihilation (Jehovah’s Witnesses), annihilation after failing the millennial test (Jehovah’s Witnesses), restoration after suffering (rationalists), or annihilation after suffering (Seventh Day Adventists).”**

Scripture answers the objection with these passages.

1) Sin deserves judgment.

Psalm 90:11 Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.

1 John 3:8-10 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God

Romans 1:32 Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Gerhard: The degree of punishment and blame is not to be sought in how long it took to commit, but in the quality and shamefulness of the sin (*Loci*, Vol XX, ch VI, par LXV, 6, p 243).

Brochmand: Because the God who is infinitely good and eternal is offended by sin, therefore it follows that sin merits eternal punishment (*Systema*, Vol II, art XLVIII, ch II, qu III, p 7043).

2) Unbelief deserves damnation.

Hebrews 6:6 To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Hebrews 10:26-29 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will

consume the enemies of God²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.²⁹ How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

- c) **Objection: “Words like ‘destruction’ imply a cessation of suffering. Therefore, eternal punishment must refer to punishment that has an eternal result, annihilation.”**

Response: the Bible speaks of conscious suffering of the damned.

Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.”

3. **Opponents of the teaching of eternal damnation include cults, liberals, and some Evangelicals.**

An Evolutionary View of the Doctrine

Hans Schwartz: We also notice a growing understanding of the concept of “hell” (*Sheol*). In the earlier parts of the Old Testament, *Sheol* indiscriminately denotes the shadowy existence of all who died (cf. Ps. 89:48). But *Sheol* is also already interpreted as the dimension of alienation from God and the sphere of death. In postexilic times, perhaps through the influence of Parsiism, *Sheol* was a temporary dwelling place and was different for the righteous than for the godless. In the New Testament, *Gehenna* (hell) names the place where the “worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:48). While “hell” denotes an already present reality (Matt. 25:41), only after resurrection and judgment will hell be disclosed as the realm of eternal torment. . . . In contrast to apocalyptic, the New Testament does not paint the torments of hell in drastic colors, unless in attempting to awaken the conscience of listeners (cf. Matt. 10:28). Like heaven, hell has its peculiarity not from a cosmological locality but from its relationship with God. Only in the world of fairy tales and fantasy is hell the domain of the devil. According to biblical witness even the anti-Godly powers are under God’s control (Braaten and Jenson, *CD II*, p 585-586).

Vague Hope: Qualified Universalism and Ecumenic Pluralism

Hans Schwartz: Without circumventing the salvific power of Christ, the church evidently affirmed the hope that those also could be saved who had not encountered Christ during their lifetime on earth. Yet it never dared to declare that therefore everyone will eventually be saved, nor did it define how someone could be saved through Christ’s descent. Our reflection today must show a similar restraint. While we fervently hope and pray that all humanity will be saved, we cannot take for granted that it will indeed be so or outline a way in which God will reach this goal. We know that the saved will be saved only for Christ’s sake (Braaten and Jenson, *CD II*, p 579).

Compare Ted Peters: What we need to affirm theologically, I believe, is ecumenic pluralism...The concept of a universal humanity must become an article of faith. (*God—The World's Future*, p 352). In this position there is a shift away from a christocentric religion toward a theocentric model of a universe of faiths. Rather than advocate one or another existing religious perspective, this supraconfessional theology would see the existing world religions as different human responses to the one divine reality (p 357).

Restoration, the view that the damned will be released from their suffering and restored to happiness. Hell in effect is a form of purgatory.

Origen: The end of the world, then, and the final consummation, will take place when every one shall be subjected to punishment for his sins, a time which God alone knows, when He will bestow on each one what he deserves. We think, indeed, that the goodness of God, through his Christ, may recall all his creatures to one end, even his enemies being conquered and subdued. But those angels who have been removed from their primal state of blessedness have not been removed irrecoverably, but have been placed under the rule of those holy and blessed orders which we have described; and by availing themselves of the aid of these, and being remoulded by salutary principles and discipline, they may recover themselves and be restored to their condition of happiness (*De Principiis* 1; 6; 1,2).

Julius Wegscheider (d. 1849): We are of the opinion , first, that God will alleviate the very miserable condition of sinners who have been afflicted by punishments after death and have improved their souls. ... God will alleviate their condition to the same degree that they return to a better mind and strenuously continue their efforts to perfect their souls. Second, we are of the opinion that even if a wicked man is improved by the punishments of the future life and advances from them to a milder condition, nevertheless, he will never be free from the memory of the evil done in earthly life, nor will he be equal in blessedness to those who live honorably (*Institutiones*, sect. 200, p 639).

Annihilation, the view that after suffering for awhile, the damned will be put out of their misery. Conditionalism (or conditional immortality) is a form of annihilationism. In some forms of conditionalism the souls of the damned do not suffer at all since they are never restored to life. In other forms, their suffering is temporary.

Seventh Day Adventists: The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever (*Seventh Day Adventists Believe*, p 362). So the Bible makes it very clear that the *punishment*, not the *punishing*, is everlasting—is the second death. From this punishment there is no resurrection; its effects are eternal (p 371).

Seventh Day Adventists: This annihilation Seventh Day Adventists call the second death; before the annihilation, however, there will be gradations of suffering, depending on the guilt of the person or demon involved. Since Satan is the most guilty of all God's creatures, he will suffer the longest and therefore will be the last

to perish in the flames (*Questions on Doctrine*, p 498, in Hoekema, *Four Cults*, p 142).

Clark Pinnock: I was led to question the traditional belief in everlasting conscious torment because of moral revulsion and broader theological considerations, not first of all on scriptural grounds. It just does not make any sense to say that a God of love will torture people forever for sins done in the context of a finite life. . . . It's time for evangelicals to come out and say that the biblical and morally appropriate doctrine of hell is annihilation, not everlasting torment (*Theological Crossfire*, p. 226-227).

LeRoy Froom: Here is God's good news: Although man was not created unconditionally immortal, and is not today born immortal, yet he may become so—if he follows the provisions of God. According to the unfailing promise of the Almighty, he may acquire an immortality beyond the reach of death and time and destruction. That is the high privilege to be granted to the righteous—a favor conferred on the penitent believer. But it is *always conditional*. The righteous will live again, *forever*; but the impenitent will finally be destroyed—likewise *forever*. Life is thereby conditional. These are the final endings of the two ways of life and death (*The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, p 20,21).

Edward Fudge: What we have found, beyond any question, is that the Old and New Testaments alike, in a multiplicity of ways, terms, figures, pictures, expressions and examples, declare time and time again that the wicked finally pass away and be no more, that righteousness will then fill the universe, and that God will then forever be all in all. Not one time in all of Scripture does God say that any human being will be made immortal for the purpose of suffering conscious everlasting torment (*The Fire That Consumes*, p 434).

4. We must let our teaching be determined by Scripture not by reason or feeling.

August Pieper: The Christian gives his Yea and Amen to the unimaginable horrible torments of hell, because God has so ordered them and has himself revealed them, although human nature revolts against the thought of eternal torment (*Isaiah II*, p 706).

Francis Pieper: The objections [to eternal punishment] are understandable, for the thought of a never-ending agony for rational beings, fully realizing their distressing plight, is so appalling that it exceeds comprehension. . . . But all objections are based on the false principle that it is proper or reasonable to make our human sentiments and judgements the measure of God's essence and activity (*Christian Dogmatics*, III, p 545).

5. Damnation is a permanent separation from the enjoyment of God's grace.

a) Note the description of the judgment as separation.

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Matthew 7:23 Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”

Matthew 8:12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

b) Note some descriptions of damnation as death and destruction.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Matthew 7:13 Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

c) Damnation includes punishment of loss (*mala privativa, poena damni*).

Psalms 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

Psalms 5:5 The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.

Isaiah 48:22 “There is no peace,” says the LORD, “for the wicked.”

Luke 13:28 There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.

Hebrews 4:3 Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.””

Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.

d) Damnation includes suffering of pain (*mala positiva, poena sensus*).

1) The pain is real.

2 Thessalonians 1:6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you.

Matthew 13:42 They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 16:23,25,28 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁵ But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.” ²⁸ “I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.”

Romans 2:9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.”

2) **The pain is intense.**

Matthew 8:12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:50 Throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

Revelation 6:16,17 They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷ For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”

Revelation 9:6 During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

3) **It is debated whether the unquenchable fire and the never-dying worm are to be understood literally or metaphorically.**

Isaiah 66:24 And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.

Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Mark 9:43,44,46,48 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out, ⁴⁴ where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. ⁴⁶ where their worm does not die and the fire is not

quenched.⁴⁸ where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. Parallel Matthew 18:8,9

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Quenstedt: Opinions of the nature of the fire of hell:

1. The first opinion is that of those who hold that the fire of hell will be material, physical, elemental. So certain fathers, such as Tertullian, Augustine etc. held. The reasons for this opinion are the following:
 - 1) One should not depart from the literal sense.
 - 2) Flame, sulfur, smoke, wood are ascribed to the fire of hell; therefore it is physical fire.
 - 3) This fire burns human bodies; therefore also it will be physical.... These reasons do not yet prove fully that the fire of hell will be material or elemental. For
 - a) Holy Scripture clearly says that all the elements on that day of judgment will be burned up (2 Pe 3:10).
 - b) In Matthew 25:41 the fire of hell is called eternal. But a material fire and one properly called fire cannot be eternal.
 - c) The fire of hell also burns devils and souls; but a material fire cannot burn a spirit.
2. The second opinion is that that fire by which the machinery of heaven and earth is dissolved and destroyed will by God's decision involve the damned in their coarser part (i.e., their bodies) and this fire will be supernatural and will be the instrument of eternal torment. This is the opinion of Calixtus, Zanchius, Alstedt. Contra: From this opinion it follows that the fire of hell does not yet exist, and that the soul of the damned are not tormented by it.
3. The third opinion is that of those who think that Holy Scripture describes the state and condition of the damned as a fire, not because there is in hell a literal fire, but that it might signify the very bitter pains and griefs of the damned. This is the opinion of Ambrose, John of Damascus, Aegidius Hunnius, Balduin, Dannhauer. (The basis for this view is found in a comparison of Mt 25:41 and 46). These last words [in v.46] seem to indicate that by the hellish fire is meant the very severe punishment of hell.
4. Finally, there is the opinion of those who prefer to reserve judgment, rather than to assert anything for sure. Gerhard follows this opinion. He says, we do not doubt that by God's power it could happen that a physical fire torments devils and disembodied souls. But whether that fire will really be physical, material, and visible, or whether it will be non-physical, invisible, and immaterial we leave undecided, although we lean more toward the latter view (Gerhard is thus more inclined to think of it as an immaterial fire rather than the opposite) and we pray God earnestly that he will not make the answer clear to us by the knowledge that comes from experience (*TDP*, Pt I, chap. XIV, sect. II, qu IV, p 573).

4) There will be degrees of punishment.

Matthew 10:15 I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Matthew 11:22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

Luke 12:47,48 That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.⁴⁸ But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Romans 2:11,12 For God does not show favoritism.¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

6. Damnation will be eternal.

a) Sin, as an attitude, is perpetuated in the damned.

1) They do not repent or confess their guilt.

Matthew 7:22,23 Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?"²³ Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"

Matthew 25:44 They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"

2) They will be in eternal bondage to sin.

Matthew 22:13 Then the king told the attendants, "Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Revelation 22:11 Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.

Francis Pieper: Can ceaseless sinning be predicated of the damned? Since the damned remain morally responsible being, subject to God's Law, and yet are wicked, there is unending sinning on their part. The claim that the punishments of hell are intended to be remedial or restorative (hypothetical damnation) is just as unscriptural as the claim that these punishments are a means of annihilation. But to the question whether God will suffer the damned continually to blaspheme Him by outward acts some of our old Lutheran theologians do not risk an affirmative answer (*CD*, p 546-547).

b) Eternal punishment is uninterrupted and without end.

1) There will be no intermission in the pain.

Luke 16:24,25 So he called to him, “Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.”²⁵ But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.”

Isaiah 34:10 It will not be quenched night and day; its smoke will rise forever. From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again.

Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever (*εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων*). There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.

Revelation 19:3 And again they shouted: “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.”

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

2) There will be no end or escape.

Isaiah 66:24 And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.

Mark 9:43,44 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out,⁴⁴ where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.

Psalms 49:8 The ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough.

Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

2 Thessalonians 1:9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

Jude 6,7 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.⁷ In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Augsburg Confession, XVII, p 50, 3 But ungodly men and devils he will condemn to be tormented without end.

Apology, XVII, p 334, 66 We confess that at the consummation of the world Christ shall appear, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give to the godly eternal life and, eternal joys, but shall condemn the ungodly to be punished with the devil without end.

c) Critics raise these objections to the eternity of the torment.

1) Objection: “The biblical expressions for eternal may mean a long, yet limited period of time.”

Exodus 12:14, 24 This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.²⁴ Obey these instructions as *a lasting ordinance* (לְחֻקֵּי עֲדָעֵי עוֹלָם) for you and your descendants.

Exodus 21:6 Then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant *for life* (לְעֹלָם).

Response : When עוֹלָם means for a long, indefinite, but finite time, the context indicates this.

-a) There are qualifying terms: for generations to come, life time.

-b) The parallel between eternal damnation and eternal life makes it clear that the meaning of the term in this case is “eternal.”

Matthew 25:46 Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

-c) **The connotation “eternity” is made clear by heaping up the terms, for example, “to the ages of the ages.”**

2) **Objection: “Scripture teaches a restitution or restoration of the damned.”**

-a) **There will be a “visitation after many days.”**

Isaiah 24:21,22 In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. ²² They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be *punished after many days*, or NIV footnote:

released after many days. וְמָרַב יָמִים יִפְקְדוּ

Response: Does “visitation” (יִפְקְדוּ) mean release or punishment? Note the parallelism of this passages to 2 Peter 2:4:

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.

After many days there is an intensification of punishment, not a release.

-b) **There will be a “regeneration” (παλιγγενεσία)**

Matthew 19:28 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the *renewal of all things*, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Response: This is a plain reference to the new life for believers which follows Judgment Day.

-c) **There will be a “restoration” (ἀποκατάστασις).**

Acts 3:21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to *restore* everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

Response: This too refers to salvation as promised by the prophets for God’s faithful people.

-d) **“All things will be placed under Jesus’ feet.”**

1 Corinthians 15:27,28 For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Ephesians 1:10 [God’s purpose in Christ is] to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Philippians 2:9,10 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

Response: This includes subjection of enemies by force.

Psalms 2:9,12 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

7. The cause of damnation is unbelief.

a) The fault does not lie in God.

1) It is not a deficiency of divine grace.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Timothy 1:15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

2) It is not a lack of efficacy of the means of grace.

Luke 16:29,31 Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.”³¹ He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

3) It is not an absolute decree of damnation for some.

1 Timothy 2:4 [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

b) The fault lies entirely in sinful mankind.

1) Consider these general statements.

Isaiah 3:9 The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves.

Jeremiah 2:19 “Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

Hosea 13:9 You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper.

Romans 1:20-21 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

2) The unbeliever, rejecting Christ, remains in his sin.

John 3:18,19,36 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.

John 9:41 Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.”

3) The unbeliever, therefore, is damned both on account of his sins and of his unbelief.

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

John 8:24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.

Hebrews 10:26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.

8. The place of damnation is hell.

a) Hell is a “somewhere” (ποῦ *damnatorum*) not merely a state of mind.

1) Individuals are sent there.

Luke 16:28 I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.

Acts 1:25 ...[Choose one] to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs

1 Peter 3:19 Through whom also [Christ] went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Gerhard: Some clearly deny the latter definition (namely that hell is a place), and they think that hell can be defined only as a feeling of divine wrath and eternal malediction, as well as horrors of conscience. But it does not seem that it can be denied that there is a certain ποῦ (somewhere), in which the damned suffer their punishments. The bodies of the damned reunited with their souls, and therefore the damned themselves, will be either everywhere, or nowhere, or in a certain ποῦ. The first cannot be said, because being present everywhere derives its origin either from infinity of essence or of person. Neither of these can be claimed here. Add the fact that the damned are said to be not in heaven but in hell in the future. Therefore they will not be everywhere.... The second likewise cannot be said because ... all finite beings must be somewhere.... Therefore only the third opinion is left, namely, that the damned will be in a certain ποῦ (*Locis*, Vol Xx, Ch III, par XXV, p 175-176).

Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Science has shown the hidden unpunished sin is this internal fire—even the fire of a guilty conscience. ...The advanced psychist knows that this hell is mental, not material. ...Sin makes its own hell, and goodness its own heaven (*Hoekema, Four Cults*, p 219).

Hans Schwartz: Allusions in the New Testament, such as “outer darkness,” “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 22:13, and “eternal fire” (Matt. 25:41) evoke hell in terms of pain, despair, and loneliness. They express the anguish of knowing what one has missed with no possibility of reaching it, and witness to a state of extreme despair with no hope of recuperation. Such anguish and despair will not result from a local separation from God but must come from a dimensional separation from God and the faithful (*Braaten and Jenson, CD II*, p 586).

2) Hell is distinguished from the realm of heaven.

Matthew 8:11,12 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Revelation 22:14,15 Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Hollaz: It is certain that the hellish prison is in a real place distinct from the residence of the blessed. It is also likely that it is outside of this inhabited world. But where that place definitely is, is unknown to men who are pilgrims still on the way (*Examen.*, Pt III, sect I, ch Xii, qu 29, p 984).

Johannes Fecht (d. 1716): Where hell is, whether inside or outside the earth cannot be taught with sufficient proof, even though the parasites of the Roman Church or rather court promise sure knowledge of this thing in vain (*De statu damnatorum*, p 329).

Quenstedt: But of what kind that $\pi\omicron\upsilon$ is, is not stated. Some locate it in the world, and indeed exactly in the center of the earth, as the Papists do. Others locate it outside the world which is also probable (*TDP*, Pt I, chap. XIV, sect. I, thesis XXXIV, p 564).

b) Hell's location is not revealed.

1) It is customary to refer to heaven as above and to hell as below the earth.

Philippians 2:10 At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

2) This has been understood literally by some Roman Catholics.

Bellarmino: The Latin name *infernus* [the Latin word for "hell" which means "a place below"] is not doubtful, for it is distinct from the name "grave" and since it means something below us. But below us is nothing but the center of the earth. The places of hell must necessarily be understood as deep subterranean locations (*Disputat.*, Vol I, Bk IV, Ch X, I, p 247).

3) A subterranean location for hell does not necessarily follow, however, from references to going down to *sheol*.

-a) Korah and his followers went down to *sheol* when they were swallowed by the earth.

Numbers 16:33 They went down alive into [*sheol*], with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community.

-1) This passage describes the mode of their death (vs 30–32). The NIV renders: “went down into the grave.”

-2) If hell is in the earth, is heaven then in the clouds?

2 Kings 2:11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Acts 1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

-b) The term *sheol/ hades* is used as a parallel with death and decay.

Psalm 16:10 You will not abandon me to [*sheol*] [NIV—the grave] nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

Acts 2:27,31 You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

In such passages *sheol* is not hell, but the condition of death.

4) Remember Chrysostom’s word:

Let us not be concerned with, “Where is it?” but with, “How can we escape it?” (In Rom., hom. xxxi, n. 5, in P. G. LX, 674).

9. The doctrine of damnation is revealed as a warning.

a) It is loving to warn people so that they may escape the pain.

Matthew 3:2, 12 Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near....¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Matthew 8:11,12 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.¹² But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 24: 42, 48-51 Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come....⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, “My master is staying away a long time,”⁴⁹ and he then

begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹ He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 26:24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.

Mark 9:43-48 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. ⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where “their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

b) “Humane” theologians who fail to warn against hell are really lacking in mercy.

Ezekiel 33:6-8 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood. ⁷ Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. ⁸ When I say to the wicked, “O wicked man, you will surely die,” and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood.

II. The believers will enjoy eternal happiness in the presence of God in heaven.

1. This eternal happiness has many names.

a) The most common words are “life” and “live” (αἰώνιος ζωῆ).

Daniel 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to *everlasting life*, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Matthew 7:14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to *life*, and only a few find it.

Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter *life* maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

Matthew 25:46 Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to *eternal life*.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have *eternal life*.

John 5:24,29 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has *eternal life* and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to *life*.²⁹ Those who have done good will rise to *live*, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

John 6:27,40,54 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to *eternal life*, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have *eternal life*, and I will raise him up at the last day.⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has *eternal life*, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 17:3 Now this is *eternal life*: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Acts 11:18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto *life*."

Acts 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for *eternal life* believed.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is *eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the *eternal life* to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Isaiah 26:19 But your dead will *live*; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.

Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and *live*. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?"

Luke 10:28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will *live*."

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will *live*, even though he dies."

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also *live* with him.

1 John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might *live* through him.

b) Scripture uses many other names for eternal life.

1) Heaven, the heavens οὐρανὸς οὐρανοὶ

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in *heaven*, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Mark 10:21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in *heaven*. Then come, follow me.”

2 Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to *the third heaven*. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.

2) Paradise (garden) παράδεισος

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in *paradise*.”

2 Corinthians 12:4 [He] was caught up to *paradise*. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in *the paradise of God*.

3) Dwellings, rooms

John 14:2 In my Father’s house are many rooms (ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου μοναὶ πολλαὶ εἰσιν); if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

Luke 16:9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings (εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς).

4) Country, city, homeland

Hebrews 11:16 Instead, they were longing for a better country (πατρίδα)—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 13:14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come (οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὧδε μένουσαν πόλιν ἀλλὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐπιζητοῦμεν).

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship (πολίτευμα) is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

5) **Granary, barn**

Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn (εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην) and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Parallel Luke 3:17

Matthew 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.

6) **Abraham's side, Abraham's bosom**

Luke 16:22 The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side (εἰς τὸν κόλπον Ἀβραάμ). The rich man also died and was buried.

7) **Kingdom ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν**

Luke 12:32 Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the *kingdom*.

Matthew 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the *kingdom of heaven*.

Matthew 7:21 Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the *kingdom of heaven*, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 21:31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering *the kingdom of God* ahead of you."

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, *the kingdom* prepared for you since the creation of the world."

2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, we will also *reign* with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.

8) **Salvation σωτηρία**

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be *saved* through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be *saved*, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive *salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the *salvation* that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit *salvation*?

Hebrews 9:28 Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring *salvation* to those who are waiting for him.

1 Peter 1:9,10 You are receiving the goal of your faith, the *salvation* of your souls.¹⁰ Concerning this *salvation*, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care.

9) **Inheritance** κληρονομία

1 Peter 1:4 [You will be received] into an *inheritance* that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.

Acts 20:32 Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an *inheritance* among all those who are sanctified.

Ephesians 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any *inheritance* in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Hebrews 9:15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal *inheritance*—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your *inheritance*, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”

1 Peter 3:9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may *inherit* a blessing.

Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes will *inherit* all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are *heirs*—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

10) Glory δόξα

Romans 5:2 Through [Christ] we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the *glory* of God.

Romans 8:17,18 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his *glory*.¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the *glory* that will be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal *glory* that far outweighs them all.

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of *glory*.

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal *glory*.

11) Joy

1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy (χαρᾶ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ καὶ δεδοξασμένῃ).

12) Rest

Hebrews 3:11 So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest” (εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν μου).

Hebrews 4:1,9-11 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.⁹ There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest (σαββατισμὸς) for the people of God;¹⁰ for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

13) Wedding feast, feast

Matthew 25:10 But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet (εἰς τοὺς γάμους). And the door was shut.

Revelation 19:9 Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” (εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου τοῦ ἀρνίου).

Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. (*ἀνακληθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ*) Parallel Luke 13:29

Luke 22:30 ...so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. Eternal salvation consists in a perfect union with God and enjoyment of his presence.

a) God will be all in all.

1 Corinthians 15:28 When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

b) We shall be with God.

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

c) We shall see God (the beatific vision, *visio Dei*).

Psalms 17:15 And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Hebrews 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Revelation 22:1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

1) The “seeing” is predicated of the whole person. It is not limited to a *visio mentalis*.

Job 19:26,27 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

2) This *visio* will not necessarily be effected only through the human nature of Christ.

-a) Though God is invisible to mortal eyes, pure spirits are said to see him.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

1 Timothy 6:16 [God] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Matthew 18:10 See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

-b) Though Jesus certainly displayed the Godhead when he was on earth, after the final judgment he will not longer serve as a mediator between us and the Father in the same way as now.

Colossians 1:19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Matthew 17:2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.
Parallel Luke 9:29

John 14:8,9 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

1 Corinthians 15:24,28 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

-c) Perhaps we will see a theophany like the one at Sinai but more glorious.

Exodus 24: 9-11 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up ¹⁰ and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. ¹¹ But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

Ezekiel 1:25-28 Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. ²⁶ Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. ²⁷ I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

Daniel 7:9-13 As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. . . .¹³ “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

Revelation 4 and 5 selected verses: ² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. ⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. ⁶ Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. ^{5:1} Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” ³ But no

one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." ⁶Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne .

3) **The *visio Dei* produces a double result.**

-a) The vision produces perfect happiness.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

John 16:22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

1 John 1:3,4 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete.

Jude 24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy...

Matthew 25:23 His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

Psalms 16:11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Psalms 126:5-6 Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. ⁶He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

Psalm 73:25,26 Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Gerhard: Because God is the highest good, therefore by the beatific vision of himself he communicates his good, his joy, his sweetness in the highest degree to the elect. He is the fountain of every good, and therefore of all bliss, because from the beatific vision of God all the good things that belong to the blessed saints in heaven rise and depend in a unique way (*Loci*, Vol XX, Ch V, Par LX, p 384).

-b) The vision produces glorification of God.

Revelation 7:9-14 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,¹² saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”¹⁴ I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Revelation 11:16,17 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God,¹⁷ saying: “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.”

Revelation 19:1-7 After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,² for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”³ And again they shouted: “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.”⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: “Amen, Hallelujah!”⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!”⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

4) This will be a great advance over our present happiness.

2 Corinthians 5:7 We live by faith, not by sight.

Romans 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

John 16:20 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

5) We will enjoy the following blessings.

-a) Freedom from all evils and all the consequences of sin.

Luke 21:28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Romans 8:21-23 The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:25,26 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 49:10 They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water.

Revelation 7:16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

2 Thessalonians 1:6,7 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

-b) Freedom from sinning.

Hebrews 12:23 You have come to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect. Contrast He 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

-c) Freedom from temptation, trials, persecution.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

1 Peter 4:12,13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Revelation 12:7-11 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. ¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his

Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Matthew 25:32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.

-d) Our dogmaticians describe this freedom.

Gerhard: These blessings of eternal life can, however, be described in negative terms, both in general and specifically. In general (*γενικῶς*) we say that every evil that can be named or imagined will be absent from the blessed. Specifically (*εἰδικῶς*), we say that the evils of guilt and punishment, the evils of sin and its penalty, the evils of body and soul, internal and external evils, temporal and eternal evils, will be absent from the blessed... When the necessary consequence has been removed, also the cause has been removed (*Locī*, Vol XX, Ch V, Par LV, p 377).

-e) This joy will include many special blessings.

-1) There will be fellowship with saints and angels.

Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 13:29 People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

Hebrews 12:22,23 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.

1 Thessalonians 4:17,18 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds

to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Gerhard: The “thetical,” or positive blessings of eternal life can be classified as internal blessings, which the blessed feel in themselves, and as external ones, which they see in their partners in bliss, by the sight of which their internal blessings are increase (*Loci*, Vol XX, Ch V, Par LIX, p 382).

Gerhard: Just as Moses and Elijah spoke with Christ concerning his departure, that is, concerning the suffering and death of Christ, so in eternal life we will carry on those very pleasant conversations with one another concerning the mystery of redemption and salvation, which we cannot understand perfectly in this life (*Loci*, Vol XX, Ch V, Par XXII, 5, p 313).

Hoenecke’s comment: One could perhaps put a question mark behind this, namely, as far as the subject of the conversation is concerned. I can’t speak about salvation without speaking about sin. And if the discussion about sins is to be so true and lively that it actually contributes to the experience of the joy of salvation, it is, nevertheless, not conceivable without a certain sense of pain about the sins (of which one was guilty); and such a feeling would not be reconcilable with a condition of perfect bliss. One could well find a proof of Gerhard’s statement in Re 5:9ff; but compare 5:13; 1:5,6. That the fellowship of the saints in heaven with one another is very intimate is evident from the perfect love for one’s neighbor that exists in heaven (IV, p 331).

-2) All the saints will have complete joy and the same salvation, but the glory will be different.

a) Glory is distinguished from happiness.

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

b) There will be degrees of glory.

1) The degrees are gifts of grace, but they are related to one’s works and faithfulness.

Luke 16:9-12 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. ¹⁰

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly

wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

1 Corinthians 4:1-7 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. ² Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ³ I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God. ⁶ Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. ⁷ For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

2 Corinthians 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

2) The degrees may be positions of honor and responsibility.

Matthew 19:28 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of

Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Matthew 20:21-23 “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”²² “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered.²³ Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

Matthew 25: 23,28,29 His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”²⁸ “Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.”²⁹ For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.”

Luke 19:17,19 “Well done, my good servant!” his master replied. “Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.”¹⁹ His master answered, “You take charge of five cities.”

3) Perhaps they involve a display of differing glory.

Daniel 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

1 Corinthians 15:40-42 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable.

Gerhard: It is certain that the happiness and glory of all the blessed will be the same objectively [the object is after all God] and subjectively. ... It will be the same because it will continue and last

forever, ... the same because it will be sure, ... the same because it will be full, ... the same because it will be free of all adversity, ... the same because there will be a living love and sharing between all. ... However, there can be some question about whether that difference which will exist between individuals in heaven must be held to consist only in accidental glory of soul and body or whether it also consists in essential glory, so that in some of the blessed there will be a greater light of glory, in others less, because one blessed person sees the divine essence more perfectly and clearly than another. Our theologians more correctly assert that the difference should be held to consist only in accidental rewards: There will be one and the same salvation for all the saints but a differing glory. This difference will not create any disturbance, because there will be no envy there. There will be no jealousy because of greater brightness when the unity of love rules in all (*Loci*, Vol XX, Ch V, Par CXX. 5, p 463).

3. The joys of heaven are everlasting and unbroken.

a) There will be a new heaven and earth where there is no sin.

Isaiah 65:17 Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

Isaiah 66:22 "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure."

2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Psalm 37:9,11 For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land. ¹¹ But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

b) The joys will be uninterrupted.

John 16:22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

1 Peter 1:4 [You will be received] into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.

Revelation 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

c) They will be endless.

Matthew 25:46 Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Luke 16:9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

2 Corinthians 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Hebrews 5:9 He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Hebrews 9:15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Revelation 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

d) The heavenly joys will not be disturbed by thoughts concerning the damned (Lk 16:25).

Hutter: But by no means will they be disturbed, for the will of the blessed will in all things agree with the will of God. Therefore carnal feelings of this kind, which in this life are a sign of our weakness, will completely come to an end in that other life, where all our love will reach out only to those whom God himself holds dear to himself and makes heirs of eternal life. But in the damned they will admire the supreme justice of God and rejoice in it forever (*Comp. Theo*, 318).

4. Only believers will receive everlasting life.

a) Consider these truths about the gift of salvation:

1) Eternal life is not given as a reward of merit.

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”

2) Christ won eternal life for us.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:21,22 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

3) Christ’s work is appropriated through faith.

Romans 10:4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

b) Faith must be acquired in this life.

1) There will be no opportunity after death.

Hebrews 9:27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...

2) Hence the urgency of preaching the law and the gospel now.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

John 9:4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

Luke 24:47 Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

2 Timothy 4:1,2 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ² Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

Ezekiel 3:10,18 And he said to me, “Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. ¹⁸ When I say to a wicked man, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood.”

Matthew 18:15-17 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

3) Can any non-Christians enter heaven?

-a) The Roman Catholic Church, liberals, and even some Evangelicals say "Yes."

Karl Rahner (d. 1984): 2nd Thesis: Until the moment when the gospel really enters into the historical situation of an individual, a non-Christian religion (even outside the Mosaic religion) does not merely contain elements of a natural knowledge of God, elements, moreover, mixed up with human depravity which is the result of original sin and latter aberrations. It contains also supernatural elements arising out of the grace which is given to men as a gratuitous gift on account of Christ. For this reason a non-Christian religion can be recognized as a *lawful* religion (although only in different degrees) without thereby denying the error and the depravity contained in it....

3rd Thesis: If the second thesis is correct, then Christianity does not simply confront the member of an extra-Christian religion as a mere non-Christian but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this or that respect as an anonymous Christian (*Theological Investigations*, Vol V, from p 115-134).

Vatican II: Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or his Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do his will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does divine Providence deny help necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to his grace (*Documents*, p. 35).

Dominus Jesus (2000): Above all else, it must be firmly believed that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5), and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door. This doctrine must not be set, against the universal salvific will of God (cf. Tim 2:4). It is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for this salvation (Par. 20).

Clark Pinnock: According to the Bible, persons can relate to God in three ways and covenants: through the cosmic covenant established with Noah, through the old covenant made with Abraham, and through the new covenant ratified by Jesus. One may even speak of salvation in the broad sense in all three circumstances. That is, insofar as salvation connotes a relationship with God, there is salvation for people in all three of the covenants. Of course, there is a more complete saving knowledge of God in the new covenant than in the old, and more in the old than in the cosmic covenant, but a relationship with God is possible in the context of all three covenants. In all three, God justifies Jews and Gentiles on the ground of faith, the condition for salvation in all dispensations (Ro 3:30) (*A Wideness in God's Mercy*, p 105). The issue God cares about is the direction of the heart, not the content of theology (*WGM*, p 158). Uniqueness belongs first of all to the God of the Bible, and if it should be said that Jesus is unique, it will be only because of that special relationship to God he is thought to enjoy as God's Son. Uniqueness and finality belong to God. If they belong to Jesus, they belong to him only derivatively (*WGM*, p 53).

John Sanders: According to the inclusivist view, the Father reaches out to the unevangelized through both the Son and the Spirit via general revelation, conscience, and human culture. God does not leave himself without witness to any people. Salvation for the unevangelized is made possible only by the redemptive work of Jesus, but God applies that work even to those who are ignorant of the atonement. God does this if people respond in loving faith to the revelation they have (*What About Those Who Have Never Heard*, p 36).

Apology IV (II), p 126, 24 Now, although we cheerfully assign this righteousness of reason the praises that are due it (for this corrupt nature has no greater good, and Aristotle says aright: Neither the evening star nor the morning star is more beautiful than righteousness, and God also honors it with bodily rewards), yet it ought not to be praised with reproach to Christ.

-b) In the time before Christ, as today, the gospel was available. The nations threw it away and turned to their own ways.

Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Genesis 9:26,27 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. ²⁷ May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave."

c) **Thus the doctrine of eternal life is a great stimulant for our faith.**

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Romans 8:18,37 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

2 Timothy 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

Luke 10:16-20 He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

*Perducat nos ad beatitudinem vitae aeternae
Christus Jesus, fidei et vitae ἀρχηγέτης,
in saecula benedictus. Amen.*

May Christ Jesus the author of faith and life,
blessed to the ages,
lead us to the bliss of life eternal.
Amen.