

**Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)** <sup>18</sup> And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not [\[a\]](#)prevail against it.

## ***(Growth Track 2025 – Essentials)***

### ***What We Believe***

#### **B. Shaun Garing – November 2025**

##### **I. Review**

###### **A. The Importance of the Local Church (*Community*)**

1. **Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)** <sup>18</sup> And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not [\[a\]](#)prevail against it.
  - a. I will build (3618. oikodomeó): In the Greek New Testament the verb translated “to build” occurs forty-one times and carries both its obvious architectural sense and its richer theological sense of establishing, strengthening and edifying. The narrative, didactic, and prophetic books alike show that what is built reveals the builder’s identity, intent and ultimate allegiance. (Topical Lexicon)
  - b. prevail against (2729. katischuó): The verb under consideration communicates an active, victorious strength that pushes through resistance until it gains the mastery. It is more than mere endurance; it pictures decisive, effectual power that achieves its goal, whether for good or for evil. (Topical Lexicon)
2. **Acts 9:1-5 (AMP)** MEANWHILE SAUL, still drawing his breath hard from threatening and murderous desire against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest And requested of him letters to the synagogues at Damascus [*authorizing him*], so that if he found any men or women belonging to the Way [*of life as determined by faith in Jesus Christ*], he might bring them bound [*with chains*] to Jerusalem. Now as he traveled on, he came near to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him, And he fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me [*harassing, troubling, and molesting Me*]? And Saul said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. It is dangerous and it will turn out badly for you to keep kicking against the goad [*to offer vain and perilous resistance*].

##### **II. Our Vision and What We Believe**

###### **A. The Importance of Vision**

1. **Proverbs 29:18 (NKJV)** Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.
  - a. Vision (2377. chazon): Proverbs 29:18 applies the principle to society at large:

“Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.” In other words, moral order depends on the continuing proclamation of revealed vision, tethering practical obedience to divine disclosure. (Topical Lexicon)

- b. **Berkley Translation (Modern Language Version, MLV)** Where there is no vision, the people run wild, but he that keeps the law is happy
  - c. *Vision is divine insight into a Godly future, “glistening with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11, TPT) Through Gods direction we are offered the plan/path to be taken to that promised future. (Proverbs 3:5-6) Once we fulfill one phase of the the vision [making that future hope our present situation by taking obedient steps of faith] more is revealed and we then pursue what is next. Our divine nature is to be fruitful – not stationary in our pursuit of His plan. (Genesis 1:28) [Our carnal nature is to settle and pursue no further when we reach that point. (Proverbs 6:6)] As we continue pursuing the divine plan, times of transition are necessary. (Isaiah 43:19, AMPC) Sadly, some do not perceive these times of transition and miss out on all that is available in the future.*
2. **Habakkuk 2:1-3 (NKJV)** I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected.<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD answered me and said: “Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it.”<sup>3</sup> For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.
  3. **Jeremiah 29:11 (TPT)** Here’s what YAHWEH says to you: “I know all about the marvelous destiny I have in store for you, a future planned out in detail. My intention is not to harm you but to surround you with peace and prosperity and to give you a beautiful future, glistening with hope.

*“The Word of God declares...that neither is there any rock like our God. (1 Samuel 2:2) In First Corinthians 10:4 it says...For they drank of that spiritual rock and that rock was Christ. Jesus said that if we would be a doer of the Word and dig deep, lay a foundation on the rock, that nothing could shake it. (Luke 6:46-49) The rock is the revealed Word of God.”*

## B. Our Vision is to... (Where we are going...)

1. ...to birth, establish, and maintain a strong **Word-oriented local church.**
2. ...for the **supernatural power of God to be in manifestation** in our services and in our personal lives.
3. ...to have a family church where **all age groups** are ministered to by effective leadership.
4. ...to develop a children’s ministry where our children are **not only taught the Word of God, but experience God’s presence.**
- 5....to train each person in every age group to reach his **fullest potential in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Luke 6:40 & Hebrews 5:14)

6. ...**to train and equip people** in the ministry of helps. (I Corinthians 12:28)
7. ...that each individual may **find his place in the body** and in turn **help meet the needs of others**. (I Corinthians 12:12-21)
8. ...to be a **strong supporter of missions** and specifically with individuals who are on the mission fields of the world. (Philippians 4:15-19)
9. ...to **support the poor and needy** in every way that we can. (Psalm 41:1-2; Proverbs 19:17; Proverbs 28:27; James 2:14-16; I John 3:17-18)

*“A church is a body and each part is dependent upon the other parts. As each person takes his place of responsibility and service, the body will grow and much will be accomplished.”*

### C. Our Vision for Church on the Rock is to Develop... *(Our Areas of Emphasis)*

1. Prayer
  - a. Not only teach people about prayer, but to **participate in prayer both individually and corporately**.
  - b. Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16-17; Luke 6:12, 17-19; Acts 1:14; Ephesians 6:18-19; Romans 15:29-30; Luke 11:1; Luke 18:1
2. Teaching the Word of God
  - a. Several sessions a week **teaching in depth on different subjects**. Only the Word can make people spiritual and build them up. (Acts 20:32) Teaching, like prayer, was a **priority in the Master's ministry**.
  - b. Luke 2:40, 52; Luke 4:15, 31-32; Luke 5:1, 17; Luke 6:6; Luke 13:10; Luke 19:47; Acts 5:42; Acts 6:4; Acts 8:4, 25, 40; Acts 11:26; Acts 14:21; Acts 15:35; Acts 18:11; Acts 19:20
3. Worship
  - a. To develop within the church a **sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in the area of worship**. To **teach and practice worship – individually and corporately**.
  - b. Acts 20:20; Acts 13:1-2; Isaiah 40:31; Psalm 16:11
4. Fellowship
  - a. To **encourage and provide** certain times and places for fellowship. The Word teaches us to **encourage and exhort one another daily** and that the people we associate with affect us.
  - b. Hebrews 10:25; Hebrews 3:12-13; Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 27:17; Acts 2:42, 5:42
5. Evangelism
  - a. **Soul Winning** – Reaching out to neighbors, friends, relatives, and the city with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:16). Mark 16:15-20; gives us the “great commission” for the church and that **God will confirm His Word as we share it**.
  - b. Our goal is to equip people to be soul winners **in their daily activities of life**.
  - c. Philippians 2:13-16a; John 4:17-18, 28-30; John 4:38-41

### D. Our Statement of Faith *(What We Believe - Our Foundation)*

1. We believe in **one God – Father, Son & Holy Spirit** – creator of all things. (Genesis 1:26)

& Matthew 28:19)

a. **Genesis 1:26 (NKJV)** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

\*And God (430. elohim): Although morphologically plural, Elohim most frequently governs singular verbs and adjectives when speaking of the one true God. **Genesis 1:1** sets the pattern: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (**Genesis 1:1**). The plural ending conveys superlative majesty and, for Christian theology, fits comfortably with the later unveiling of God's triune fullness. Hints of plurality appear in divine deliberations: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image'" (**Genesis 1:26**). Yet Scripture insists on the singularity of the divine essence: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One" (**Deuteronomy 6:4**). (Topical Lexicon)

b. **Matthew 28:19 (NKJV)** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

2. We believe that the **Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God**, was **conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin Mary**, was **crucified, died, buried, resurrected**, and **ascended into Heaven** and is now **seated at the right hand of the Father** and is **true God and man**. (John 3:16, Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 23:33-56, Matthew 28:5-6, Mark 16:19, Colossians 2:9 & John 1:14)

a. Jesus was the *only* begotten Son. (Now the *firstborn* – Hebrews 1:6)

i. **John 3:16 (NKJV)** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

ii. Not perish (622. apollumi): 622 /apóllymi ("violently/completely perish") implies *permanent* (absolute) destruction, i.e. to cancel out (remove); "to die, with the implication of ruin and *destruction*" (*L & N*, 1, 23.106); cause to be lost (utterly perish) by experiencing a miserable end. (HELPS Word-studies); Here ἀπόλλυμι marks the final destiny of unbelief, contrasted with ζωὴ αἰώνιος. A similar tension appears in **Luke 13:3,5**, where Jesus urges repentance "or you will all perish," and in **2 Peter 3:9**, where divine patience restrains judgment because God is "not wanting anyone to perish." (Topical Lexicon)

b. Mary, Jesus mother, conceived of the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 1:18 (TLB)** These are the facts concerning the birth of Jesus Christ: His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But while she was still a virgin she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

c. Jesus was born of a virgin.

**Matthew 1:23 (AMPC)** Behold, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel—which, when translated, means, God with us.

d. Jesus will be crucified. (Adam's tomb? Golgotha near Mt. Moriah, Genesis 22:2)

**Luke 23:33 (AMPC)** And when they came to the place which is called The Skull

[Latin: Calvary; Hebrew: Golgotha], there they crucified Him, and [along with] the criminals, one on the right and one on the left.

e. Jesus died.

i. **Luke 23:46 (NKJV)** And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.

ii. He gave up the ghost (1606. εκπνέω): ἐκπνέω depicts the decisive moment when breath leaves the body. In the New Testament it is reserved exclusively for the death of Jesus Christ, underscoring the historical reality of His physical expiration and the purposeful completion of redemption. (Topical Lexicon)

f. Jesus was buried.

**Luke 23:55-56 (TLB)** <sup>55</sup> As the body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw it carried into the tomb. <sup>56</sup> Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to embalm him; but by the time they were finished it was the Sabbath, so they rested all that day as required by the Jewish law.

g. Jesus was resurrected.

i. **Matthew 28:5-6 (AMPC)** <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, Do not be alarmed *and* frightened, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, Who was crucified.<sup>6</sup> He is not here; He has risen, as He said [He would do]. Come, see the place where He lay.

ii. He is risen (1453. egeiró): Strong's Greek 1453, commonly rendered "raise," "awaken," or "arouse," spans 144 New Testament occurrences. The verb forms range from imperatives commanding immediate action to perfects that celebrate completed, enduring results. Whether applied to a sleeper, a paralytic, a prophet, or the crucified Lord, the word consistently depicts God-given restoration from a state of incapacity to purposeful life. The perfect tense (ἐγήγερται) in 1 Corinthians 15 signals an event whose effects are permanent and ongoing. (Topical Lexicon)

h. Jesus ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father..

i. **Mark 16:19 (NKJV)** So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

ii. "God's right hand" refers to where the Messiah (Jesus) was seated. He is of equal position, honor, power, and authority with God (John 1:1-5). The fact that Christ is "sitting" refers to the fact that His work of redemption is done.

i. Jesus is both God and man.

**Colossians 2:9 (AMPC)** For in Him the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead) continues to dwell in bodily form [giving complete expression of the divine nature]

3. We believe the **Bible in its entirety to be the inspired Word of God** and the infallible rule of faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3:16 & 2 Peter 1:20-21)

a. **2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

i. inspiration of God (2315. theopneustos): The adjective θεόπνευστος appears a

- single time in the Greek New Testament—in 2 Timothy 3:16. Paul reassures Timothy, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (Berean Standard Bible). Positioned in a pastoral letter that deals with doctrinal fidelity amid rising deception (2 Timothy 3:1-15), the term anchors Timothy’s confidence in the written Word by grounding it in God Himself. “Scripture” (graphē) in Paul’s usage already embraced the Old Testament and, by apostolic extension, the growing corpus that would become the New Testament (compare 1 Timothy 5:18 with Luke 10:7; 2 Peter 3:15-16). (Topical Lexicon)
- ii. doctrine (1319. didaskalia): Greek word: διδασκαλία – systematic instruction, authoritative teaching or doctrine that shapes belief and conduct. (Topical Lexicon)
  - iii. reproof (1650. elegchos): Here the term highlights Scripture’s capacity to confront false belief or behavior and establish what is right. (Topical Lexicon)
  - iv. correction (1882. epanorthōsis): From a compound of epi and anorthoo; a straightening up again (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance); Positioned between “conviction” and “training,” the term highlights Scripture’s unique power to set believers back on a straight path after error, restoring conformity to God’s revealed standard. Though the word itself is rare, the concept pervades both Testaments, linking divine revelation to moral and doctrinal realignment. (Topical Lexicon)
  - v. instruction (3809. paideia): The word occurs six times in the New Testament, spanning household instruction (Ephesians 6:4), pastoral counsel (2 Timothy 3:16), and a concentrated exposition on divine discipline (Hebrews 12:5–11). In every setting it points to the formative process by which character, faith, and obedience are shaped through purposeful training that may include corrective measures. (Topical Lexicon)
4. We believe in the **resurrection of the dead**, the **eternal happiness of the saved** and the **eternal punishment of the lost**. (Isaiah 26:19-20, Revelation 21:4 & Matthew 25:46) We believe in the **personal salvation of believers through the shed blood of Jesus Christ**. (Ephesians 1:7 & 1 Peter 1:18-19)
- a. Resurrection of the dead and eternal happiness
 

**Isaiah 26:19-20 (AMPC)** <sup>19</sup> Your dead shall live [O Lord]; the bodies of our dead [saints] shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For Your dew [O Lord] is a dew of [sparkling] light [heavenly, supernatural dew]; and the earth shall cast forth the dead [to life again; for on the land of the shades of the dead You will let Your dew fall]. <sup>20</sup> Come, my people, enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the [Lord’s] wrath is past.
  - b. Eternal punishment
    - i. **Matthew 25:46 (AMPC)** Then they will go away into eternal punishment, but those who are just *and* upright *and* in right standing with God into eternal life.

- ii. punishment (2851. kolasis): **Cognate: 2851 kólasis** (from *kolaphos*, "a buffeting, a blow") – properly, punishment that "fits" (matches) the one punished (R. Trench); *torment* from living in the *dread of upcoming judgment* from *shirking one's duty* (cf. *WS* at 1 Jn 4:18). (HELSP Word-studies);
  - iii. Life (2222. zóé): Though eternal life awaits its climactic unveiling in the age to come (Matthew 25:46; Revelation 21:6), it begins now for those who believe. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brothers" (1 John 3:14). Paul can speak of believers as already "alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11) while also longing for future glory (Philippians 1:21). This "already/not yet" tension shapes Christian hope and ethics. (Topical Lexicon)
- c. Salvation through Jesus Christ
- i. **1 Peter 1:18-19 (AMPC)** <sup>18</sup> You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold, <sup>19</sup> But [you were purchased] with the precious blood of Christ (the Messiah), like that of a [sacrificial] lamb without blemish or spot.
  - ii. redeemed (3084. lutróō): **3084 lytróō** (cognate with 3083/lytron, "a ransom-price") – properly, to *release* (set free) *by paying the full ransom*; "to release, on receipt of ransom" (Vine); (figuratively) to restore "something *back*, into the possession of its *rightful* owner – i.e. *rescuing* from the power and possession of an alien possessor" (Wm. Barclay). (HELPS Word-studies)
  - iii. blemish (299. amomos): Hebrews 9:14 and 1 Peter 1:19 explicitly apply the concept to Jesus Christ. "He offered Himself unblemished to God" and is "a lamb without blemish or spot." The Old Testament shadows culminate in the once-for-all sacrifice of the Son, whose moral perfection satisfied the holiness of God and secured eternal redemption. (Topical Lexicon)
  - iv. spot (784. aspilos): Strong's Greek 784, ἄσπιλος, belongs to a cluster of purity terms that include ἄμωμος ("blameless," Strong's 299) and καθαρός ("clean," Strong's 2513). Together they describe the absence of moral or ceremonial stain. While ἄμωμος emphasizes legal blamelessness, ἄσπιλος highlights the absence of any defiling spot, whether literal or figurative. (Topical Lexicon)
5. We believe in **sanctification through the Word of God by the Holy Spirit**, and in **personal holiness of heart and life**. (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- a. **1 Corinthians 6:11 (KJV)** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.
    - i. Ye are washed (628. apolouó): Strong's Greek 628 draws attention to the decisive, once-for-all cleansing accomplished by God when an individual responds in faith to the gospel. The term evokes more than external washing; it signals an inward removal of guilt and moral defilement, resulting in an entirely new standing before God and inaugurating a life of sanctification. (Topical Lexicon)

- ii. Ye are sanctified (37. hagiazó): The verb behind Strong's Greek 37 portrays the setting apart of persons or things unto God's exclusive possession and purpose. While rooted in the Old Testament cultus, the New Testament expands the theme to encompass the whole sweep of salvation history, from divine election to final glorification.' 1 Corinthians 6:11 identifies the Spirit's work at conversion (Topical Lexicon)
  - iii. Ye are justified (1344. dikaioó): Strong's Greek 1344 expresses the judicial act of declaring someone "in the right." The verb does not describe a process of moral improvement but a verdict rendered before God or people. According to context it can refer to (1) God's forensic declaration of righteousness, (2) public vindication of a person's claim, or (3) self-justification, whether true or false. (Topical Lexicon)
6. We believe in **divine healing through faith in the name of Jesus Christ** and that **healing is included in redemption.** (Isaiah 53:5 & 1 Peter 2:24)
- a. **Isaiah 53:5 (NKJV)** But He *was* wounded<sup>[k]</sup> for our transgressions, *He was* <sup>[l]</sup>bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes<sup>[m]</sup> we are healed.
    - i. wounded (2490. chalal): The verb occurs about one hundred forty-three times and gathers several distinct yet related ideas: profaning what is holy, defiling persons or places, beginning an action, and piercing or fatally wounding. All nuances share the sense of breaching a boundary that God has set—whether the boundary is ritual, moral, temporal, or physical. (Topical Lexicon)
    - ii. transgressions (6588. pasha): denotes a wilful break with God's revealed will. Unlike inadvertent sin, it is conscious revolt that fractures covenant relationship, producing guilt that only divine forgiveness can remove.
    - iii. bruised (1792. daka): pictures a force that presses down until the object is broken, shattered, or pulverized. Scripture applies the verb both literally and figuratively, moving from cracked clay walls (Job 4:19) to crushed spirits (Isaiah 57:15). The occurrences cluster in poetry and prophecy, where vivid imagery communicates humanity's fragility, the plight of the oppressed, the certainty of divine judgment, and the redemptive plan fulfilled in the Messiah. (Topical Lexicon)
    - iv. iniquities (5771. avon): (avon) gathers the ideas of twistedness, moral perversity, the personal or corporate guilt that arises from such acts, and the consequent liability to punishment. Scripture never isolates the deed from its effects on the sinner's heart or on the community. Because the term carries both deed and burden, it can be translated "iniquity," "guilt," or "punishment for iniquity" depending on context. (Topical Lexicon)
    - v. chastisement (4148. musar): Isaiah 53:5 links מוֹסָר with redemptive suffering: "The chastisement that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." The Servant bears covenant discipline in place of the guilty, achieving peace and opening a path for renewed obedience. (Topical Lexicon)
    - vi. stripes (2250. chabburah): Isaiah twice draws on חַבּוּרָה. In Isaiah 1:6 the

prophet depicts Judah's apostasy: "From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds, welts, and festering sores." National sin has rendered God's people a body sick unto death. The Servant absorbs the wound that belonged to the covenant breakers, providing the remedy that Judah could never produce for herself.

- vii. healed (7495. rapha): Isaiah foresees a Servant "pierced for our transgressions... and by His stripes we are healed" ([Isaiah 53:5](#)). Here רָפָא reaches its theological summit: the impending atonement will address both sin's guilt and its corrupting effects. The Gospels later reveal Jesus embodying this promise, healing diseases as signs of a deeper redemption ([Matthew 8:16–17](#) echoing [Isaiah 53](#)). (Topical Lexicon)

7. We believe in **water baptism**, and the **baptism of the Holy Spirit as distinct from the new birth**, in **speaking in tongues** as the Spirit of God gives utterance, and **gifts of the Spirit** and the evidence of the **fruit of the Spirit**. We believe that **all are available to believers**. (Matthew 28:19, Acts 8:12-17, Acts 2:4, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 & Galatians 5:22-23)

a. Water baptism

**Matthew 28:19 (AMPC)** Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

b. Baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues

**Acts 2:4 (NKJV)** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

c. The gifts of the spirit

- i. **1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (KJV)** <sup>8</sup> For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup> To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; <sup>10</sup> To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

\*Word of wisdom (Revelation) – Divine utterance about a future situation.

\*Word of knowledge (Revelation) – Divine utterance about a past or present situation.

\*Gift of faith (Power) – A setting where God does something supernaturally *for you* that you could not do on your own. This is not the result of ordinary, saving, faith.

\*Gifts of healings (Power) – A gift to heal a specific type of illness.

\*Working of miracles (Power) - A setting where God does something supernaturally *through you* that you could not do on your own.

\*Prophecy (Utterance) – An utterance of edification (build up), exhortation (stir up) or Comfort (cheer up). This utterance has no foretelling.

\*Discerning of spirits (Revelation) – Seeing into the realm of the spirit oftentimes seeing angels and demons.

\*Tongues (Utterance) – Utterance in an unknown tongue.

\* Interpretation of tongues (Utterance) – Interpretation of an unknown tongue into a known tongue. (Not a translation.)

d. The fruit of the spirit

i. **Galatians 5:22-23 (KJV)** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,<sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

\*Love (26. agapé): The noun occurs 116 times across twenty-six New Testament books. It is never used of romantic passion and only rarely of natural affection. Rather, it denotes a holy, self-giving disposition that originates in God, is displayed perfectly in Jesus Christ, and is implanted in believers by the Holy Spirit. (Topical Lexicon)

\*Joy (5479. chara): **Cognate: 5479 xará** (another feminine noun from the root *xar-*, "extend *favor*, lean towards, be favorably disposed") – properly, the awareness (of God's) *grace, favor; joy* ("grace recognized"). (HELPS Word-studies)

\*Peace (1515. eiréné): εἰρήνη describes wholeness, harmony, and well-being granted by God and experienced among His people. In the New Testament it is never a mere absence of conflict; it is the positive, covenantal state that flows from God's redemptive work in Christ and is applied by the Holy Spirit to individuals and communities. Cultivate the fruit of peace (Galatians 5:22) through Scripture meditation and Spirit-led obedience. (Topical Lexicon)

\*Longsuffering (3115. makrothymia): 3115 /makrothymía ("divinely-regulated patience") is used of *God Himself* (see 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 3:15). Indeed, only *the Lord* produces 3115 /makrothymía ("true patience, longsuffering") in us and hence is *a fruit of the Spirit* (Gal 5:22). (HELPS Word-studies)

\*Gentleness (5544. chrēstotēs): 5544 /xrēstótēs ("useful kindness") refers to *meeting real needs, in God's way, in His timing (fashion)*. Hence 5544 (xrēstótēs) is listed as *a fruit of the Holy Spirit* (Gal 5:22). With the believer, 5544 /xrēstótēs ("divine kindness") is the *Spirit-produced* goodness which meets the need and avoids human harshness (cruelty). "We have no term that quite carries this notion of *kind and good*" (WP, 1, 92). (HELPS Word-studies)

\*Goodness (19. agathosune): This term belongs to the New Testament family that describes moral excellence and beneficent action. While other words in the group stress intrinsic virtue, this one highlights virtue actively expressed in generosity and righteous initiative toward others. (Topical Lexicon)

\*Faith (4102. pistis): The root of 4102/*pistis* ("faith") is 3982/*peithō* ("to persuade, be persuaded") which supplies the *core-meaning* of faith ("divine persuasion"). It is God's warranty that guarantees the fulfillment

of the revelation He births within the receptive believer (cf. 1 Jn 5:4 with Heb 11:1). (HELSP Word-studies)

\*Meekness (4236. *praotés*): *πραότης* (*praótēs*) denotes a disposition of humble strength, often rendered “gentleness” or “meekness.” It is not weakness, but power submitted to God, exercised without harshness toward others. Though this specific inflected form does not appear in the Greek New Testament, its cognates (*πρᾶος* and *πραΰτης*) saturate Scripture and shape the biblical vision of Spirit-filled character. (Topical Lexicon); humility (Strongs Exhaustive Concordance)

\*Temperance (1466. *egkrateia*): **1466** *egkráteia* (from 1722 /*en*, “in the sphere of” and 2904 /*krátos*, “dominion, mastery”) – properly, *dominion within*, i.e. “self-control” – proceeding out from *within* oneself, but *not by oneself*. (HELPS Word-studies)

8. We believe in the Christians hope – **the soon coming, personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.** (Matthew 24:36-44 & 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

a. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (AMPC)** <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first.<sup>17</sup> Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall be with the Lord!

\*Shall be caught up (726. *harpazó*): **726** *harpázō* – properly, seize by force; *snatch* up, suddenly and decisively – like someone seizing bounty (spoil, a prize); to take by an *open display* of force (i.e. *not* covertly or secretly). (HELPS Word-studies); The term supplies the biblical basis for the doctrine commonly called “the Rapture.” Paul presents the event as:

- Sudden and irresistible—believers are “caught up,” not merely invited.
- Corporate—“together with them,” uniting resurrected and living saints.
- Upward—“in the clouds... in the air,” indicating literal, physical relocation.
- Christ-centered—“to meet the Lord,” emphasizing personal encounter.

Because the word signals divine initiative, the timing and manner lie wholly in God’s sovereign hands, confirming that the hope rests on His faithfulness, not human effort. (Topical Lexicon)

b. **Matthew 24:36-44 (NKJV)** 36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of [a]heaven, but My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what [b]hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master

of the house had known what [c]hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

9. We believe in **evangelizing and missionary work** in accordance with the Christian commission. (Matthew 28:19)

a. **Matthew 28:19 (KJV)** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

\*and teach (3100. mathéteuó): **Cognate: 3100 mathēteuō** (from 3101 /mathētēs, "disciple") – to disciple, i.e. helping someone to *progressively learn* the Word of God to become a matured, growing *disciple* (literally, "a learner," a true Christ-follower); to train (develop) in the truths of Scripture *and* the *lifestyle* required, i.e. helping a believer *learn* to be a disciple of Christ *in belief and practice*. See 3101 (mathētēs). (HELPS Word-studies); The verb behind Strong's 3100 describes the intentional, relational process by which a learner is brought under the influence of a master-teacher so as to adopt his teaching, lifestyle, and mission. It moves beyond classroom instruction to a covenantal allegiance that re-orders priorities (Luke 14:26-27) and re-shapes conduct (John 8:31). In the Gospel record, the act is inseparably tied to faith in Jesus Christ, baptism, and ongoing obedience (Matthew 28:19-20). (Topical Lexicon)

b. **Acts 1:8 (NKJV)** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be <sup>[a]</sup>witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

### III. Church Structure

#### A. Church Government

1. The form of government a local body adopts should meet the following guidelines:

- a. It must be Biblically based.
- b. It must meet the needs of the local congregation.
- c. It must function for God's glory.
- d. It must allow the leadership the freedom to follow the spirit of God.
- e. It should safeguard the interests of all concerned.
- f. It should be theocratic in nature with a chain of authority from God through the leaders, to the people. God anoints and ordains men, not organizations.

2. Three main areas of government in society that are established by God.

a. Home (1 Corinthians 11:1-3)

**Ephesians 6:1-4 (NKJV)** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

<sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:

<sup>3</sup> "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." <sup>4</sup> And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

b. Civil Government

**Romans 13:1-7 (NKJV)** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will [a]bring judgment on themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. <sup>4</sup> For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil. <sup>5</sup> Therefore *you* must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. <sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

c. Church Authority (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 & 1 Corinthians 11:1)

i. **Hebrews 13:7 (NKJV)** <sup>7</sup> Remember those who [a]rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct.

ii. **Hebrews 13:17 (NKJV)** <sup>17</sup> Obey those who [a]rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

3. With no governmental order there is chaos, lawlessness, anarchy, and disorder

a. **1 Corinthians 14:33, 40 (NKJV)** <sup>33</sup> For God is not *the author* of [a]confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. <sup>40</sup> Let all things be done decently and in order.

b. **2 Peter 2:10 (NKJV)** And particularly those who walk after the flesh and indulge in the lust of polluting passion and scorn *and* despise authority. Presumptuous [and] daring [self-willed and self-loving creatures]! They scoff at *and* revile dignitaries (glorious ones) without trembling,

c. Judges 17:6, Judges 21:25, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, Romans 12:8,  
1 Thessalonians 5:12-14 & Acts 20:28-35

## B. Church Leadership

1. What is a Deacon? (1 Timothy 3:8-15)

a. **Deacon:** (1249. Diákonoi) Possibly derived from the word *diakónis* meaning "in the dust laboring" or "running through the dust." Also may be derived from the word Diákonoi meaning "to hasten." The deacons in a sense were helping or serving the bishops or elders, and this is why they were probably called *deacons*. They did not, however, possess any ruling authority as did the elders. [Z] (from 1223 /*diá*, "thoroughly" and *konis*, "dust") – properly, "thoroughly raise up dust by moving in a hurry, and so to minister" (WP, 1, 162); *ministry* (sacred service). (HELPS Word-studies); Strong's Greek 1249 (διάκονος, diakonos) designates one who renders active, often personal, service to another. Its New Testament usage

moves from ordinary table-service (John 2:5, 9) to the highest expressions of Gospel ministry (Colossians 1:25). In every setting the term underscores humble, task-oriented devotion rather than status or rank. (Topical Lexicon)

- b. The deacon was to be an assistant to the elder or bishop (pastor) in the church, not a member of a board that determined the actions of the elder or bishop. The word for deacon (1249) is also translated “servant” in numerous scriptures. (Mt 23:11, Mk 12:49, Jn 12:26, and Rom 16:1) Notice in the following passage that the deacon is to have rule over their family, but there is no mention of their rule in the local church as is mentioned for the office of the bishop in 1 Timothy 3:5.

2. What is an Elder? (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

- a. A Deacon, Elder/Bishop/Pastor MUST be proven. (1 Timothy 5:22)
- b. When we see the church of the New Testament beginning in the book of Acts, it is lead by the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. (Ephesians 2:20 and Revelation 21:14) Scripture indicates that the apostles established churches in areas where the Gospel had not yet been heard, then traveled to new areas and continued their work. Before leaving, however, they appointed *elders* over the churches to take the oversight of the flock. (Titus 1:5) An *elder* (4245) is defined as “an old man”, “an ambassador”, “a senior or one who is aged.” The elder was given the oversight because the office of the pastor had not yet been established in the early church. The fivefold ministry is not mentioned by name until Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus around 62 A.D. The elder of the early church was a man placed in a position of authority until the fivefold ministry gift of the pastor could be raised up to take over the care of the flock. An elder may have been called to be the pastor and may have stepped into that calling, but not in all cases. Elders were chosen for this task due to their experience and stability, having “been around the block” over the years. A sixty year old man is not likely to make the mistakes of a thirty year old.
- c. The New Testament mentions those who are referred to as *bishops* and *overseers*. Both of these terms come from the same Greek word. A *bishop/overseer* (1985) is an officer in the local church who acts as an “overseer” or “superintendent.” Although a different Greek word is used to describe the position, we see scriptural support that an overseer or a bishop is a New Testament pastor.

3. The Legal Board of the Local Church

- a. **Exodus 18 :21 (NKJV)** Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.
- b. Our Legal Board (November 2025)
  - i. Dr. Michael Jacobs (Founder of Church on the Rock, New Albany, IN & president, Michael Jacobs Ministries)
  - ii. Dr. Dennis Hattabaugh (Church on the Rock, Georgetown, TX)
  - iii. Joe Reuter (COTR Congregation Member)
  - iv. Dr. Keith Rogan (Church on the Rock, Goodlettsville, TN & Brentwood, TN)
  - v. Dale Tillet (COTR Congregation Member)

c. Verses for Reference

- i. Proverbs 12:15; 13:20 - walking with wise men
- ii. Proverbs 15:22 - success through counsel
- iii. Proverbs 19:21 – the counsel of the Lord will stand
- iv. Proverbs 20:5 – Wise counsel must be drawn out of the heart (spirit)
- v. Proverbs 20:18, 24:6 – with wise counsel wage war

C. Church Membership

1. Why some people have a problem with church membership:

- a. Fearful of commitment due to past hurts. (Psalm 77:2 & Philippians 3:13-14)
- b. Some want the “freedom” to move and operate without accountability to human authority (Mark 6:30 & Luke 12:48b)
- c. In the New Testament all members of the universal church were members of local churches. A Christian in "isolation" is not in the New Testament. (Ephesian 4:16)

2. Advantages of practical church membership:

- a. Colossians 2:2 – A deeper level of fellowship and family.
- b. Ephesians 4:16 - greater productivity and impact in the lives of other members, city, town, state, etc.
- c. Galatians 6:1-2 – A greater sense of accountability and responsibility.
- d. 1 Thessalonians 5:11-12 – Greater comfort, edification, and opportunities to receive pastoral care.
- e. Matthew 18:19-20 – Greater success as a member of a local church family.

3. Ways to be confirmed as a church member:

- a. Confirm defined: To make firm, or more firm; to add strength to; to strengthen; as, health is *confirmed* by exercise. (Webster 1828 Dictionary)
- b. By the laying on of hands by the leadership and prayer.
- c. By extending the right hand of fellowship. (Galatians 2:8-9)
- d. By a verbal commitment or public affirmation, whereby the believer enters into covenant relationship. Confirming they are willing to receive the privileges, assume the responsibilities, and accept the discipline of the local church of which he is a member.
- e. Take an oath for confirmation. To commit oneself, which is "to pledge; to entrust; to." (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 & Hebrews 6:16-17)

4. Commitment as a church member:

- a. God illustrates church as a family (Galatians 6:10 & Ephesians 3:15)
  - i. Family responsibility
  - ii. Family relationship
- b. How to demonstrate commitment:
  - i. 1 Peter 1:22 - love one another
  - ii. Romans 14:19 - build up one another
  - iii. 1 Peter 4:10 - serve one another
  - iv. Ephesians 4:32 - forgive one another
  - v. Ephesians 5:21 - submit to one another

- c. Things not to do:
  - i. Romans 14:13 – condemn, criticize or judge
  - ii. James 4:11- not speak evil of each other
  - iii. Galatians 5:26 - not envy one another
- d. How to accomplish commitment:
  - i. 1 Corinthians 6:17 - joining to the Lord one spirit (Acts 11:23)
  - ii. Psalm 119:31 - stick to Gods testimonies (Word)
  - iii. Genesis 2:24 - cleave to our mates
  - iv. Ephesians 4:1-6. 16 – be committed to each other

#### D. The Relationship between Leadership & Church Members

1. The responsibilities of leaders towards the people:
  - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14 – offer general oversight / rule= preside over; to care for; to give attention to
  - b. 1 Peter 5:2-3 - rule with a spirit of gentleness
  - c. Acts 20:28-35 – feed the flock; watching out for wolves; help the weak
  - d. 1 Timothy 3:2 & Titus 1:9 – offer a good example to follow/imitate
  - e. Ephesians 4:14 & Titus 2:1 - teaching sound doctrine which brings stability
2. The attitude of the people towards leadership:
  - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 - esteem them in love for their works sake. Esteem defined: To set a value on, whether high or low; to estimate; to value. (Webster 1828 Dictionary)
  - b. Hebrews 13:7. 17 - submit to godly leadership
  - c. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 - financial support (1 Corinthians 9:7-14)
  - d. 1 Timothy 5:1, 19-20 - careful about hastily charging a leader with wrong
  - e. 1 Thessalonians 5:25 - pray for the leadership
  - f. Acts 1:13-15 - pray with your leaders (Acts 2:41-43; 4:29-33)

### III. Tithing (*Key words: all, portions, first fruits, best, tenth*)

A. What is a tithe? It is a tenth of what we receive and it is holy to the Lord.

1. **Leviticus 27:30-33 (NKJV)** And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD. <sup>31</sup> If a man wants at all to redeem *any* of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. <sup>32</sup> And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. <sup>33</sup> He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.' "
2. Numbers 18:21-32
2. 2 Chronicles 30:22; 31:1-21
3. Nehemiah 10:37-39; 12:44-47; 13:10-14
4. Malachi 1:6-14; Malachi 3:7-14

5. **Matthew 23:23 (NKJV)** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.
6. Hebrews 7:7-8

## B. What is the purpose of the tithe?

1. The tithe is giving honor to God.  
 \***Proverbs 3:5-12 (NKJV)** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. <sup>7</sup> Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.<sup>8</sup> It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. <sup>9</sup> Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; <sup>10</sup> So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine. <sup>11</sup> My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; <sup>12</sup> For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.
2. The tithe helps take care of the minister. (1 Corinthians 9:6-14)
3. The tithe helps supply God's house (the church) with what it needs.  
 \***Malachi 3:10 (AMPC)** Bring all the tithes (the whole tenth of your income) into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house (1 Timothy 3:15), and prove Me now by it, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

## C. God wants *you* first. The attitude of our hearts while giving is important

- a. 2 Corinthians 8:5, 12
- b. Matthew 6:24-33
- c. Proverbs 21:27; 23:26; 28:6
- d. Jeremiah 2:3

## D. Proper ways to minister the tithe to the Lord

- a. Give in faith
  - i. Hebrews 11:1, 6
  - ii. Proverbs 3:9-10
- b. Give in obedience and willingness  
**Isaiah 1:19-20 (TLB)** <sup>19</sup> If you will only let me help you, if you will only obey, then I will make you rich! <sup>20</sup> But if you keep on turning your backs and refusing to listen to me, you will be killed by your enemies; I, the Lord, have spoken.
- c. Tithing allows meat in God's house
  - i. Malachi 3:10
  - ii. Luke 12:42 (Ephesians 2:19)
  - iii. Hebrews 5:13-14
  - iv. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3

- d. Give according to your ability
  - i. Deuteronomy 16:17
  - ii. Acts 11:29
  - iii. 2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:6-15
  - iv. Ephesians 4:16, 27-28

## IV. Conclusion

### **The House of God**

There are *seven reasons* why we must build the House of God:

1. It is the place where sinners find mercy.
2. It is the place where Heaven is made real to mankind.
3. It is the place where God speaks to us in revelation knowledge.
4. It is the place where angels congregate in the earth.
5. It is the place where God gives us a vision and destiny for our lives.
6. It is the place where we join hands with God financially.
7. It is the place where the divine laws of increase begin to operate in our lives.

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