

Statement of Faith (with scripture references and implications)

The Scriptures

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament (**2 Pet 3:15,16**), as the written Word of God (**Matt 1:22; 4:4; 19:4,5; Heb 1:1-2**). The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind (**Jn 17:17; 1 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:23; Ps 119:44, 45, 165**). It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (**Lk 16:29-31; Gal 1:8, 9; 2 Tim 3:15**). Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God (**2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20,21**). Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches (**Num 2:19; 2 Sam 7:28; Prov 30:5; Ps 119:96,160; Matt 5:18; Jn 10:35; 17:17; Tit 1:1,2**). Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose (**Lk 1:1-4**) and in reverent obedience to the Lord (**Matt 28:20; 2 Thess 3:14; 1 John 2:5**) who speaks through it in living power (**2 Tim 3:16**). All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures (**2 Tim 2:15**) and diligently apply them to their lives (**1 Tim 4:16, Matt 22:29**). The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine (**2 Tim 3:16**). They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom (**Rev 22:18,19**). Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture (**Acts 17:11, 2 Thess 2:15**). We continue to grow in our knowledge of God and his ways (**Rom 15:4; Rom 1:2; 4:21; Heb 10:23; 2 Pet 1:4; 3:13**) through the Scriptures (**Matt 4:4**).

God Is Triune

There is one God (**Dt 6:4; Mk 12:29**): infinite (**Ps 90:2; 145:3**), eternal (**Ps 33:11; 102:25-27; 115:3; Dan 4:34,35; John 5:26; Acts 17:24-25**), almighty (**Jer 32:17; Eph 1:11; 3:20; 2 Cor 6:18; Rev 1:8**), and perfect in holiness (**Dt 32:4; Ps 18:30; 50:2; Matt 5:48**), truth (**Jn 14:6**), and love (**1 Jn 4:8,16**). The Triune God consists of God the Father (**Dt 32:6, Mt 6:6; Rom 8:15; 1 Cor 8:6**), God the Son (**Matt 3:17; Jn 1:14; 3:16; Gal 4:4; Heb 1:5**) and God the Holy Spirit (**Jn 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom 8:9, 26; Gal 4:6**) as three distinct Persons (**Jn 17:11; Matt 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Pet 1:2**) but one divine being, co-existent (**Gen 1:1-3**), co-equal (**John 10:30; Acts 5:3-4**), co-eternal (**Jn 3:35; 17:24**). One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith (**Jn 3:16, 17; 6:38; 14:16; 16:7**) and life (**1 Cor 11:3; 12:12; Rev 7:9**).

God the Father

God the Father (**Dt 32:6; Mt 6:6; Rom 8:15; 1 Cor 8:6**) is the Creator of heaven and earth (**Gen 1:1; Ps 33:6; Jn 1:3; Col 1:15-17; Heb 11:3**). By his word (**Gen 1; John 1:1-3**) and for his glory (**Ps 19:1-2; Col 1:16; Rom 11:36**), he freely (**Isaiah 44:24**) and supernaturally created the world from nothing (**Gen 1:1; Heb 11:3**). Through the same Word he daily sustains all his creatures (**Heb 1:3**). He rules over all (**Eph 4:6**) and is the only Sovereign (**2 Kgs 19:15, 19; Ps 86:10; Is 37:16**). His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted (**Gen 50:20; Act 2:23**). He is faithful to every promise (**Num 23:19; Josh 23:14; Ps 145:13; Rom 4:19-21; 2 Cor 1:20**), works all things together for good to those who love him (**Rom 8:28**), and in his unfathomable grace gave his Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption (**Jn 3:16; Eph 1:7**). He made man for fellowship with himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of his glory (**Gen 1:26-28; Rom 11:36; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11**).

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ (**Matt 1:21; 16:18**), the only begotten Son of God (**Jn 3:16**), was the eternal Word made flesh (**Jn 1:1,14**), supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit (**Matt 1:18; Lk 1:34,35**), born of the Virgin Mary (**Isa 7:14; Matt 1:20; Lk 1:34,35**). He was perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience (**Rom 5:19; Gal 4:4-5; Matt 3:15; Phil 2:7,8; Heb 4:15**). He is fully God (**Isa 9:6; Jer 23:6; Jn 1:1; 20:28; Rom 9:5; Col 2:9**) and fully man (**Matt 4:2; Lk 2:40,52; Jn 11:35; Heb 5:7-8; 1 Jn 1:1-13**). He was always with God and is God (**Jn 1:1-2**). Through him all things came into being and were created (**Jn 1:3; Col 1:16**). He was before all things and in him all things hold together by the word of his power (**Col 1:17**). He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation (**Col 1:15**), and in him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily (**Col 1:19**). He is the only Savior for the sins of the world (**Jn 4:42; 1 Jn 4:14**), having shed his blood and died a vicarious death (**Jn 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 5:21**) on Calvary's cross (**Col 1:19-22, Phil 2:8**). By his death in our place, he revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God (**Rom 3:26**). Having redeemed us from sin, the third day he rose bodily from the grave (**Matt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:39; Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:20,44-45; Col 1:18; Rev 1:5**), victorious over death (**1 Cor 15:26, 55**) and the powers of darkness (**Col 2:15**), and for a period of 40 days (**Acts 1:3**) appeared to more than 500 witnesses (**1 Cor 15:6**), performing many convincing proofs of his resurrection (**Matt 28:9-10,16-20; Lk 24:13-53; Jn 20:11-21:25; Acts 1:3**). He ascended into heaven (**Lk 24:51; Acts 1:6-11; Eph 1:20, 4:8-10; 1 Tim 3:16**) where, at God's right hand (**Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 8:1, 10:12; 1 Pet 3:22**), he intercedes for his people (**Rom 8:34; Heb 2:17, 3:1, 4:14, 6:20, 7:25, 8:1, 9:24; 1 Jn 2:1**) and rules as Lord over all (**Eph 1:21-23**). He is the Head of his body, the Church (**Matt 21:42, Eph 1:22, 5:23; Col**

1:18), and should be adored (**Lk 14:26; Phi 3:7-11**), loved (**Matt 10:37, 28:19; Mk 12:29-30; Jn 8:42, 20:21**;), served, and obeyed (**1 Cor 7:22; 2 Cor 9:13; Eph 6:5-6; 1 Pet 1:2**) by all.

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life (**Gen 2:7**), convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (**Jn 16:8; 1 Cor 2:14**). Through the proclamation of the gospel he persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord (**2 Cor 3:17-18, 4:3-6**). By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy (**Rom 9:14-18, 1 Tim 1:13-14, 16; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 2:10**). The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith (**Rom 3:24; 5:15-21; 12:5; 1 Cor 1:2, 5:19, 15:22; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 1:22, 2:17, 3:28, Eph 1:4, 2:12, 3:6, 4:32; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Thess 4:16**), brings about the new birth (**Ezek 36:25-27; Jn 3:3, 5; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:5; Col 2:1; 1 Thess 1:4-5; 2 Thess 2:13; Tit 3:5; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3**), and dwells within (**Jn 14:17; Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 3:16**) the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son (**Jn 16:14**), who in turn came to glorify the Father (**Jn 17:1-5**). He will lead (**Jn 16:13; Acts 15:28; Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18**) the Church into a right understanding (**2 Tim 2:7**) and rich application (**Phil 1:9-11**) of the truth of God's Word (**2 Tim 3:16**). He is to be respected and honored as God and one of the three Persons of the Trinity (**Jn 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Rom 8:9, 26; Gal 4:6**).

Man

God made man—male and female—in his own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with him (**Gen 1:26-27, 5:1, 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Col 3:10; Jam 3:9**). Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God (**Gen 3:1-6; Jn 8:44; Rom 5:12-14, 16:20; 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:13-14**). Being estranged from his Maker (**Rom 5:10**), yet responsible to him (**Rom 1:19-21**), he became subject to divine wrath (**Rom 1:18; 2:5; 3:9-19; 3:23; Eph 2:3**), inwardly depraved (**Gen 6:5; Jer 17:9; Isa 6:5; Rom 5:15, 8:5-8; Eph 2:1-2, 4:17-19**) and, apart from a special work of grace (**2 Cor 4:3-4**), utterly incapable of returning to God (**Rom 3:11-12**). This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will, and affections (**Gen 6:5; Rom 3:9-18**). Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin (**Jn 8:34**) and Satan (**1 Jn 5:19**). He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God (**Jn 8:44**). Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ (**Isa 53:6, 64:6; Rom 3:23, 6:23**).

The Gospel

The good news is revealed in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension (**Mk 1:1, 1 Cor 15**). Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel (**1 Cor 15:3**), his resurrection is the power of the gospel (**1 Cor 15:4,20-28**), and his ascension is the glory of the gospel (**Mk 16:19; Lk 24:26; Eph 4:8-10**). Christ's death is a substitutionary (**Mk 10:45; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 2:16-17; 1 Pet 2:24, 3:18**) and propitiatory (**Isa 53:6; Jn 3:36; Rom 3:25, 5:9; Heb 2:17; 1 Thess 5:9; 1 John 2:2, 4:10**) sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice (**Rom 3:26**) and appeases his holy wrath (**Rom 1:18**). It also demonstrates his mysterious love (**Rom 5:8, 1 Jn 4:10**) and reveals his amazing grace (**Rom 5:2; Eph 2:7-8**). Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man (**1 Tim 2:5; Heb 9:15, 12:24**). There is no other name by which men must be saved (**John 14:6, Acts 4:12**). At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ (**Gal 1:6-9**) and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what he has accomplished (**1 Peter 2:9-10**). Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches, and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross (**1 Cor 15:3; Gal 2:14**).

Salvation

Salvation (**Jonah 2:9; Lk 1:77, 2:30, 3:6, 19:9; Jn 4:22; Acts 4:12; Rom 1:16; 1 Thess 5:9; 2 Tim 2:10, 3:15, Titus 2:11; Heb 2:3; Rev 7:10, 12:10, 19:1**) the free gift of God (**Rom 5:15, 6:23; Eph 2:8**) is provided by grace alone (**Jn 1:16-17; Acts 18:27, 20:24; Rom 3:24, 4:16, 5:2, 15-17, 20-21, 11:6; Gal 1:6, 2:21, Eph 1:3-8, 2:5-8, 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:7, Heb 2:9**) through faith alone (**Matt 9:2, Mk 11:22; Lk 5:20; Acts 6:7, 14:22, 15:9, 16:5, 20:21, 24:24; Rom 1:5, 8, 16-17, 3:21-31, 4:5, 9, 11-22, 5:1-2, 9:30, 10:6,17; Gal 3:6-11**) because of Christ alone (**1 Tim 2:5-6; Col 1:13-18**), for the glory of God alone (**Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 10:31; 1 Pet 4:11; 2 Pet 3:1; Eph 3:21; Rev 1:6; Rev 7:12**). This salvation is made possible by Christ's substitutionary death and resurrection (**Isa 53:1-12; Jn 12:27-33; Lk 4:16-22; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:10,13; 1 Pet 2:24, 3:18**), whereby the believer receives the gift of eternal life (**Jn 3:16, 17:3**) and is declared righteous by God as a free gift (**Rom 3:21-26**). The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him (**2 Cor 5:21; 1 Jn 2:2**). He is justified and fully accepted by God (**Rom 5:1, 18-19**). Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes his child (**Jn 15:15; Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-19; Col 1:20-21**). The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin (**Col 1:14**) and, via the miracle of regeneration, liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit (**Jn 8:36; Rom 8:21; Gal 3:1-5,14**). Man's response to the gospel is repentance of his sins towards God and putting his saving faith in Christ (**Matt 21:32; Mk 1:15; Acts 11:18, 17:30; 2 Cor 7:10; 2 Tim**

2:25). We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (**Jn 10:27-29, 17:2,12; Rom 5:9, 8:29-30, 35, 38-39; Eph 1:3-14; Phil 1:6; 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 1:3-5; 1 Jn 2:19**).

Sanctification

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification (**Gal 5:17**) and seeks to produce his fruit in us (**Gal 5:22-23**) as our minds are renewed and we are conformed (**Rom 12:1-2**) to the image of Christ (**Rom 8:29-30**). Though indwelling sin remains a reality (**Rom 7:22-24, 8:13; 1 Jn 1:8-9**) as we are led by the Spirit (**Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18**) we grow in the knowledge of the Lord (**Eph 1:17, 4:13; Col 1:10, 2:2; 2 Pet 1:3,6**), freely keeping his commandments (**Ps 40:8; Jn 14:15, 21; Phil 4:8 1 Jn 5:3**) and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven (**Matt 5:16**). All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word, and deed (**Matt 12:36-37; Rom 14:12; Heb 4:13; 1 Pet 4:4-5**). The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard (**Acts 2:41-42, 13:2; Jam 5:16**). Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve his people until the end, which is most certain (**1 Pet 1:3-7**).

Empowered by the Spirit

In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service (**Acts 1:8, 4:8,31, 6:5, 8, 10; Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 2:4; 1 Thess 1:5; 1 Pet 1:12**). While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion (**1 Cor 12:13**), the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well (**Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31; Eph 5:18**). Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences (**Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; Eph 1:12-14; 5:18**). The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Church and for various works of ministry in the world (**Rom 8:26-27; 1 Cor 12:7,11, 14:26, Eph 4:7-11**). All the gifts of the Holy Spirit (**Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 7:7; 12:8-10, 28; Eph 4:11**) at work in the church of the first-century are available today (**1 Cor 13:9,12**), are vital for the mission of the church (**1 Cor 12:4-6,28 14:12, 24-25; Eph 4:12-14**), and are to be earnestly desired (**1 Cor 12:1, 31, 14:1, 39-40**) and practiced (**1 Cor 14:5, 26-33, 39-40; 1 Thess 5:19-21**).

The Church

God by his Word (**Deut 4:10**) and Spirit (**Acts 2:47; 1 Cor 12:13**) creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body (**Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pet 2:9**). By the same Word and Spirit, he guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity (**Matt 16:18; Acts 11:26; 1 Cor 7:17, 11:36, 14:4-5, 26, 34; Eph 5:27-29**). The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel (**Matt 18:15-20; Acts 2:41,47; 14:23; 20:7; 1 Cor 1:2, 9; 11:20; 12:13; 16:1-2**). The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (**Col 3:16; Eph 1:2; Eph 5:16-19; 1 Pet 2:9**). It also exists to serve him by faithfully doing his will in the earth (**Matt 28:19; Acts 11:29; 2 Cor 8:4; Gal 2:10; 1 John 3:17**). This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached (**Isa 61:1; Matt 10:7, 11:1,5; 24:14; 26:13; Mark 3:14; 6:12; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15,20; Lk 9:2, 6; 16:16; 24:47; Acts 8:4; 14:7,21; Rom 10:15; 15:20; 1 Cor 1:21,23; 2:4; 9:16; 15:1, 11; 2 Cor 4:5; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2**) and churches planted in all the world for a testimony (**Acts 8:1, 4, 14; 9:31; 11:19-22; 13:2; 14:21-23; 1 Cor 3:6; Col 1:6; 1 Thess 1:7, 8; Tit 1:5**). The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the gospel (**Matt 28:18-20**). When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation (**Jer 29:7; Matt 5:13-16; Rom 8:19-21; Gal 2:14**). Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church, in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer (**Acts 2:41-42**).

All members of the Church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church (**Acts 9:31; 20:28-30; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 1:2; 16:19; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; Philem 1:2**). In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God (**2 Cor 3:6**), and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God (**Matt 10:8; 12:18; 16:19; 24:14; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 6:9-10**). The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow (**1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-14**). Through the gift ministries, all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry (**1 Cor 14:3, 12, 26; Eph 4:12**). Eldership in the church is male (**1 Cor 14:33-34; 1 Tim 2:11-14; 3:2; Tit 1:5-6**). In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership (**Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 3:5,13,17; 2 Tim 2:10,14-15,24-26; 4:2-5; Tit 1:7,9; 2:1**) and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in his service in relation to one another and to the world (**1 Cor 12:4-31; 14:1-33; Eph 5:18-21**).

The Ordinances

Water baptism (**Matt 3:6,11,13-16; Mark 1:5-9; Lk 3:16,21; John 1:26,33**) is intended only for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become his disciple (**Acts 2:41; 8:12; 10:44-48; 16:14-15, 32-33; 1 Cor 1:16; Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12; Gal 3:27**). Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command (**Matt 3:15; 28:19; Acts 2:38**) and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water (**Matt 3:16; Mark 1:5,10; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39; Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12**) in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (**Matt 28:19**). Water baptism is a visual demonstration (**Rom 6:3**) of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of his death and resurrection (**Rom 6:4-5**). It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death, and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin (**Rom 6:6-11**).

As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ (**1 Cor 10:17; 11:29-30**). This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of his blood on our behalf (**Matt 26:26-29; 1 Cor 11:23-25**), and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death (**Matt 26:27-29; 1 Cor 10:16, 21**). As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith (**Heb 10:22**) and self-examination (**1 Cor 11:28**), we remember (**1 Cor 11:25**) and proclaim the death of Christ (**1 Cor 11:26**), receive spiritual nourishment for our souls (**John 6:53-57**), and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body (**1 Cor 10:17**).

The Consummation

The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ (**Matt 24:44; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:10; 1 John 3:2; Rev 1:7; 22:20**), the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ (**Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2; 1 Cor 15; 1 Thes 4:13-18; Rev 20:13**), the judgment of the just and the unjust (**Ecc 12:14; Matt 12:36; Matt 26:31-32; Acts 17:31; Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1**), and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth (**Isa 65:17; 66:22; Rom 8:19-21; Heb 12:26-27; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1; 22:3**). In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts (**Rev 20:10**) and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment (**Matt 25:46; Lk 16:26; 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 14:11; 20:14-15; 21:6, 8; 22:14-15**), but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with him forever (**Matt 25:34, 46; John 14:2; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 21:1-3**). Married to Christ as his Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving him and giving him unending praise and glory (**Eph 1:6,12; 5:25-32; Rev 19:6-10; 21:3; 22:17**). Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled (**Rom 8:19-21; 1 Cor 15:20-28**).



REDEMPTION
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and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God **(Rev 22:3-5)** who makes all things new **(Rev 21:5)**.