1. Stewards of God's Creation

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.

And God saw that it was good. O Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty.

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

He wraps himself in light as with a garment; He stretches out the heavens like a tent.

And God saw that it was good. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.

God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered in one place, and let dry ground appear."

He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate bringing forth food from the earth.

And God saw that it was good. The trees of the Lord are well watered. There the birds make their nests.

God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth. Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds."

How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.

"And let them rule over all the earth." And God saw that it was good.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; May the Lord rejoice in his works.

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

2. Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Gen. 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

3. Ten Commandments

And God spoke all these words:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my

"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God,

for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.

On it you shall not do any work,

neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

"Honor your father and your mother,

so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

"You shall not murder. "You shall not commit adultery. "You shall not steal. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

4. Joshua 24:14-24

"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.

LORD." Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and

But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!

He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."

Josnua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to
But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the LORD." Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD."

"Yes, we are witnesses," they replied. "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

5. Kings 8:23-30; 41-43

"O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth belowyou who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way.

You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it as it is today.

"Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said: 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done.'

And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true. "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day.

May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.

Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

"As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm

when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

6. 1 Kings 19:9-12

There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword.

"I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind.

After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire.

And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

Hosea 11:1-4

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more I called Israel, the further they went from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images.

It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them.

I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.

Micah 7:7; 18-20

But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot

and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago.

7. Messiah Brings the Kingdom

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.

For to us a child is born, To us a son is given,

The government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,

Establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

8. Repentance

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love: According to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence Or take your Holy Sprit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation And grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. The sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Repent! Turn away from all your offense. Get a new heart and a new spirit. The promise is for you and your children.

9. Mothers

A wife of noble characterwho can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

Her husband has full confidence in her and lack nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

She selects wool and flax And works with eager hands.

She is like the merchant ships, Brining her food from afar.

She gets up while it is still dark; She proves food for her family.

She opens her arms to the poor And extends her hands to the needy.

She is clothed with strength and dignity; She can laugh at the days to come.

She speaks with wisdom, And faithful instruction is on her tongue.

She watches over the affairs of her household And does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. 10. The Magi's Visit

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

`But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said:

"Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, A light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel. Matthew 2:1-9, 11; Luke 2:30-32

11. How Lovely Is Your Dwelling Place

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. **Blessed** are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere. **O** Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you. Psalm 84:1-2, 4-5, 7, 10a, 12

12. Christ's Ascension

After Jesus' suffering, he showed himself to the disciples and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command:

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 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."

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

"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."

Remember Jesus' words: "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Acts 1:3-11. Matthew 28:20b

13. Justification By Faith

Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Through whom 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. We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance,

And perseverance produces character, And character produces hope.

Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, Though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have now received reconciliation. Romans 5:1-8,11

14. Faith

Faith is being sure of what we hope for

And certain of what we do not see.

This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, **Because anyone who** comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country.

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age, was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

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.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, The author and prefecter of our faith. Hebrews 11:1-3, 6, 8-9a, 11, 17a; 12:1-2a

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