

A Biblical Theology Of The Church

A Biblical Theology Of The Church A Biblical Theology of the Church A biblical theology of the church seeks to understand the nature, purpose, and identity of the church as revealed throughout Scripture. It explores how God's plan for His people unfolds from Genesis through Revelation, emphasizing the continuity and development of God's redemptive work in and through the church. This approach recognizes the church not merely as an institution or social gathering but as a divine creation rooted in God's eternal purpose, grounded in Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. By examining key biblical themes, covenants, and the narrative flow of Scripture, a biblical theology of the church provides clarity on its divine origin, its mission, and its future hope.

The Biblical Foundations of the Church

Old Testament Roots and Covenants The concept of God's people begins early in Scripture, with foundational promises and covenants that foreshadow the church's New Testament fulfillment.

- The Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12, 15, 17):** God promises to make Abraham's descendants a great nation, bless them, and bless all nations through them. This covenant establishes the idea of a chosen people connected to God's purpose in salvation history.
- The Sinai Covenant (Exodus 19-24):** The giving of the Law at Mount Sinai formalizes Israel as God's covenant community, called to live in obedience and holiness as a witness to the nations.
- The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7):** God's promise to establish David's throne forever points to the coming Messiah, who will reign over God's people eternally. These covenants reveal God's plan to form a people for Himself, setting the stage for the New Testament understanding of the church as the continuation and fulfillment of these promises.

Prophetic and Wisdom Literature The prophets frequently speak of a future gathering of God's people and the renewal of the covenant community.

- Isaiah's Vision of Restoration (Isaiah 2, 11, 42):** Foretells a future where God's house is established as a house of prayer for all nations, emphasizing inclusivity and universal worship.
- Ezekiel's Vision of the Temple and the Spirit (Ezekiel 40-48):** Illustrates the renewal of Israel through a future temple and the outpouring of God's Spirit, prefiguring the New Testament church.
- Wisdom Literature (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes):** Emphasizes living in covenant obedience and the pursuit of righteousness, foundational for understanding the moral and spiritual life of God's people.

These texts lay the groundwork for understanding the church as God's new covenant community, rooted in the promises and hopes expressed by the prophets. The New Testament Revelation of the Church Jesus Christ as the Foundation The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ as the central figure in God's redemptive plan and the foundation of His church. The Gospel of Matthew (16:18): Jesus declares, "I will build my church," explicitly establishing the church's divine origin and purpose. The Incarnation and Ministry of Jesus: Jesus' teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection inaugurate the new covenant community, embodying the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20): Jesus commands His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them, defining the church's mission. The church's foundation is rooted in Christ's person and work, making Him the head and cornerstone of the community. The Church as the New Covenant Community The writings of Paul, Peter, and other apostles elucidate the church's identity as the spiritual body of Christ. Paul's Letters (Ephesians 1-3, 4-6): Emphasize unity in Christ, the church as the body with Christ as the head, and the believers' new identity in the Spirit. 1 Peter 2:9-10: Describes believers as a chosen race, royal priesthood, and a holy nation—echoing Old Testament language but now fulfilled in Christ. The Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper serve as visible signs of inclusion in the church and participation in Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The church is thus a spiritual fellowship called out of the world, united by faith in Christ and empowered by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit and the Formation of the Church The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in establishing, guiding, and empowering the church. Pentecost (Acts 2): The Spirit's outpouring marks the birth of the church and enables believers to witness boldly. The Spirit's Role: Convicts of sin, unites believers, bestows spiritual gifts, and guides the church's mission and doctrine (John 14-16). Paul's Teaching (1 Corinthians 12): Emphasizes the diversity of gifts within the church, all empowered by the Spirit for the common good. The Spirit's presence confirms the church's divine authority and ongoing mission. The Mission and Purpose of the Church in Scripture The Great Commission and the Gospel's Spread The church's primary calling is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. Make Disciples: Evangelize, baptize, and teach obedience (Matthew 28:19-20).1. Exalt Christ: Worship and glorify God in all aspects of life.2. Transform Society: Live out the kingdom values of justice, mercy, and humility.3. This mission is rooted in the biblical narrative of redemption and is the continuation of Christ's earthly ministry. The Church's Visible and Invisible Dimensions The biblical understanding of the church

encompasses both its visible and invisible aspects. Visible Church: The gathered community of believers, local churches, and their organized ministries. Invisible Church: The spiritual fellowship of all true believers across time and space, known only to God. This dual perspective underscores that while the church is tangible and visible in history, its ultimate reality is rooted in the spiritual union of all believers in Christ. The Eschatological Hope of the Church 4 The Church in the New Heaven and New Earth Biblical theology affirms that the church's ultimate destiny is eternal communion with God. Revelation 21-22: Describes the new heaven and new earth where God dwells with His people, and the church experiences perfect communion, worship, and righteousness. The Marriage of Christ and the Church (Revelation 19:7-9): Portrays the church as the bride prepared for Christ, emphasizing intimacy and eternal union. This future hope motivates the church's present mission and perseverance amid trials. The Consummation of God's Kingdom The biblical narrative culminates in the full realization of God's eternal kingdom, where the church will dwell forever in the presence of God, free from sin and suffering. The Final Resurrection and Judgment: Believers are raised to eternal life, and evil is finally defeated. The Eternal State: The church exists in a renewed creation, worshiping God in a perfect, unblemished community. This eschatological hope sustains the church's identity as a redeemed community called to live in anticipation of Christ's return. Conclusion: A Biblical Theology of the Church A biblical theology of the church reveals it as a divine institution rooted in God's covenant promises, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. From its Old Testament foundations to its eschatological hope, the church is portrayed as the ongoing community of God's redeemed people—called to worship, witness, and serve in accordance with God's eternal purpose. Understanding the church biblically encourages believers to see their participation as part of God's grand redemptive plan, fostering unity, holiness, and mission. Ultimately, the biblical vision of the church is one of hope and anticipation, awaiting the full realization of God's eternal kingdom where His people will dwell with Him forever in restored glory. QuestionAnswer What is the biblical foundation for understanding the church's identity? The biblical foundation for the church's identity is rooted in the New Testament, where the church is described as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27), and the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). These images emphasize the church's spiritual unity, sacrificial love, and familial relationship with God. 5 How does biblical theology define the mission of the church? Biblical theology defines

the church's mission as making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20), proclaiming the gospel, and embodying Christ's love through service and justice. It emphasizes obedience to God's commands and participating in God's redemptive work on earth. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the biblical understanding of the church? The Holy Spirit is essential in the biblical understanding of the church as He indwells believers, empowering worship, guiding doctrine, and uniting diverse believers into one body. The Spirit also equips the church for mission and sanctification (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13). How does biblical theology describe the relationship between Israel and the church? Biblical theology sees the church as the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, with continuity and discontinuity. The church is viewed as the spiritual Israel, inheriting the promises through faith in Christ, while also recognizing the distinct roles and covenants of Israel and the church (Romans 9-11). What is the significance of the church's sacraments or ordinances in biblical theology? In biblical theology, sacraments like baptism and the Lord's Supper are vital symbols that affirm the church's identity in Christ, signify initiation into the community, and serve as means of grace that nurture faith and unity among believers (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). How does biblical theology guide the understanding of church worship and community life? Biblical theology emphasizes that worship and community life should be centered on glorifying God through Spirit-led praise, prayer, and teaching of the Word. It advocates for a community characterized by love, humility, spiritual growth, and mutual accountability, reflecting Christ's character (Colossians 3:16-17; Hebrews 10:24-25). A biblical theology of the church offers a rich and comprehensive understanding of what the church is according to Scripture. It explores how the concept of the church develops through the unfolding narrative of the Bible, revealing God's purpose, mission, and plan for His people. By grounding this theology in Scripture, believers gain clarity on their identity, responsibilities, and hope as members of Christ's body. This article will delve into the biblical foundations of the church, examining its origins, nature, mission, and future promises, providing readers with a nuanced yet accessible overview rooted firmly in biblical teaching. What Is a Biblical Theology of the Church? A biblical theology of the church involves studying the church as it is depicted throughout the entire biblical narrative—from Genesis to Revelation. It seeks to understand the church not merely as a human institution but as God's divine creation, woven into His redemptive plan. This approach emphasizes the unity of Scripture, highlighting how each part contributes to a coherent picture of God's people. Fundamentally,

biblical theology of the church answers questions such as: - How does Scripture define the church? - What is the church's origin and purpose? - How does the church relate to Christ and God's overarching plan? - What are the characteristics and responsibilities of the church today? - What is the church's A Biblical Theology Of The Church 6 ultimate destiny? To grasp the biblical theology of the church, it is essential to trace key themes and passages that reveal its foundational truths. The Origins of the Church in Scripture The Church in the Old Testament: Shadows and Promises Though the explicit term "church" (from the Greek *ekklesia*) appears predominantly in the New Testament, the Old Testament lays important groundwork. The foundational idea is that God's people have always been called to be a distinct community set apart for Him. Key Old Testament themes include: - The People of Israel: The nation of Israel served as God's chosen community, called to embody His covenant and demonstrate His holiness to the nations (Exodus 19:5-6). They were to be a light to the nations, pointing forward to a more inclusive spiritual community. - The Covenant: God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12, 15, 17) established a people through whom His blessing would flow. This covenant foreshadowed the universal scope of the church. - The Tabernacle and Temple: These physical structures symbolized God's presence dwelling among His people, emphasizing communal worship and divine fellowship (Exodus 25-31). While the Old Testament primarily describes Israel as God's chosen community, it also contains prophetic promises pointing forward to a future, more complete community—what would eventually be fulfilled in Christ. The Church in the New Testament: The Fulfillment and Expansion The New Testament marks the decisive moment where the biblical concept of the church is explicitly revealed. Jesus Christ inaugurates the new community of His followers, emphasizing both continuity and fulfillment of Old Testament promises. Key New Testament passages include: - Matthew 16:18: Jesus declares, "I will build my church," establishing His authority and the foundation of His people. - Acts 2: The day of Pentecost marks the birth of the church as the Holy Spirit is poured out on believers, uniting Jews and Gentiles into one body. - Ephesians 1:22-23: Paul describes the church as the body of Christ, with Christ as its head. - 1 Peter 2:9: Believers are called a "royal priesthood," emphasizing their communal identity and spiritual authority. In essence, the New Testament reveals the church as the culmination of God's redemptive work, expanding beyond Israel to include all nations. The Nature and Identity of the Church The Church as the Body of Christ One of the most profound biblical images of the church is that of the body—Christ's body. This metaphor emphasizes unity,

diversity, dependence, and purpose. - Unity: All believers are connected to Christ and to each other (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). - Diversity: Different members have different gifts, roles, and functions (Romans 12:4-8). - Dependence: Just as the body relies on its parts, the church depends on Christ and mutual interdependence. - Purpose: The body exists to serve Christ's mission—evangelism, discipleship, and worship. This biblical image underscores that the church is not merely an organization but a living organism characterized by spiritual life and divine purpose. The Church as the People of God The biblical concept of the church also includes being "the people of God," a term rooted in the Old Testament but fully realized in Christ. - Adopted as Children: Believers are adopted into God's family through A Biblical Theology Of The Church 7 faith in Christ (Galatians 4:4-7). - Covenantal Community: The church lives under the new covenant, marked by grace, forgiveness, and the Spirit's indwelling (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:10-12). - Universal and Local: The church is both universal (all believers across time and space) and local (congregations and communities). The Marks of a True Church Scripture also provides criteria for identifying a faithful church: - Preaching of the Word: The faithful proclamation of Scripture (2 Timothy 4:2). - Right Sacraments: Proper administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). - Discipline and Holiness: Maintaining spiritual discipline and moral integrity (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Timothy 3:15). - Fellowship and Love: Genuine community marked by love and mutual care (John 13:34-35). The Mission of the Church in Biblical Perspective The Great Commission At the heart of the church's mission is the Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20: > "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This directive emphasizes: - Evangelism: proclaiming the gospel to all nations. - Discipleship: nurturing new believers. - Baptism and Teaching: initiating and instructing followers in obedience. The Mission as Part of God's Redemptive Plan The church's mission is not an add-on but integral to God's purpose. It includes: - Worship: Glorifying God through adoration and obedience. - Holiness: Reflecting Christ's character in personal and communal life. - Justice: Acting justly and caring for the oppressed (Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8). - Cultural Engagement: Transforming society through the gospel (Matthew 5:13-16). The Spirit's Role in Mission The Holy Spirit empowers the church for its mission: - Guides believers into truth (John 16:13). - Equips with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). - Convicts and draws people to Christ (John 16:8). The Future of the Church:

Eschatological Hope The Church's Ultimate Destiny Biblical theology affirms that the church's future is rooted in the promises of Scripture: - The Marriage Supper of the Lamb: Revelation 19:6-9 depicts the church as the bride of Christ, united with Him in eternal fellowship. - New Heaven and New Earth: Revelation 21-22 describes the consummation of God's kingdom, where the church dwells with God in perfect harmony. The Church's Role in the Eschaton The church will participate in God's final act of redemption: - Resurrection Bodies: Believers will be raised immortal (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). - Eternal Worship: The community will worship God fully and forever (Revelation 7:9-17). - Renewed Creation: The earth will be restored and transformed, serving as the eternal home of God's people. Conclusion: Living Out a Biblical Theology of the Church A biblical theology of the church reveals it as a divine community rooted in Christ, called to embody His life and mission in the world. It is both a present reality—spiritually alive and engaged in service—and a future hope, awaiting the full realization of God's kingdom. Understanding this biblical foundation equips believers to live faithfully, participate actively in the church's mission, and anticipate the glorious future that God has prepared. By anchoring our understanding in Scripture, we recognize A Biblical Theology Of The Church 8 that the church is not merely a human institution but a divine assembly—God's chosen instrument for His redemptive purposes. As members of Christ's body, we are called to embody love, pursue holiness, and advance the gospel until Christ returns in glory. church history, ecclesiology, salvation, covenant, New Testament, Old Testament, divine nature, community, sacraments, mission

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the theology of struggle is a genuinely popular fillipino theology rooted in the history and culture of a people who have endured colonial oppression at the hands of spain north america and japan as well as neo colonialism and home grown dictatorship because christianity has played a role in assisting the history of oppression in the philippines a theology of struggle must include a struggle in theology to wrest christian symbols from the hands of the oppressors and return them to the poor this theology which is otherwise expressed in articles poems art and action receives its first systematic treatment in toward a theology of struggle in part on fernandez establishes the historical and cultural context out of which the theology of struggle has emerged part two represents fernandez s own constructive work in which he shows how a theology of struggle must address the quest for identity and peoplehood in part three fernandez explores the question of theological method outlining the areas of convergence and distinction between the theology of struggle and other third world theologies as well as setting forth the distinctive challenge that this theology of the philippines poses to the authority and dominance of western theology as a whole

written by one of the world s leading theologians theology the basics is designed for students taking a first short course in christian theology or for lay christians who wish to find out more about their faith completely revised and updated in response to feedback from readers this second edition introduces readers to key theological issues such as god jesus christ the holy spirit faith creation salvation atonement religious history and heaven contains within each chapter an overview of one of these themes presents relevant biblical passages and summarizes the contribution of one major theologian includes a major new chapter on sacraments and expanded

discussion of key concepts throughout features new sections on core topics including the problem of suffering the theology of sin concepts of heaven and views of the millennium uses the apostle s creed as a framework in order to provide a user friendly structure concludes with a section on how readers can take their study further giving examples of the kind of detailed discussion that is possible the revisions to the second edition enhance the book s accessibility and coverage while retaining the clarity and style that made the first edition an international bestseller and student favorite

all god s people a theology of the church sets out a corrective understanding of the nature of the church universal with a focus on implications for the church local the book is divided into three basic sections a historical theology of the church surveys the history of theology of the church beginning with the early church the formative years for all christian theology a biblical theology of the church examines the old testament gospels and apostolic sense of the people of god a systematic theology of the church seeks to both systematize the biblical theology and synthesize it with contemporary thought finally a practical theology of the church concludes the work relating the book s lessons to the contemporary church climate

bruner has been both thorough and fair and has written a book that combines scholarly research with constructive commentary on the life and mission of the contemporary church

who are the people of god luke s purposes in the acts of the apostles are to identify the church to establish the legitimacy of its gospel and to demonstrate that god was an active force in history he wanted to show that the communities of jewish and gentile christians are the true heirs of god s promises to israel he gives the history of the early church from the last decades of the first century as the communities become separated from their jewish origins and paul plays the lead role acts offers an apologetic for the mixed mission of the church to jews and gentiles luke was an eyewitness to some of what he reports but his authorship and views have been questioned this is a theological interpretation of the history of the church within history luke is an artist a narrator rather than a systematic theologian but writes about the roles of god christ and the holy spirit and of the church

the doctrine of god remains as important as ever the apostle paul rebuked the corinthians in the first century for accepting another jesus and a different gospel 2 cor 11 4 denial of the deity of christ and the holy trinity were no

doubt among the falsehoods condemned by paul as doctrines of demons 1 tim 4 1 christians need to know the biblical basis for these beliefs in view of the many historic heresies and recent fashionable nonsense such as open theism and process theology my emphasis is on a listing of many scores of relevant bible passages systematic theology additionally i attempt to explain theology proper in laymen s terms so that with the aid of this book soaked with scripture anyone will be able to defend the biblical and nicene chalcedonian truths of the holy trinity jesus as the incarnate god and the divinity of the holy spirit the coherence and truthfulness of orthodox biblical theology of god is evident the more these passages are understood

philip kennedy here offers the first book that any student with or without religious convictions can profitably use to get quickly to grips with the essentials of the christian religion its history and its key thinkers its successes and its failures most existing undergraduate textbooks of theology begin from essentially traditional positions on the bible doctrine authority interpretation and god what makes philip kennedy s book both singularly important and uniquely different is that it has a completely new starting point the author contends that traditional christian theology must extensively overhaul many of its theses because of a multitude of modern social historical and intellectual revolutions offering a grand historical sweep of the genesis of the modern age and writing with panache and a magisterial grasp of the relevant debates conflicts and controversies a modern introduction to theology moves a tired and increasingly incoherent discipline in genuinely fresh and exciting directions and will be welcomed by students and readers of the subject

jüngel sets out to establish a basis for a theology of god the crucified while avoiding the shoals of theism and atheism he warns of the danger rooted in the fact that modernity no longer dares to think god of talking god to death of silencing god with too much god talk jüngel analyzes what our possibilities are of thinking and speaking god and concludes that theology has to become the narrative of god s humanity this second book in the series helps the reader to gain a more explicit awareness of the contemporary issues jüngel s theology grapples with

this volume is a first ever companion to the intellectually and pastorally stimulating work of louis marie chauvet one of the most important systematic theologians of liturgy and sacraments in recent times in this trans atlantic venture pairs of leading thinkers continue the development of sacramental

liturgical theology along six lines of chauvet's thought fundamental theology scripture and sacrament ecclesiology liturgy and ethics theology and the social sciences and the theological anthropology of symbolism embracing his constant attention to faith is actual practice in history these francophone and anglophone authors test numerous of chauvet's insights in the face of new challenges for the church and world the ongoing mediation of the humanity of god revealed in the crucified and risen christ louis marie chauvet retired in 2008 from the faculty of theology at the institut catholique de paris while continuing his work as pastor of saint leu la foret in the diocese of pontoise just outside paris he is author of symbol and sacrament a sacramental reinterpretation of christian existence and the sacraments the word of god at the mercy of the body both published by liturgical press philippe bordeyne is professor of theological ethics and dean of the faculty of theology at the institut catholique de paris bruce t morrill sj holds the edward a maloy chair of catholic studies in the divinity school at vanderbilt university where he is also professor of theological studies in addition to numerous journal articles book chapters and reviews he has published several books most recently encountering christ in the eucharist the paschal mystery in people word and sacrament paulist press 2012 his most recent book with liturgical press is divine worship and human healing liturgical theology at the margins of life and death pueblo liturgical press 2009

many of the earliest books particularly those dating back to the 1900s and before are now extremely scarce and increasingly expensive we are republishing many of these classic works in affordable high quality modern editions using the original text and artwork

recovery of paul and luther's theology of the cross has been an enduring legacy of twentieth century theology and in our own day the topic has continued to expand as more and more global voices join the conversation the array of literature produced on the cross and its theological significance can be overwhelming in this readable and concise introduction robert saler provides an overview of the key motifs present in theologians seeking to understand how the cross of jesus christ informs the work of theology ministry and activism on behalf of victims of injustice today he also demonstrates how theology of the cross can be a lens through which to understand crucial questions of our time related to the nature of beauty god's redemption and the forces which seek to overwhelm both ranging from luther and bonhoeffer to james cone and feminist theologians saler makes this literature accessible to all who wish to understand how the cross shapes

christian claims about god and god s work on behalf of the world

man has always wrestled with the problem of finding meaning in history it is not surprising that as a christian von balthasar finds the meaning of history in christ its center and lord what may surprise as it will surely stimulate is the theological mastery with which von balthasar traces the effects of christ s lordship upon the daily life of the christian in this book we have one of the indispensable sources for understanding balthasar s catholic christocentrism here we find elaboration of the striking statement that jesus christ is the idea made concrete personal historical universale concretum et personale which put otherwise means that christ is the universally valid in the here and now characteristic of balthasar the book inspires as much spiritually as it informs theologically

do various members of the church regardless of their generation gender race sexual orientation country of origin and whatever their doubts are about official church teachings and policies have any role in determining safeguarding and assessing the authentic teaching and praxis of the faith of the church this has always been a haunting question in the life of the christian church though only recently acknowledged because of the long standing role of male clergy of european descent with a eurocentric outlook who held hierarchical offices and determined official doctrines and moral and disciplinary codes there have been controversies that bear on these matters over the course of the church s history but it has only been over the last fifty years that the question has received increasing attention among roman catholics in terms of the baptismal anointing of the spirit that bestows the gift of the sense of the faith on individuals and the collective sense of the faithful this gift provides discerning skills to recognize receive and imaginatively and practically apply the living faith in history and society this book explores these issues from historical sociological systematic and theological ethical perspectives infused by the contributions of world christianities

focuses on the concept of communion with god in the work of puritan theologian john owen covering key areas such as anthropology the incarnation the trinity and the lord s supper

biblical theology is the discovery and development of doctrine as found and emphasized by a specific book of the bible instead of beginning with a subject and then searching the scriptures broadly to assemble what may be relevant

and illuminate one's understanding of that specific topic biblical theology starts with a particular author and focuses upon a specific scriptural unit the objective is to let the bible speak for itself and discover what the original writer's wanted readers or those listening to the reading to understand therefore new testament biblical theology assists the student in understanding the distinctive doctrinal enrichment each book in the christian canon brings to the collection of authoritative literature the theology of the four gospels is designed to engage an individual or group in a fresh study of the teachings of jesus and the distinctive perspectives of the four evangelists matthew mark luke and john even though everyone participating in the study is examining the same literature the conclusions may vary widely which may contribute to a very fruitful discussion why should one anticipate a variety of interpretations each person comes to the study of the bible with prior opinions judgments and beliefs these presuppositions have been formed by our culture e.g ethnicity political social economic and religious background critical knowledge educational background in history literature language natural abilities life experiences and age and character moral values belief in the supernatural human immortality accountability rational choices and spiritual maturity this is the goal to let the four gospels speak for themselves the theological outcome may be tentative and provisional however the reader or student becomes engaged in the process of building a sound personal theology and a steadfast living faith in jesus christ

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Introduction

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