

Article 5¹

Jesus Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.
6. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.

- I. Introduction
- II. Change of order in Articles 5 and 6
 - A. This follows the biblical narrative, the unfolding plan of God's redemption.
 - B. It follows theologically and logically in that the truth about the work of Christ builds upon the person of Christ. Thus, a closer connection is made between these two inseparable truths.
 - C. The truth about the Holy Spirit's ministry of glorifying Christ, and His application of the work of Christ in regeneration and adoption follows theologically and logically in the next statement, article 6.
 - D. Christ's perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins as our representative and substitute is stated here, under the work of Christ, and moved from article 3 ("A sacrifice for our sins").
 - E. Justification is based on the completed work of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who now believe. This truth has been stated under the article on the church, article 7 (and it is mentioned in article 8 as well).
 - F. The language of "believe" and "receive" occurs in article 10, as the Statement of Faith (adopted June 2008), follows the unfolding plan of God's redemption. This means the ultimate response to this unfolding truth that finds its culmination in Jesus Christ is to believe the gospel and receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ Adapted from "EFCA Statement of Faith: Article 3," by Greg Strand, Director of Biblical Theology and Credentialing. <http://www.efca.org/files/document/office-of-the-president/sof-proposed-revision-article-5.pdf>.

Questions for discussion

- What is the significance of Jesus being our “representative and substitute?” Why did we need a representative? Why do we need a substitute?
- Why is the reference to Christ shedding “his blood on the cross” important? What are the roots of the necessity of a blood sacrifice under the old covenant?

Making Jesus the active subject emphasizes the voluntary nature of his sacrifice on our behalf, his passive obedience, while retaining the importance of sacrificial “blood” (cf. Hebrews 9:22). Rooted in the Old Testament law, this was the means through which the new covenant would be established.

- Jesus’ death is “the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins.” What is the importance of this statement? Can anything be added to what Christ has done to address our sin problem, viz. being under God’s wrath?

This affirms a substitutionary understanding of the atonement in a forensic sense but can also include complementary views of the atonement which stress Jesus’ victory over the forces of evil, his role as a ransom, redeeming us from the power of sin, and the moral power of his sacrificial love. Jesus’ death on the cross “as our representative and substitute” is the only means by which God’s wrath against sinners is turned away, an effect otherwise known as propitiation.

Further, we affirm that Christ’s sacrifice is fully sufficient to save all those who trust in him. Nothing must be and nothing can be added to complete that work.

- This cross-work of Christ is referred to as “his atoning death and victorious resurrection.” What does this mean to God the Father? What does this mean for us? Is there any other ground of salvation?

“Victorious” is included to emphasize the triumph of Christ over the powers of evil—a power that is now available to believers. This *Christus Victor* theme is significant in the biblical presentation of the work of Christ. It is an important truth that is anchored in the substitutionary and representational death and resurrection of Christ, which is the heart of the heart.

- Why is it important to emphasize this truth of the work of Christ today? In what ways is this biblical truth being undermined today?

III. Article 5 – The Work of Christ

- A. We believe Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross (Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:14, 22; 10:19; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 12:10-11).

Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.²

Matthew 26:28 (ESV)

²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 9:14, 22 (ESV)

¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. . .
²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 10:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,

1 Peter 1:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Revelation 12:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

B. We believe Jesus' voluntary death on the cross is the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice (1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 9:23-24, 26, 28; 10:1; 13:11, 12) for our sins (Isaiah 53:5-7, 12; John 1:29; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1 John 3:5).

1 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)

⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Hebrews 9:23-24, 26, 28 (ESV)

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. . . ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end

² All Scripture taken from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. . . ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Hebrews 13:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Isaiah 53:5-7, 12 (ESV)

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. . . ¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

John 1:29 (ESV)

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Romans 3:21-26 (ESV)

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 3:13 (ESV)

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

1 John 3:5 (ESV)

⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

C. We believe Jesus is our representative (Genesis 2:15-17; Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13; Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 15:45, 47; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 4:15) and substitute (Leviticus 16; Mark 10:45; Hebrews 2:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

Genesis 2:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Matthew 4:1-11 (ESV)

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ” ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple ⁶ and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, “ ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and “ ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’ ” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Mark 1:12-13 (ESV)

¹² The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

Luke 4:1-13 (ESV)

¹ And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” ⁴ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’ ” ⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “ ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’ ” ⁹ And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the

pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,¹⁰ for it is written, “ ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’¹¹ and “ ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’ ”¹² And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Romans 5:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (ESV)

³⁰And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

1 Corinthians 15:45, 47 (ESV)

⁴⁵Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. . . ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.

Philippians 3:9 (ESV)

⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Mark 10:45 (ESV)

⁴⁵For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Hebrews 2:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)

²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 3:18 (ESV)

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

D. We believe Jesus' atoning death (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) and victorious resurrection (Colossians 1:13; 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15) constitute the only ground for salvation (Romans 4:25; 6:4, 11, 14; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:20; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 1:19-20; 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3).

Romans 3:25 (ESV)

²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

Hebrews 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

1 John 2:2 (ESV)

² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 4:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Colossians 1:13 (ESV)

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV)

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Romans 4:25 (ESV)

²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Romans 6:4, 11, 14 (ESV)

⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. . . ¹¹ So

you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. . . ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

1 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

2 Corinthians 4:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

Ephesians 1:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

Ephesians 2:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

1 Peter 1:3 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Summarizing connection to the gospel: *“God’s gospel is accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ.”*

- IV. Specific ways the Article on the doctrine of Jesus Christ has been strengthened, or new issues addressed.
- Emphasize and focus on the work of Christ
 - Representative and substitute
 - Shed his blood
 - Perfect all-sufficient sacrifice
 - Atoning death
 - Victorious resurrection

- V. Importance of reaffirming the biblical/doctrinal truths of Jesus Christ today (which also carries with it denials)
- Jesus is our representative and substitute—His substitutionary death is being denied by some in broader evangelicalism today
 - Jesus shed his blood—this is important to emphasize today because it is biblical, without the shedding of blood there is not forgiveness, and he did this voluntarily. For some, this is considered “cosmic child abuse.”
 - Perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins—nothing can be done or added to atone for sins, and this is being denied in many places. Any time anything is added to the work of Christ, it is being denied.
 - Jesus’ victorious resurrection—this is the first stage of his exaltation. This, too, is denied by some as they will make a distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.
 - Salvation—salvation sin, ultimately God’s wrath. There are many ideas about salvation today, but the only true salvation that gets at the heart of our problem is what has been stated here about the work of Christ.