

***What We Teach***  
**Grace Bible Church Bylaws [Section 2]**  
***Our Doctrine (Statement of Faith)***

## **ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **PREFACE**

Recognizing that the Bible is the very Word of the living God to man, and understanding the priority of knowing and obeying its truths, the Elders at Grace Bible Church are deeply committed to studying and teaching Scripture with diligence and authority.

Therefore, at the heart of the ministry here at Grace is the continuous imparting of biblical truth to the people of God in order that they may know God and serve Him in worship and ministry. This doctrinal statement presents the Elders' convictions regarding theological truths of the Bible. These are the primary doctrines of the Christian faith and they reflect the heart of the teaching here at Grace Bible Church.

Each person who chooses to worship and minister at Grace, or each person who is considering aligning themselves with Grace is encouraged to read and review the following doctrines. While it is not necessary for each member and adherent of Grace Bible Church to be in absolute personal agreement with every doctrine stated herein, it must be recognized that these written doctrines are used as a plumb line to determine both faith and practice in all of the various ministries at Grace Bible Church - whether to children, teens, or adults.

Each person requesting membership at Grace must give a clear profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and demonstrate evidence of genuine salvation in their daily walk. Furthermore, if any believer requesting membership at Grace has not already followed the Lord in believer's baptism they will be requested to do so within a reasonable period of time (as determined by the Elders) following membership.

### **THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, and God-breathed. We teach the literal (normal), grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual (divine-human) authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man without error (2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture (2 Timothy 2:15), recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture always stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

## **GOD**

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)--each equally deserving worship and obedience.

## **GOD THE FATHER**

We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Acts 17:28-29), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge (reduce or lessen) the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

## **GOD THE SON**

We teach that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies and attributes, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial (has the same nature as), and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

We teach that God the Father created all things according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-3).

We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) the Lord Jesus Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternal Son of God accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:23-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy (power to produce the intended results) of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, bodily resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:23-25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that He has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20,23).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture, and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:1-6).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23). He will judge:

- a) Believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
- b) Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46)
- c) Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15)

As the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the head of His body the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their faith in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

## **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, uncreated, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternality (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial (has the same nature as) with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14, and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7; Titus 3:5).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this present dispensation (economy) began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ; baptizing believers into His body; bestowing spiritual gifts and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration (Titus 3:5), baptizing all believers into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious (showy and pretentious) displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith. The Holy Spirit is ever present to testify of Christ, directing our attention to Him instead of ourselves or our experiences (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4). (For a description of what we teach regarding the two categories of spiritual gifts see THE CHURCH [Spiritual Gifts] below.)

## **MAN**

We teach that God directly and immediately created man, male and female, in His own image and likeness. In His goodness, God gifted each human being with a specific gender, identified at birth by one's biological sex (Genesis 1:26-27). Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7; 15-25; James 3:9).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature and by choice (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18; 5:12-21; 8:5-8).

## **Marriage and the Family**

We teach that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The family is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

We teach that marriage, according to Scripture's definition, is the uniting of one man and one woman into an exclusive covenant commitment for a lifetime (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-6; John 4:15-17; Hebrews 13:4). Marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:25-28) and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:25; Proverbs 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:31-33).

We teach that the husband and wife are of equal worth, value, and standing before God, since both are created in God's image. We teach that the marriage relationship, as defined above, uniquely models the way God relates to His people. According to Scripture, a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. Simultaneously, a wife is to submit herself graciously to the leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33). She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

We teach that children are a gift from God and are fully human from conception (Psalm 127:3; 139:13-16). Parents are to train their children by modeling a godly life, teaching them the Scriptures, disciplining them in love, and providing them a resource of wisdom and counsel and to point them to their need of a personal Savior from sin (Proverbs 1:8-9; 6:20; 13:24; 22:6; Colossians 3:21). Parents are to care for the needs of their children (2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:4) and children are likewise to obey their parents with respect and honor, caring for them in the time of their dependency and old age (Proverbs 23:22; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20; 1 Timothy 5:8).

## **SALVATION**

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works. Therefore, salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7-8; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

## **REGENERATION**

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5-7). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct (Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4-5; 2 Corinthians 7:10). Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 1 John 3:2-3).

## **ELECTION**

We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4- 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We teach that sovereign election does not of itself save, and does not negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:17). All men, including the elect, are lost until such time as they individually and personally exercise faith in Christ as their own Savior (John 3:14-18; 3:36; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 10:8-10). The Bible makes faith the single condition of salvation, thereby stressing the fact that the saving benefits of Calvary's completed work are withheld until men believe the gospel. In the same way that the blood of the Passover lamb became efficacious (capable of producing the desired effect) only when applied to the doorposts (Exodus 12:1-14), the work of Christ at Calvary becomes efficacious only when applied through faith.

Faith, rather than being the product of salvation, is the actual means of receiving it. No appeal is ever addressed to men that they should believe because they have already been saved. It is rather that they should first believe and then receive eternal life. Here we have the twofold truth concerning salvation in Christ: the sinner must come, but he will not come unless drawn by the Father (John 6:35- 44). To come to Christ is the same as to believe on Him. Men must come (i.e. believe) to be saved, and yet they will not have the desire or ability to come unless they are drawn by God to do so. The seeming inconsistency or contradiction between the sovereignty of God in election and the responsibility of man in believing is only so in the finite mind of man, not in the infinite mind of God. Both truths are clearly taught in Scripture and must each be allowed to stand without diminishing the other (John 6:63-65; Romans 9:14-23).

We teach that man's faith in Christ does not add anything to the full and complete redemption procured by Christ. Faith does not save; Christ saves and Christ alone. Faith must be viewed as a means through which the grace of God comes to the needy heart (Ephesians 2:8-9). The salvation received is not improved upon nor is its nature altered in any way by the reception of it by faith. Scripture declares that faith is not a work (Romans 4:5). Men are required to exercise faith. But faith consists not in doing something, but in believing and receiving something. Faith is no more than an activity of reception contributing nothing to that which it receives. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40,44; Acts 13:48).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative on their own, nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2-3).

We teach that God is absolutely sovereign, and He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes-- especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16 Ephesians 1:4-6). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-27).

## **JUSTIFICATION**

We teach that justification before God is an act of God by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, entrust their salvation solely to Him (Romans 4:5; 8:30,33; Galatians 3:8). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

## **SANCTIFICATION**

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. Positional sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2,30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 10:10,14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We teach that there is also a work of progressive sanctification of the Holy Spirit by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict--the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh – but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. As long as we dwell in these fleshly bodies, eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 1:8-10; 3:5-9; Romans 7-8).

## **SECURITY**

We teach that all the redeemed once genuinely saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever--they cannot be lost again (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1,31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24-25).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:1-2, 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

## **SEPARATION**

We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior.

We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Peter 1:4-9; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

## **THE CHURCH**

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21,38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church did not exist prior to the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), and a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that each local congregation is an autonomous and complete expression of the universal church. The establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23,27; 20:17,28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and the members of the one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2,15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-47), and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

## **GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

We teach that the one, supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are men called Elders (also called bishops, overseers and pastors; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12) and men or women called Deacons or Deaconesses, all of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that the Elders provide spiritual oversight for the congregation, primarily through ministering the Word and prayer (Acts 6:2, 4; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; 2 Timothy 4:2). We teach that the Elders lead the congregation as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We teach that the Deacons and Deaconesses serve the congregation by coordinating various ministries that meet physical needs, encourage unity, and aid the Elders' ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-7).

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5).

We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its Elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The Elders are to guard the purity of doctrine and defend against the encroachment of false teaching and teachers, and determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28-29; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).



## **BODY LIFE**

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:3-5), mutual accountability of all believers to each other, as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:18-20; Titus 1:10-16, 3:9-11).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:11-13). We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world.

## **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives spiritually gifted men to the church chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two categories of spiritual gifts given to the New Testament church: a) miraculous signs and wonders gifts of divine revelation (apostleship, prophecy, miracles, healing, tongues and interpretation of tongues) given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles and their message (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12); and

b) permanent, non-revelatory equipping gifts (teaching, helping-ministering, administering-ruling, evangelism, pastor, exhortation, giving, showing mercy, faith), given to equip believers for edifying one another (Ephesians 4:7-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

With the New Testament revelation now complete (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19), Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous and revelatory nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (Matthew 24:23-25; Revelation 13:13-14). The only spiritual gifts in operation today are those permanent, non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-13).

We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

We teach, however, that sickness is often used of God in the believer's life for His own glory, purpose and power and He has promised that His grace will be sufficient for the suffering saint (2 Corinthians 12:6-10).

## **ORDINANCES**

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the outward testimony of a believer illustrating and displaying his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:23-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

We teach, then, that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbols of the inward reality of salvation and that they, in no way, are a cause of salvation. These symbols then, are a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

## **ANGELS**

### **HOLY ANGELS**

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve and worship God, and to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7,14; 2:5-8; Revelation 5:11- 14; 22:8-9).

### **FALLEN ANGELS**

We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Colossians 1:16; John 8:44; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:11; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:6), and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

## **LAST THINGS**

### **DEATH**

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (*as seen in Revelation 6:9-11*), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19- 23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be reunited (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

### **THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH**

We teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate (rapture, catch away suddenly to heaven without physical death) His church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

## **THE TRIBULATION PERIOD**

We teach that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Zechariah 14:1-8; Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-46; Revelation 19:11-16). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6). This period is the fulfillment of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46), and will last for seven literal years.

## **THE SECOND COMING AND THE MILLENNIAL REIGN**

We teach that after the tribulation period, Christ will come bodily to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His Messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).

We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).

We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

## **THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST**

We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand-year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) whereupon Christ, who is the judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment.

We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

## **ETERNITY**

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy fellowship forever with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21,22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).