

PREFACE

The Statement of Faith represents the doctrinal position of Calvary Grace Church. The Bible mandates that elders and shepherds of Christ's Church protect the doctrinal purity and integrity of the Church (Acts 20:28-31; Jude 3; 2 Tim 4:1-5), and are also charged to preserve unity regarding the truth (Rom 12:9-18; Eph 4:3; 3 John 8-12).

This Statement of Faith is a distilled overview of the basic topics of what we believe to be the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) regarding the fundamentals that a discerning church and growing Christians should be aspiring toward. We acknowledge that every Christian is ever-growing and ever-learning in the Christian life (Phil 3:12), and we acknowledge that in this life we all "see in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor 13:12). We are all in progress and growing in knowledge (2 Pet 1:5-8).

As such, we recognize the reality that every believer has a learning curve and is on the continuum of biblical understanding based on maturity, experience, upbringing, and many other variables. The purpose of the Statement of Faith is not to exclude and isolate true believers, but rather to provide a common ground of truth which serves as the basis of common worship, fellowship, and service to Christ as one spiritual Body and the family in the local church (3 John 3-4).

Our over-arching doctrinal beliefs can be summed up with the five "battle cries" of the Protestant Reformation. In brief, these five terms are:

Sola Scriptura – Scripture Alone (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Sola Gratia – Grace Alone (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

Sola Fide – Faith Alone (Romans 3:28)

Solus Christus – Christ Alone (Acts 4:12)

Soli Deo Gloria – To God Alone Be the Glory (1 Peter 4:11)

And a principle by which we live:

Sola Reformanda – Always Reforming

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE (Bibliology)

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1Cor 2:7-14; 2Tim 3:16; 2Pet 1:20-21).

We teach that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God (Jer 1:9; Ezek 2:2-7; 3:4, 10-11; 13:1-16; Matt 1:22-23; 4:4-10; 19:4-5; 22:31-32; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 2:16-17; 3:18, 21; 4:25; 13:47; 28:25-27; Rom 1:2; 3:2; 9:17; 1Cor 9:8-10; 14:37; 1Thess 2:13; 2Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1-2, 6-8; 3:7-11; 10:15-17; 1 Pet 1:10-11; 2Pet 1:20-21; 3:2; 1John 4:6).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1Thess 2:13; 1Cor 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2Tim 3:16; 2Pet 1:20-21), absolutely inerrant in the original documents (Prov 30:5-6; Ps 12:6; 19:7-11; 119:89, 140, 142, 151, 160; John 17:17), and infallible (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4; 2Tim 3:16).

The Bible was written in the "language of the people," and as such, should be understood that way. The following interpretive priorities are paramount when studying the Bible: (1) prayer for understanding; (2) the Holy Spirit enables a person to understand Scripture; (3) acquire a good translation of the Bible, i.e. NASB, NKJV, ESV, NIV etc.; (4) the goal in Bible study is to determine the author's original intent; (5) context determines meaning; (6) the Bible does not contradict itself; (7) the modern culture does not determine the meaning of a Bible passage; (8) the text will have one meaning, although it may have many applications; (9) the Bible relates true history; (10) ideally, one should study the original languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic) to get the clearest meaning of Scripture; (11) theology and the analogy of Scripture are to always follow exegesis.

The books commonly called the Apocrypha, not being divinely inspired, are not part of the Canon of Scripture and hold no authority. Rather, they are to be viewed as being on the same level as other books of merely human origin.

GOD (Theology Proper)

We teach that there is but one true, eternally existing God (Deut 6:4; Isa 45:5-7; 1Cor 8:4; James 2:19). This unique God is Triune, being one in essence and yet existing, ever and always, in three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:26-27; 3:22; 11:7; Isa 48:16; Matt 28:19; 1Cor 12:4-6; 2Cor 13:14; Eph 2:18; 4:4-6; Jude 20-21; Rev 1:4-5). Functional subordinations within the Trinity never stand opposed to the full Deity that each of the Persons possesses (John 4:34; 5:30; 12:49; 14:10; 16:13; 1Cor 11:3).

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 (Ps 115:3; 136:6; Rom 11:36; Eph 1:11; 1Cor 8:6; Rev 4:11). He is the creator of all things (Gen 1:1-31; Acts 14:15;

17:24; Eph 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps 103:19, Dan 4:34-36; Rom 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 (Hos 1:10; Matt 5:9; John 1:12-13; 20:17; Rom 8:14-19; 9:8, 26; 2Cor 6:18; Gal 3:26; 4:5-6; Eph 1:5; 2:18; 3:14-15; 4:6; 5:1; Heb 12:6-7).

In His sovereignty He is neither author nor does He approve of sin (Ps 5:4; Hab 1:13; John 8:38-47; James 1:13-14; 1John 1:5). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph 1:4-6; 2Tim 1:9; Titus 1:1-2) yet without abridging the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (Rom 2:5-10; 9:19-21; 1Pet 1:17). He graciously saves all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, adopting them as His own (Matt 11:28; John 1:12; Rom 8:15; 10:13; Gal 4:5; Rev 22:17).

God is perfect in all His attributes. Some, including His self-existence, self-sufficiency, eternity, infinitude, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, and incomprehensibility, are unique to Him alone. They expose His lofty, transcendent nature (Ps 113:1-5; Isa 57:15a). Others, including His qualities of justice, grace, mercy, love, joy, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, holiness and self-control, He has chosen to share with man, made in His image (Gen 1:26-27; John 13:3, 34-35; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 1:4; 5:1-2, 25-27; Heb 12:4-10; James 3:9; 1Pet 1:15-16). God is both unapproachable, in view of His majesty and greatness, as well as being near and intimately involved with all His creation, especially His chosen people (Gen 1:2; Exod 2:24-25; 3:7; 6:5; Job 38:2-39:30; Ps 8:3-8; 33:18-19; 34:15; 113:6-9; Isa 40:27-31; Matt 6:26-33; 11:29-30; Eph 1:11; 1Pet 5:6-7; Rev 21:2-4).

God the Son (Christology)

We teach that the second Person of the Godhead is eternally of the same essence of Being as the Father (John 1:1-3; 10:30; 14:9; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3). His attributes of greatness and goodness also correspond to the Father's. His emptying of Himself in Philippians 2:5-8 was not of His divine essence or the surrendering of His full Deity but pertained to the independent exercise of His Divine prerogative during the First Advent—the incarnation (John 1:14). His incarnation was initiated by the miraculous conception of the virgin Mary (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:30-35) in which He took upon Himself genuine humanity (Heb 2:9-18; 1John 4:2). He thereby became the unique God-man who consequently is the perfect Revealer, Savior,

Mediator, and ultimately, the Judge of all men (cf. respectively, John 1:18; Titus 2:13; 1Tim 2:5; John 5:22, 27).

Through this loving condescension, He fully accomplished His task of grace which culminated in His sacrificial death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, furnishing the grounds for the forgiveness of believing sinners (cf. respectively, Isa 52:13-53:12; Rom 1:4; 4:25; 6:1-11; Acts 1:9). As our sole and perfect Mediator, Christ is prophet, priest, and king (Deut 18:15-19; Ps 2:6-9; John 8:26-8; 12:49-50; 15:15; 17:7-8; Acts 3:22-23; 1Tim 2:5; Heb 1:1-2; 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:24; Dan 7:14; Luke 1:33; Rev 17:14).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled His priestly office by offering Himself a sacrifice for sin (Heb 5:7-10; 7:27) accomplishing our redemption and reconciliation (Luke 1:68; Eph 1:7; Rev 5:9) through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross. His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (Isa 53:5-8; John 10:15, 17-18; Rom 3:24-25; 5:8; 2Cor 5:21; 1Pet 2:24). As a result of these truths, we believe and teach that Christ's atoning death is sufficient to satisfy God's eternal justice for the sins of all mankind but is efficient only for all who will believe—who constitute the elect people of God (Isa 53:8; Matt 1:21; 20:28; Luke 1:68; John 10:15; Eph 5:25).

Today our Lord is building His Church (Matt 16:18) and continually ministering to her as the heavenly Advocate interceding for the saints (Heb 7:25; 1John 2:1). He will return for His bride in glory (1Thess 4:13-18) and will adjudicate the reward and retribution of all people (John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; 2Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15; 22:12).

God the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality (John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13-15) and deity (Matt 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1Cor 3:16; 12:4-6; 2Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1Pet 1:2; Jude 20-21), including intellect (1Cor 2:10-13), emotions (Isa 63:10; Eph 4:30), will (1Cor 12:11), eternity (Heb 9:14), omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa 40:13-14), omnipotence (Ps 104:30; Acts 1:8; Rom 15:13), and truthfulness (John 14:17; 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal with the Father and the Son (Matt 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1Cor 12:4-6; 2Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1Pet 1:2; Jude 20-21; Ps 95:6-11 with Heb 3:7-11; Jer 31:31-34 with Heb 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 (Gen 1:2), the

incarnation (Matt 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35), the written revelation (2Sam 23:2; John 14:25-26; 16:13-15; Acts 28:25; 1Cor 2:6-16; Heb 3:7; 9:8; 10:15; 2Pet 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-8; 6:63; 2Cor 3:6; Titus 3:5).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (Luke 24:49; John 14:16-17; 15:26; Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9, 14; Rom 8:29; 2Cor 3:18; Eph 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration (John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5,6). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Acts 1:8; 2:38; 4:8,31; Rom 8:9-11; 15:19; 1Cor 2:4; 3:16; 6:19; Eph 1:13; 4:30; 1John 2:20, 27).

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; Rom 8:9; Eph 5:18; 2Pet 1:19-21; 1John 2:20, 27).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1Cor 12:4-11; 2Cor 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; and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (Acts 14:3; 1Cor 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2Cor 12:12; Heb 2:1-4).

CREATION, PRESERVATION AND PROVIDENCE

We teach that God created out of nothing the physical universe and all that it contains, including angelic beings, in six literal days (Gen 1:1-31; Exod 20:11; Ps 33:6, 9; Prov

3:19; Col 1:16; Heb 11:3). He also sustains for His own purposes the whole of that which He has created (Job 38:4-39:30; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).

We also believe and teach the sovereign providence of God (Ps 103:19; 135:6; Isa 14:26-27; Dan 4:34-35; Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11). His absolute sway is all inclusive, including, for example, history (Job 12:23; Ps 22:28; 75:6-7; Dan 2:20-21; 4:34-35), the circumstances of life (Prov 16:1, 9; 20:24; Acts 17:25-26; James 4:13-15), duration of life (Job 14:5; Ps 139:16), manner of death (John 21:18-19), helpful acts of men (Isa 44:28-45:7; Eph 2:10; Phil 2:13), harmful acts of men (Gen 20:6; 45:4-8; 50:20; Exod 14:17; 2Sam 12:11-12; 1Kings 22:23; Ps 105:25; Prov 16:4; Isa 10:5; Jer 25:9; Amos 3:6; Acts 4:27-28), salvation of sinners (Eph 1:4-5; 2Thess 2:13-14), the greatest world events (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; Rev 13:8), seemingly trivial circumstances (Job 37:6-13; Prov 16:33; Matt 6:26; 10:29-30), etc. These truths, however, never nullify the responsibilities of created, moral beings (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:22-23).

MAN AND SIN (Anthropology & Hamartiology)

We teach that man is a direct product of the creative handiwork of God (Gen 2:7; Ps 100:3). God created mankind in and according to His own image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27), and even after the fall, no matter how thoroughly distorted that image has become, it is not eradicated (Gen 9:6; James 3:9).

The reality of the image and likeness of God indicates that man, via his original creation, resembles God in certain characteristics and capacities which are necessary for relationship with God and fellow man and also for mankind's exercise of dominion over the rest of the earth (Gen 1:28). The grace of God in salvation, sanctification, and glorification focuses on the renewing of this image until it is finally perfect and eternally established (Rom 8:29; 2Cor 3:18).

Both male and female equally bear the image of God (Gen 1:27). Although they share the same essence of being, there are nevertheless functional distinctions and subordinations (cf. a similar phenomenon within the Trinity). These differences, biblically based upon creation and not cultural biases, are significant for both our families and the church (1Cor 11:1-16; Eph 5:22-33; 1Tim 2:8-15; Titus 2:3-5; 1Pet 3:1-6).

We teach that through Adam's one act of disobedience, he not only fell from his state of innocence into one of separation and alienation from God, but as our representative, he also plunged the whole race into sin and death (Gen 2:17; 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-21; 1Cor 15:21-22). Consequently, all persons from their conception and birth are spiritually estranged from God (Rom 8:5-8; Eph 2:1-3; Col 1:21; 2:13), innately unholy, and stand

condemned by their sinful nature (Ps 51:5; Eph 2:1-3), and their sinful acts (Exod 20:5; 34:6-7; Num 14:18; Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12; Matt 16:27; 25:35-46; John 5:29; Rom 1:18-3:20; Eph 5:4-6; Col 3:5-6; 2Thess 1:6-9; Rev 2:23; 20:12) before their Creator and Judge.

Man's depravity (i.e., corrupted sinful nature) is total in breadth (1Kings 8:46; Ps 14:1-3; Isa 1:2-6; 53:6; Rom 3:9-20, 23; 5:12; 7:18) and depth (Eccles 9:3b; Jer 17:9; Mark 7:14-23; Rom 8:7-8). Sin, like a drop of poison deposited in a cup of water, has poisoned the entire cup. By this we mean that all the faculties of man's heart, i.e., rational, volitional, emotional, etc., are morally tainted by sin and perversity (Gen 6:5; Luke 18:19; Rom 7:18; 14:23; Eph 4:17-19). Leaving mankind utterly hopeless and helpless in reference to any kind of human reformation or rescue—he cannot save himself (Isa 64:5-7; Jer 13:23; 1Cor 2:14; Col 1:21-22). These realities are not only crucial for an accurate theology but also for a proper biblical approach to ministry (Rom 1:16; 10:17; 1Cor 1:18-21; 2:1-5; 3:10-15; 2Cor 4:3,4; 2Tim 3:16-4:2; 1Pet 1:23).

SALVATION (Soteriology)

We teach that salvation is completely the sovereign work of God (John 1:13; Titus 3:5,6). A single divine method of salvation by grace through faith has been in effect since the fall of man (Rom 4:1-9; 9:16; Eph 2:8,9; Heb 11:1-39). This great truth, however, never nullifies or diminishes either the sinner's responsibility of appropriation or the servant's responsibility of communication (Rom 10:8-15).

God's sovereign plan of salvation was divinely drafted in eternity past (Eph 1:4; 2Tim 1:9; Titus 1:2; Rev 13:8), including all of its provisions (the work of Christ and the Spirit) and processes (Titus 3:3-7). Furthermore, on an individual, historical basis, His grace stands behind all the stages of salvation, i.e. past – justification; present – sanctification; and future – glorification (Rom 8:29-30). Thus, our salvation is entirely accomplished by the almighty power of the sovereign and gracious triune God. "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy..." (Titus 3:5). Some vital constituents of His salvation plan include:

Election

We teach that election is the gracious act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously calls, regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies (Matt 11:27; Rom 8:28-30; 9:6-18; 11:7; Eph 1:4-11; 1Thess 1:4-5; 2Thess 2:13; 2Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1Pet 1:1-2; 2:9; Rev 13:7-8).

We believe and teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord, nor the genuineness of God's open offer of salvation through Christ (Isa 55:1-3, Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11; Matt 11:28-30; 23:37; John 3:16; 7:37; John 3:18-19,36; 5:40; 2Thess 2:10-12; Rev 2:17; 22:17). Nor does the doctrine of election negate the responsibility of believers to proclaim the gospel (Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Rom 10:14-17; 1Cor 9:16-17;19-23; 2 Tim 2:10). All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith, the Father will receive (John 3:16; 6:37-40, 44-45, 65; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is unconditional, i.e. not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph 1:4-7; 2:1-8; 2Tim 1:9; Titus 3:4-7; 1Pet 1:1-2).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration (i.e. the new birth) is a gracious supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 1:13; 3:3-7; 2Cor 5:17-18; Eph 2:4-5; Col 2:13; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1Pet 1:3; 2Pet 1:3-4). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 3:6; 5:24; James 1:18; 1Pet 1:23). The new birth results in the believer's union with Christ (2Cor 1:20-21; Eph 1:3-4, 6-7, 9-11, 13; Col 2:13) in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6:1-11; Col 2:12); thus receiving the spiritual graces of the New Covenant (i.e. peace with God, a new heart, new affections, deliverance from the dominating power of sin, etc.) (Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33; Ezek 11:19-20; 36:25-27; Rom 5:1; 6:5-7, 11, 14, 17-18; 2Cor 5:17; Col 2:11-13; Heb 8:6-12; 10:14-17).

Because genuine regeneration involves the imparting of a new life, a new heart, and saving faith, it will be manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. "Faith working through love" will be in proper evidence and fruit (John 8:31; 14:15, 21, 23; Rom 6:4-6,17-22; 8:10-13;

Gal 5:6, 22-23; Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14; Heb 11:1-40; James 2:14-26; 2Pet 1:4-11; 1John 2:3-5; 3:3, 6-10; 2John 9). This grace-empowered obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29; 2Cor 3:18). Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom 8:19; 1Cor 15:42-44, 49, 51-53; 2Pet 1:4; 1John 3:2).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Rom 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38; 3:19, 11:18; Rom 2:4; 2Cor 7:10, Isa 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom 10:9-10; 1Cor 12:3; 2Cor 4:5; Phil 2:11). This free righteousness (Rom 5:15-17) is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col 2:14; 1Pet 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1Cor 1:30; 2Cor 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26).

Sanctification

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional, permanent, and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or experiential condition or his final future state (Acts 20:32; 1Cor 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2Thess 2:13; Heb 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1Pet 1:2).

In addition, we teach that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state (i.e. practice) of the believer is brought closer to the standing he positionally enjoys through justification. This sanctification is an effect of the love of God manifested in the soul, whereby through the gracious empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is enabled 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; Rom 6:1-22; 2Cor 3:18; Eph 4:13-15; Col 3:10; 1Thess 4:3-4; 5:23; Heb 12:14).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict. He is a new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh (2Cor 5:17; Rom 7:15-25; 8:12-13), 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. Although eradication of sin is not possible, the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Rom 6:14, 17-18; Gal 5:16-25; Eph 4:22-24; Phil 3:12; Col 3:9-10; 1Pet 1:14-16; 1John 3:5-9).

We teach and affirm that the Christian life is a life of loving, obedient righteousness (John 14:15, 21; Rom 6:17-18, 22) that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matt 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Rom 12:1-2; 2Cor 7:1; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 12:14; 1Pet 1:14-16; 1John 3:1-10).

THE CHURCH (Ecclesiology)

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by Him into one united spiritual body, the Church (1Cor 12:12-13), the Bride of Christ (2Cor 11:2; Eph 5:23-32; Rev 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23-24; Col 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 (John 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-52; 1Thess 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 (Eph 2:11-3:6). The Church is distinct from Israel (1Cor 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph 3:1-10; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23,27; 20:17,28; Rom 16:1,4-5,16; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:1; 1Thess 1:1; 2Thess 1:1; Philemon 2) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1Cor 11:18-20; Heb 10:25).

We teach that the one supreme authority for the Church is Christ (Matt 16:18; 28:18; 1Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23-24; Col 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures (Eph 4:7-8,11). The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders, also called bishops, overseers, pastors, and pastor-teachers; (Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11; 1Tim 5:17; 1Pet 5:1) and deacons/deaconesses, all of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1Pet 5:1-5).

We teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants under Christ (1Cor 4:1; 1Tim 5:17-22; Heb 13:17) and have His authority in directing the Church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Heb 13:7, 17).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matt 28:19-20; Gal 6:1-2; 2Tim 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matt 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matt 18:15-22; 1Cor 5:1-13; Gal 6:1-2; 2Thess 3:6-15; 1Tim 1:19-20; 5:17-20; Titus 1:10-16; 3:10).

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 14:23; 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 should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:4,19-31; 20:28; 1Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17; 1Pet 5:1-4).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (John 17:17; 2Tim 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:42,46; Heb 10:25; 1John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Matt 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:38-42; 8:36-38; 1Cor 11:23-26) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1Cor 12:7-11; 15:58; Eph 4:7-12; Rev 22:12).

We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the Church spiritual gifts. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each and every member of the Body of Christ (Rom 12:5-8; 1Cor 12:4-31; 1Pet 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Acts 14:3; 2Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3-4) and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1Cor 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (Matt 24:24; 2Thess 2:8-10; Rev 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory, equipping gifts given for edification (Rom 12:6-8; 1Pet 4:10-11).

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 (Luke 18:1-8; John 5:7-9; 2Cor 12:6-10; Phil 2:27; James 5:13-16; 1John 5:14-15; 3John 2).

ORDINANCES

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:38-42; 1Cor 11:23-26). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Rom 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

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 (1Cor 11:28-32). We also teach the elements of communion (bread and cup) are representative of the flesh and blood of our beloved Christ and our partaking of them is an acknowledgment of His substitutionary atoning sacrifice and our identity with Him as our Lord and Savior.

ANGELS (Angelology)

We teach the existence of angels who were apparently the first issue of God's creation (cf. Job 38:4-7 with Gen 1:1; Ex 20:11; Neh 9:6; Col 1:16). In relation to men, these created spirit beings currently have greater powers (2Pet 2:11), and yet, elect angels minister on behalf of elect people (Heb 1:14). Furthermore, one day redeemed people will judge angels (1Cor 6:3).

Morally, angels may be classified under two headings: holy or elect angels (Mark 8:38; 1Tim 5:21) and fallen angels (Matt 25:41; Rev 12:9). There also seems to be various hierarchies of angels; for example, archangels (cf. Michael, Jude 9), special attendants (Gen 3:24; Isa 6:1-6), and designations in series (Col 1:16; 2:15; Eph 3:10; 6:12; 1Pet 3:22).

At the head of all fallen angels stands Satan (Job 1:6-9,12; Matt 4:10). Subsequent to his creation, he fell morally (Ezek 28:12-19; Isa 14:12-21), and along with him there followed a host of fallen angels, some of whom today are bound (1Pet 3:19-20; 2Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 9:1-11) while others are still active in the world (Matt 4:24; 8:16, 28-32; 9:32-34; 12:22-24; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:26-31; 11:14; Acts 16:16-18; 19:11-12). He then became the subtle instigator of mankind's fall (Gen 3; 2Cor 11:3). Currently he roams

the earth, but his ultimate end is guaranteed by the finished work of Christ (Rom 16:20; Heb 2:14; 1Pet 5:8; 1John 3:8; Rev 20:10).

Although believers are in union with Christ, we are not to be presumptuous so as to seek to engage the Archenemy and his host. Our call is to be aware of his methods (2Cor 2:11), stand defensively in the provision of God (Eph 6:10-18), and resist, not charge, him (James 4:7).

DEATH (Thanatology)

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil 1:23; 2Cor 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Phil 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (John 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:20-23,50-53; 1Thess 1:9-10; 4:13-17; Rev 3:10), which initiates the first resurrection (Job 19:25-27; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29; Rev 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phil 3:21; Rom 8:11, 18-23, 29-30; 1Cor 15:20-23, 35-44, 48-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2Cor 5:6-8; Phil 1:23).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 5:25-29; Rom 8:10-11,19-23; 1Cor 15:20-23, 42-54; 2Cor 4:14; Rev 20:4-5), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan 12:2; John 5:29; 2Thess 1:6-10; Rev 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; Rev 20:13-15), when the soul and the body will be united (Job 19:25-27; Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the Lake of Fire (Matt 25:41-46; Rev 20:15; 21:8), cut off from the life of God forever— experiencing eternal conscious punishment (Dan 12:2; Matt 5:21-22, 27-30; 8:11-12; 10:28; 13:30, 40-43, 49-50; 18:6-9; 23:15,33; 24:51; 25:41-46; Mark 9:42-48; 2Thess 1:6-9; Heb 6:1-2; Jude 7:13; Rev 14:9-11; 20:10-15).

FUTURE EVENTS AND ETERNITY (Eschatology)

The Rapture of the Church

We teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year Tribulation (1Thess 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:16; 5:23; Titus 2:13; Rev 3:10) to translate His Church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:20-23,50-53; 1Thess 4:15-5:11;

2Thess 2:1-4; Rev 3:10) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (Isa 40:9-10; 62:11; Matt 6:19-21; 1Cor 3:11-15; 2Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12).

The Tribulation Period

We teach that immediately following the removal of the Church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon the earth dwellers over a seven year period commonly referred to as the Tribulation (Jer 30:3-11; Dan 9:27; 12:1; Matt 24:3-51; Mark 13:3-37; Luke 21:7-36; 2Thess 2:7-12; Rev 3:10; 4:1-22:6). This will also be a period of tremendous worldwide salvation (Rev 6:9-11; 7:4-8, 9-17). This period is the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9:24-27; Matt 24:15-31; 25:31-46; Mark 13:4-37; Luke 21:7-36). These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in great power and glory to the earth, accompanied by the redeemed from heaven, to rescue the Jewish people from her enemies (Ps 2:1-12; Isa 11:1-16; 13:1-14:1; 27:12-13; 31:4-9; 40:1-11; 43:1-7; 49:22-26; 61:1-11; 62:1-63:6; 65:8-12; 66:10-24; Jer 23:1-8; 30:3-24; 31:1-40; 46:27-28; Ezek 11:17-21; 20:33-44; 28:25-26; 34:11-31; Joel 1:15; 2:1-3:21; Obad 15-21; Mic 1:2-4; 2:12-13; 4:1-13; 5:1-15; Nah 1:7-15; 2:1-13; Hab 3:8-15; Zeph 1:14-18; 2:1-15; 3:1-20; Zech 2:1-13; 3:1-20; 8:1-23; 9:7-17; 10:1-12; 12:1-14; 13:1-9; 14:1-21; Mal 3:16-4:6; Matt 23:37-39; 24:27-31; 25:31-46; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-27; 2Thess 1:5-10; 2:7-12; Jude 14-15; Rev 11:1-13; 12:1-6, 13, 17; 16:12-16; 19:11-21). At that time the Tribulation martyrs will also then be raised (Rev 20:4).

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We teach that, after the Tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (2Sam 7:8-16; Isa 9:7; 16:5; Ps 2:1-12; 89:3-4, 29, 35-37; 132:11; Isa 40:9-11; 42:13; Jer 23:5; 30:9; 33:14-21; Ezek 34:11-31; 37:24-28; Hosea 3:5; Obad 15-21; Matt 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:6-11; 2:29-30; Rev 19:11-16) and establish His Kingdom (Ps 2:1-12; Isa 52:1-15; Dan 2:28-25; 7:1-27; Hos 3:4-5; Obad 15-21; Mic 4:1-13; 5:1-15; 7:14-20; Zeph 3:1-20; Zech 6:11-15; 8:1-13; 9:7-17; 14:1-21) for one thousand years on the earth (Rev 20:1-7). The believers who survive the Tribulation enter the kingdom and will have children who will populate the earth. This is where the rebellious nations will come from at the end of 1000 years. During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezek 37:1-28; Dan 7:17-22; 12:13; Rev 19:11-16; 20:4,6). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Dan 7:17-27; Rev 19:20-20:7).

We teach that the Kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isa 27:1-13; 43:1-7; 52:1-15; 62:1-12; 65:17-25; Jer 3:11-18; Ezek 34:11-31;

36:1-38; 37:1-28; Hos 2:14-23; 3:4-5; 14:4-7; Mic 2:12-13; 5:1-15; 7:14-20; Nah 1:7-15; 2:1-13; Zeph 2:1-15; Hag 2:2-9; Zech 6:11-15; 8:1-23; 9:7-17; 14:1-21; Mal 3:1-12; Acts 1:6; 3:17-26) to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience (Deut 28:15-68; 30:1-8; Isa 27:1-13; 31:4-7; 40:9-11; 52:1-15; 65:8-12; 66:10-24; Jer 3:14-18; 23:1-8; 30:3-24; 31:1-40; 32:36-44; Ezek 11:17-21; 20:33-44; 28:25-26; 36:1-38; 39:25-29; Hos 2:14-23; 6:11; 11:8-11; Joel 3:1-21; Am 9:7-15; Obah 15-21; Mic 4:1-13; 7:14-20; Zeph 3:1-20; Zech 2:1-13; 8:1-23; 9:7-17; 10:1-12; 12:1-14; 14:1-21; Mal 3:1-4). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matt 21:33-45; 23:37-39; Rom 11:1-26), but will be saved through repentance and faith to enter into the land of blessing (Deut 4:30-31; Isa 31:4-9; 52:1-15; 65:8-12; 66:10-24; Jer 31:31-34; 50:20; Ezek 36:22-36; Hos 5:15; Amos 5:18-24; Zeph 3:1-20; Zech 2:1-3:10; 12:1-14; 13:1-9; 14:1-21; Rom 11:25-29; Rev 1:7; 11:13).

We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isa 11; 65:17-25; Ezek 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Rev 20:7-10).

The Judgment of the Lost

We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Rev 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and Jerusalem, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Ezek 38:1-23; 39:1-24; Rev 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Matt 25:41; Rev 20:10), whereupon God through Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2Tim 4:1; Rev 22:12), will judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15).

We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in Hell, the Lake of Fire (Dan 12:2; Matt 3:8-12; 5:21-22, 27-30; 8:11-12; 10:28; 13:30,40-42,49-50; 18:6-9; 23:15, 33; 24:51; 25:41-46; Mark 9:42-48; 2Thess 1:6-9; Heb 6:1-2; Jude 7,13; Rev 14:9-11; 20:11-15).

Eternity

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2Thess 1:9; Rev 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 (2Pet 3:7-12) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Isa 65:17-19; 1Cor 6:9-10; Eph 5:5; Rev 20:15; 21:1-27; 22:1-21). Following this, the heavenly Jerusalem city will come down out of heaven (Rev 21:2, 9-11) and

will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (Isa 60:1-22; John 17:3; Rev 21-22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father (1Cor 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1Cor 15:28).