

# Grace Fellowship Bible Church

## Statement of Faith

9/28/2008

# **GRACE FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH—STATEMENT OF FAITH**

## **The Holy Scriptures**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and twenty-seven books of the New Testament, is God's written revelation to mankind and thus constitutes the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21). As such the Scriptures embody the very speaking of God and therefore partake of His authority and power (Hebrews 4:12) and are binding on the consciences of all men.

We believe 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 autographs, infallible, and God breathed. We believe in a consistent, literal, grammatical historical interpretation of Scripture.

We believe that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We believe that God's will, as revealed in the Bible, is the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not specifically addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture. We believe that the Scriptures are complete and sufficient in all respects for matters pertaining to life and godliness. (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 1:3, 20-21).

We believe that in the area of discipleship counseling the Bible alone provides the necessary and complete mind of Christ for every eventuality of human life. Therefore we deny any attempt to integrate humanistic psychology with biblical counsel. (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Colossians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 3:18-21)

We believe that God communicated His revelation by a process of dual 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 (2 Peter 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16). We believe 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, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

## **God**

We believe 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 coexisting in three distinct Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience. We believe that God is completely unique; He is unlike anyone or anything else in all the universe. God has all power, all knowledge, all wisdom, and is due all glory, honor and praise. As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption, and everything that comes to pass does so at His decree (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). All things will, in the end, result in the glory of God (Isaiah 46:5; Ephesians 1:10-14).

We believe that God created the universe, and everything in it, out of nothing (ex nihilo), by the word of His power in six literal twenty-four hour days (Genesis 1:31; Hebrews 11:3; Exodus 31:17). Having no deficiency in Himself, nor moved by any incompleteness in His self-sufficiency, God was pleased to display His glory to all mankind through His creation (Genesis 1; Psalm 19:1; Exodus 3:12-14; Psalm 50:9-15; Acts 17:25; Romans 1:20).

## **God the Father**

We believe 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). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. He is Creator of all men but 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).

## **God the Son**

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and that by Him all things were created that are in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, and that He sustains all creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2)

We believe that Jesus Christ, in His incarnation, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant being made in the likeness of men. We believe that Jesus Christ perfectly represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9).

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

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ perfectly 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 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We believe that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, where He mediates as our Advocate and great High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 4:14, 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We believe that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God 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 believe that Jesus Christ will return imminently to gather His elect which is the Body of Christ and establish a new Heaven and new Earth wherein righteousness dwells (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3:9-13; Revelation 20).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:31-46; 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; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King, who reigns on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31). We believe that on the basis of the efficacy 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 justified, 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).

## **God the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third divine Person of the Trinity, and that He is eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), 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 and personhood He is coequal and consubstantial 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 believe 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).

We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age 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 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 believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (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 believe that the Holy Spirit was the divine agent who guided the apostles and prophets ensuring that all Scripture was His God-breathed revelation.

We believe that 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 believe 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; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

We believe, 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 (known human languages, Acts 2) 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 normative in the lives of believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:14).

## **Man**

We believe that Adam was directly and immediately created by God (uniquely in His image and likeness) from the dust of the ground. We believe that Eve was created from the side of Adam and that both were created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, self determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).

We believe that God, who works all things after the counsel of His will, created man for His glory.

We believe that, although God created man morally upright, he was led astray from God's Word and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan's deceit, and chose to take what was forbidden, and thus declare his independence from, distrust for, and disobedience and rebellion toward his all-good and gracious Creator.

Thus, our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original innocence and communion with God (Ecclesiastes 7:9; Genesis 3:6-8; Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21).

We believe 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 in every aspect of his being and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace (Romans 8:7-8). With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost and dead in trespasses and sins. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ alone (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-9; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We believe 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, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

We believe God has subjected the creation to futility, and the entire human family is made justly liable to untold miseries of sickness, decay, calamity, and loss. Thus all the adversity and suffering in the world is an echo and a witness of the exceedingly great evil of moral depravity in the heart of mankind; and every new day of life is a God-given, merciful reprieve from imminent judgment, pointing to repentance (Romans 8:20-23; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Romans 8:35-36; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; Romans 2:4).

## **Sin**

We believe that sin subsists, but the origin and occasion for the existence of sin remains a mystery known only to God. Sin entered the world through the one sin of Adam which in turn brought guilt and condemnation to all of his posterity. The Bible reveals that through Adam's transgression there resulted condemnation to all men (Romans 5:18) and that the judgment of mankind arose from this transgression. All are guilty in Adam and all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

## **Salvation**

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

We believe that salvation is in Jesus Christ alone through the message of the gospel (Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 John 2:21-24; Romans 1:16, 10:13-17).

We believe that by His perfect obedience (both active and passive) to God and by His suffering and death as the immaculate Lamb of God, Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins and the gift of perfect righteousness for all who trusted in God prior to the cross and all who would trust in Christ thereafter. Through living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed our punishment, appeased the wrath of God against us, vindicated the righteousness of God in our justification, and removed the condemnation of the law against us (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18; Romans 3:24-26; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Romans 5:6, 8:34, 14:9; Galatians 2:21; John 1:29; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Acts 13:38; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:21-22, 4:3).

## **Regeneration**

We believe that regeneration is a sovereign and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit which precedes faith and by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). 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), with the result that the repentant sinner 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. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration which have been prepared beforehand for the believer to walk in (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10) and will be experienced to the extent 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), a conformity which is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

## **Election**

We believe that election is the sovereign prerogative of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He unconditionally chose, by an act of His free grace through Christ, those whom He would graciously regenerate, bring to repentance and faith, save, sanctify and glorify (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of believers to spread the gospel, nor of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). Nevertheless, the election of God includes both the means (faith) and the end (salvation) so that it is not the man who wills or the man who runs but God who has mercy that determines who shall be saved. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive and all who are received of the Father will be eternally glorified (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:15-16; James 4:8).

We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is 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 (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).

We believe that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God exercises His sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, particularly His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16). 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 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9).

## **Justification**

We believe that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He acquits those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7). The basis for this declaration in no way involves any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) but rests solely on the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of both the passive and active righteousness of Christ to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). The righteousness contemplated in the verdict of justification is always the righteousness of Christ alone imputed to the ungodly for their acquittal. 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 believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing before God, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).



We believe that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification 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 believe 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. 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 3:5-9).

## **Separation**

We believe 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 believe that, out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so 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 believe that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us, by God (Matthew 5:7; 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 believe that Christians 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 that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

## **Perseverance of the Saints**

We believe that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. Despite the sin that yet remains in the life of a believer, God has assured His elect that He will never leave them or forsake them and that nothing can separate them from His love in Christ Jesus. We believe that God who began a good work inside of His own will complete it until the end and that Christians are kept by the power of God unto their ultimate salvation. The assurance of perseverance is grounded in God's sovereign election. We believe that those who apostatize were never truly redeemed to begin with (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 28-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25, 13:5; 1 Peter 1:3-6; 1 John 2:19; Jude 24).

We believe 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 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14). We believe that all Christians will bear fruit and walk in the good works prepared for them before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 2:10).

## **The Church**

We believe 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 believe 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 believe 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 is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We believe 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; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that 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 believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; 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 leaders serving under Christ and over the local assembly are elders (also called overseers and bishops) who must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). We believe that these elders lead or rule 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 believe the only biblically designated church office other than elder is that of deacon (Phi 1:1). Deacons must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8-13) and serve primarily as ministers of mercy on behalf of the local church to the needy within the church at the direction of the elders (Acts 6:1-6).

We believe in the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

We believe in 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 (Titus 1:5). We believe 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 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We believe 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 (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42). We affirm the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42).

## **Baptism**

We believe that the only candidates for baptism are those who have come to faith and repentance in the Lord Jesus Christ. As an act of obedience, 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 (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of



fellowship and identification with the Body of Christ (Acts 2:38-42; Acts 10:44-48; Acts 19:1-5; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 1:11-17).

We believe that infant baptism is not Christian baptism and uphold the following: Scripture nowhere states that baptism takes the place of circumcision, nor that it shares in the significance and meaning of circumcision. Scripture nowhere states that baptism signifies a potential or anticipated faith in an infant or anyone else, nor that it brings one into contact with the new covenant, nor that it places one in the body of Christ.

## **The Lord's Supper**

We believe that the Lord's Supper, as instituted by Jesus, is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). It is not intended to be a time of morbid introspection focused on individual unworthiness, but rather a time to remember Christ's worthiness which has reconciled us to God, having been justified by faith alone (Romans 5:1).

We believe that the elements of the Lord's Supper are only representative or symbolic of the flesh and blood of Christ. The bread serves as a symbol of His body which was broken for us. In taking the bread, we fellowship in the body of Christ. The fruit of the vine serves as a symbol of the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed to inaugurate the New Covenant. In taking the cup of blessing we fellowship in the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-26).

We believe that only those who are disciples of Jesus Christ should participate in the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:18-25; 1 Corinthians 11:27)

## **Holy Angels**

We believe that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him, and to serve those who will inherit salvation (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14-19; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

## **Satan**

We believe that Satan is a created angel, and as a created being does not possess any of the non-communicable attributes of deity (e.g., omniscience and omnipresence). Satan incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19) and taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14). We believe that Satan introduced sin into the human race through Adam's fall (Genesis 3:1-15; Romans 5:12-21) and that he continues to tempt believers in an effort to subvert the plans of God.

We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10); the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

## **Death**

We believe that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), and that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24). For the redeemed, such separation (in a disembodied state (2 Corinthians 5:8)) will continue until Christ gathers His elect to

Himself, at which time the soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54).

We believe in 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 believe that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until Death and Hades give up the dead (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46; Revelation 20:14, 15), cut off from life and God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

### **The Rapture of the Church**

We believe in the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate 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 believe 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 (Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). At that time the tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

### **The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign**

We believe that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come 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 believe 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 believe 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 believe 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 20:7-9). 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 believe that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical bodily resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious torment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

## **Eternity**

We believe that after the closing of the Millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers, the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15; 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 forever fellowship 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).

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