

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The following statement of faith is not intended to define the boundaries of my fellowship with others. Our basis for biblical fellowship is a confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the pursuit of a godly lifestyle. This statement of faith represents my current doctrinal understanding, and all my teaching, preaching, and counseling reflects this understanding.

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of my beliefs, as growth in understanding Scripture occurs over a lifetime. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final authority of all that I believe.

BIBLIOLOGY-Holy Bible

I 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 (1 Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

I teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. I teach the literal, historical-grammatical and contextual interpretation of the Scriptures which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen. 1:31; Ex. 31:17).

I teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Jn. 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

I teach that God spoke forth His written Word 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 Pet. 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16).

I 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 historical-grammatical and contextual method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 Jn. 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.

I teach that a book's canonicity is determined by its inspiration, not by men or church council. The recognition of this inspiration and the collection of the books together were governed by God (Deut 31:25-27; Lk 11:51; Jn 17:17; 1 Tim 5:18).

THEOLOGY PROPER-*God the Father*

I teach that there is but one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Is. 45:5-7; 1 Cor. 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere-present Spirit (Jn. 4:24), perfect in all His attributes. He is one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)-each equally deserving worship and obedience.

I teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1-31; Eph. 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; 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 (Eph. 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph. 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chron. 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Hab. 1:13; Jn. 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Pet. 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 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 (Jn. 1:12; Rom 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

CHRISTOLOGY-*God the Son*

I teach 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 (Jn. 10:30; 14:9).

I teach that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

I teach that in the incarnation (God taking on human flesh) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9).

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

I teach that my Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23, 25; Lk. 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (Jn. 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Is. 9:6; Jn. 1:29; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 7:25-26; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

I teach that, in the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:5-8).

I teach that my Lord Jesus Christ accomplished my redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (Jn. 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24).

I teach that on the basis of the efficacy (adequacy) of the death of my 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 (Rom. 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).

I teach that my justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as my Advocate and High Priest (Matt. 28:6; Lk. 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom. 4:25; 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 Jn. 2:1).

I teach 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, in His resurrection from the dead. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (Jn. 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23).

I 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 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20).

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

- Believers (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10)
- Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matt. 25:31-46)
- Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15)

As the Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), and the Head of His Body the church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the

throne of David (Is. 9:6; Lk. 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

PNEUMATOLOGY-*God the Holy Spirit*

I teach the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph. 4:30), will (1 Cor. 12:11), eternality (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Is. 40:13-14), omnipotence (Rom. 15:13), and truthfulness (Jn. 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Jer. 31:31-34; with Heb. 10:15-17).

I teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. I recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the written revelation (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (Jn. 3:5-7).

I teach that the Holy Spirit began His work in this age began Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Cor. 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (Jn. 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22).

I teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13).

I 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 (Jn. 16:13; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

I 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 (Jn. 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 3:18).

I 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 (1 Cor. 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12; Heb. 2:1-4).

ANTHROPOLOGY-*Man*

I teach that God directly and immediately created man in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25; Jas. 3:9).

I 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 (Is. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).

I 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 of 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 (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 Jn. 1:8).

I 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, by choice, and by divine declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

Marriage, Divorce, and Sexuality

I teach that marriage is the intimate, life-long covenant relationship established by God between one man and one woman (as genetically defined). That God's intention for marriage is permanent and only between a man and woman is seen by His command to the man to "leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife" in a "one flesh" relationship. By "one flesh" it is meant that the husband and his wife are joined physically in the only union that can potentially produce offspring (except in certain cases of infertility or debilitating physical abnormality) and relationally by virtue of their shared and united life together. The above definition of marriage—as one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union—is the only one recognized by God (Gen 1:26-28; 2:18-19, 23-24; Matt 19:4-6; Rom 7:2).

I teach that the union of a husband (man) and wife (woman) is reflective of the very nature of God and His relationship with His people (Gen 1:28; Isa 54:5; Hosea 1:2; 3:1; 1 Cor 11:1-3; Eph 5:31-32; Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9).

I teach that any intimate sexual union or activity outside the one man and one woman marriage covenant is illegitimate, sin, and offensive to God. God explicitly and repeatedly condemns any sexual unions such as homosexuality (male with male), lesbianism (female with female), bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication (all sexual

union outside marriage), adultery, altering one's gender by surgery or appearance, and pornography. These are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex and sexuality and are expressly forbidden (Gen 2:24; 18:20; 19:5-7, 13; 26:8-9; Lev 18:1-30; Matt 5:27-32; Rom 1:18-29; 1 Cor 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess 4:1-8; Heb 13:4).

I teach that to continue in any of the above-mentioned sexual unions or activities or to be supportive of them without repentance after being informed of what the Scriptures teach on the matter, evidences that one is walking in sin. This may also be demonstrating that he/she is not a born-again Christian who has tasted of God's saving grace (1 Cor 6:9-10; Jn 14:15; Rom 8:5-9; Gal 5:17-23; Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 2:3-5; 3:4-10; Rev 21:8, 27).

I teach that divorce is expressly forbidden by God except in the following circumstances: unbelieving spouse leaves or refuses to be reconciled and/or adultery (sexual activity with someone other than their spouse). Remarriage in the Lord is permitted in the case of a biblical divorce or in the death of a spouse (Matt 5:31-33; 19:3-9; Rom 7:1-3; 1 Cor 7:10-17, 39).

Sanctity of Human Life

I teach that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage and condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

SOTERIOLOGY-*Salvation*

I 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 (Jn. 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Regeneration

I teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (Jn. 3:3-7; Tit. 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (Jn. 5:24) when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation.

I teach that fruits of repentance, as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct manifest genuine regeneration. Good works are its proper evidence and fruit. This fruit will be experienced and manifested to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through obedience to the Word of God. This

obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (1 Cor 6:19-20; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 2:1-10, 5:17-21; Phil 2:12b; Col 3:16; 2 Pet 1:4-10; 1 Jn 3:2-3).

Atonement

I teach that Jesus Christ died to satisfy the justice of God's nature. He rendered satisfaction to the Father so that we might be spared the punishment of our sins. Jesus Christ atoned for sin by sacrificing Himself in the place of the offending sinner. Thus, He turned away the Father's wrath and reconciled believing sinners to the Father. Jesus' death on the cross is the one and only atonement that is acceptable to God (Lev 17:11; Mk 10:45; Rom 5:6-10; 6:10; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; 1 Jn 4:10).

Substitution

I teach that by offering Himself as a sacrifice in our place and substituting Himself for us, Jesus actually bore the punishment which should have been ours. To pay the penalty of death that all people deserve because of their sins, Christ died as a sacrifice for our sin in our place. He is our substitute, the One who suffered and died instead of us who are guilty. He has paid the price (His life) for our sin (Isa 53; Rom 6:23; 1 Cor 5:7; Heb 9:26; 10:12).

Propitiation

Christ's death appeases and turns away God's wrath against sin from those whom He saves by grace. Christ's sacrifice satisfied God, who hates and opposes sin and who is going to destroy it and its agents (Rom 1:18; 2:4-13; 3:25; 5:8-9; 9:22-23; Eph 2:3-5; 5:5-6; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 2:2, 4:10).

Election

I 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 (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1-2).

I teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; Jn. 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (Jn. 6:37-40,

44; Acts 13:48; Jas. 4:8) Sovereign election will result in what God determines; the elect cannot resist God's grace (Jn 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48).

I teach that the purpose of election is to glorify God and to actually save the elect, not to merely make salvation possible. The unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative on their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but it is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy. Salvation is a gift from God, not God's confirmation of a person's decision. A person's belief is their confirmation of God's gift (Rom 8:29; Eph 1:4-7, 11-12; 2 Thess 2:13-14; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:9).

Election is not based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes such as His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, mercy, and love. God's sovereignty always functions within His will in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. God's election is motivated by love and mercy and is not cruel (Matt 11:25-28; Rom 9:11-23; 2 Tim 1:9).

Justification

I 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 (Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; Is. 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:20; 4:5) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 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

I 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. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2).

I teach 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 (Jn. 17:17, 19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, I 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 is unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Gal. 5:16-25; Gal. 4:22-24; Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:9-10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 Jn. 3:5-9).

Security

I teach that all the redeemed, once genuinely saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (Jn. 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 24).

I 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 (Rom. 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13, 25-26; Tit. 2:11-14).

Separation

I teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Bible which teaches that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

I teach 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 of God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. I also teach that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; 2 Jn. 9-11).

I teach that believers should be separated unto their Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:11-12; Heb. 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Jn. 3:1-10).

Assurance

I teach that believers, from the moment of their salvation, can rejoice in the assurance of their salvation. However, God's Word clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living. Assurance of salvation should not be looked at as a perceived "right" of salvation, or based only on a time of decision, but instead should be seen as a gift of the Spirit given to those who exhibit the fruit of regeneration. This gift of assurance, once granted, can be sacrificed through carnal living or ignorance of Scriptural truth, by which doubts are the natural by-product. There is also the reality of

false assurance in spurious professions of faith (Matt 7) made by those who eventually fall away (Matt 13:19-21; 1 Jn 2:19). Therefore, we must apply ourselves to growth in Gospel graces (2 Pet 1:5-9), perseverance in faith, righteousness, and the manifestation of religious affections, such as love for God (Ps 42; 2 Cor 5:14-15; Matt 10:37-39), godly sorrow that leads to repentance from sin (Ps 32:5, 51; Prov 28:13; 2 Cor 7:8-11), and separation from the world (1 Cor 2:12; Jas 4:4ff; 1 Jn 2:15-17). We are responsible before God to be all the more diligent concerning our calling and election (2 Pet 1:5, 10). Rom 6:15-22; 13:11-14; Gal 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Pet 1:5).

ECCLESIOLOGY-*Church*

I 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 Cor. 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18).

I 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 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

I 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 (1 Cor. 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6; 5:32).

I 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; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Cor. 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25).

I teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 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 elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).

I teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Tim. 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. In essence, they are under-shepherds serving the Good Shepherd. Their leadership is not a dictatorship, nor lording an assumed authority over those entrusted to their care, but servant leadership as they shepherd the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:1-5). The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Heb. 13:7, 17).

I teach that from its very beginning, the church has seen the vital role women play (Acts 1:12-14; 9:36-42; 18:1-2, 18, 24-28; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 1:5; 4:19).

However, amidst all her different roles, the woman's role has never been one of leadership over men. Though they work together in ministry with men who they are equal to, they serve a different role. God makes it clear that women, as valuable as they are to ministry, are not to teach or exercise authority over men (1 Tim. 2:12).

I teach the importance of discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 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; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; Tit. 1:10-16).

I teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority of control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Tit. 1:5). I teach that it is scriptural for biblically sound 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 determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Cor. 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

I 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 (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 Jn. 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Lk. 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

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

I 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 member of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

I 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 (Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 12:12); 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 (1 Cor. 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Cor. 13:13-14:12; Rev. 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those nonrevelatory gifts given for edification (Rom. 12:6-8).

I 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 (Lk. 18:1-6; Jn. 5:7-9; 2 Cor. 12:6-10; Jas. 5:13-16; 1 Jn. 5:14-15).

I teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian (believer's) 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 local expression of the body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

I 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 Cor. 11:28-32). I teach that, whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer, and so is present, fellowshiping with His people (1 Cor. 10:16).

ANGELOLOGY-*Angels, Demons, Satan*

Holy Angels

I teach that angels are created beings and are thus not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Lk. 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9)

Fallen Angels

I teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Is. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1-15).

I teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and also of man (Is. 14:13-14; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-10); the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Is. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20-10).

ESCHATOLOGY-*End Times*

Death

I 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 (Lk.

23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 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 (1 Thess 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 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 Cor. 5:8).

I teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (Jn. 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Cor. 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29; Rev. 20:13-15).

I teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Lk. 16:19-26; Rev. 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (Jn. 5:28-29) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

The Rapture of the Church

I teach the personal, bodily return of my Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thess. 4:16; Tit. 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:15-5:11) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

The Tribulation Period

I teach that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thess 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world during seven years of Great Tribulation (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 16). These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matt. 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and Tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

I teach that, after the Tribulation Period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Lk. 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezek. 37:21-28; Dan. 7:17-22; Rev. 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 (Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 20:1-7).

I teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Is. 65:17-25; Ezek. 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-17) to restore them to the land that they forfeited

through their disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matt. 21:43; Rom. 11:1-26), but will at this time be renewed through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29).

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

The Judgment of the Lost

I teach that following the release of Satan after the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Rev. 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 attacked by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10), whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (Jn. 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment.

I teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Jn. 5:29b), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15).

Eternity

I teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thess. 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 (2 Pet. 3:10) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Eph. 5:5; Rev. 20:15, 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (Jn. 17:3; Rev. 21-22). My Lord Jesus Christ, having accomplished His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Cor. 15:28).

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