

STATEMENT OF FAITH

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PREFACE

The following statement of faith is not intended to define our boundaries of fellowship. 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 the doctrinal understanding of the leadership of Grace Community Church, and all teaching, preaching, and counseling at GCC will reflect this understanding.

This statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. 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 we believe. For purposes of Grace Community Church's Statement of Faith, doctrine, practices, policies, and discipline, the Elder Board is Grace Community Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and applications.

THE SCRIPTURES

The Bible is the written revelation of God. The sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God. The Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation, verbally inspired in every word, absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. 1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

God spoke His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit superintended the human authors so that what they wrote are the very words of God yet also according to each individual's personality and different style of writing. They recorded and composed God's Word to man without error. Matthew 5:18; Ephesians 4:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

The Bible is to be interpreted according to the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation which affirms that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days. Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17.

The Bible constitutes the only inerrant and infallible rule of faith and practice and must be obediently submitted to in every aspect of life. Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

There are several applications of any given passage of Scripture, but there is only one correct interpretation. Scripture's meaning is found as the believer consistently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. It is the responsibility of believers to carefully ascertain the true intent and meaning of Scripture,

recognizing that proper application of biblical truth is binding on all Christians. The Bible is the standard of conduct for all people and stands in judgment of them; never do people stand in judgment of the Bible. It is vested with God's authority. John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20.

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. Deuteronomy 31:25-27; Luke 11:51; John 17:17; 1 Timothy 5:18.

THE ONE TRUE GOD

There is only one living and true God. He is Creator of all things, infinite, all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present Spirit, perfect and complete, unchangeable in all His attributes. He is one in essence, yet eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each equally deserving worship and obedience. Genesis 1:1-31; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 139; Isaiah 45:5-7; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

God The Father

God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace. By His own will the universe was created. As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. Genesis 1:1-31; Psalm 102:25; 103:19; 145:8-9; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9.

His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Father within the Trinity, He is the source, initiator, planner, and director of divine ideas and actions. He is Father to all men as Creator, but He is spiritual Father only to believers. Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 4:6; Hebrews 1:2; 10:7.

God has decreed, for His own glory, all things that come to pass. He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events. In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin, nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures. 1 Chronicles 29:11; Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47; Ephesians 1:11; 1 Peter 1:17.

God the Father has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own. He saves from sin and adopts as His own all who come to Him through believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:4-6; Hebrews 12:5-9.

God the Son

His Nature

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son, the second person of the Trinity. He possesses all of the divine perfections and in these He is coequal, consubstantial (made of the same essence), and coeternal with the Father. In His incarnation He united to His divine nature a true human nature in an indissoluble union and so became the God-Man. These two natures comprise one person. Micah 5:2; John 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9; 1 John 5:20; Jude 25.

In His incarnation (God becoming man) the eternal Son laid aside the manner of existence of God to assume the manner of existence appropriate to a servant, but He never divested Himself of His divine attributes. In His incarnation Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of His divine essence either in degree or kind. In His incarnation Christ Jesus is fully God and fully man, and He represents humanity in indivisible oneness with God. Micah 5:2; John 14:9-11; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9.

Jesus Christ was virgin born with His personhood and nature begotten by the Holy Spirit and so was preserved from contamination with the stream of fallen humanity. He was sinless in nature as well as in deed. The Lord Jesus Christ was God incarnate, and the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom. Psalms 2:7-9; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Matthew 1:23-25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1, 14, 14:30; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:22.

His Work

God the Father created the universe according to His own will and through Jesus Christ. By Christ all things continue in existence and operation. John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2.

The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished redemption through His sacrificial death on the cross. His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive. John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24.

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

A sinner's justification is made sure by Jesus Christ's literal, physical resurrection from the dead. Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father where He currently mediates

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between the Father and believers as our Advocate and High Priest. Matthew 25:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1.

God the Father confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that He has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross, in His resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers. Isaiah 53:10-11; John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23.

Jesus Christ will return to receive the Church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture. He will also return with His Church in glory and establish His millennial kingdom on earth. As the mediator between God and man, the head of His body the Church, and the coming King who will reign on the throne of David, Christ is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior. Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33; Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 1:9-11; 17:30-31; Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Timothy 2:5; Revelation 20.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind. He will judge believers for rewards at the Bema seat and the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne. Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15.

God the Holy Spirit His Nature

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is a divine person who is eternal and underived (not created), possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect, emotions, will, eternality, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and truthfulness. In all the divine attributes He is coequal, consubstantial (made of the same essence), and coeternal with the Father and the Son. Psalms 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:13-14; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:34; 28:25-26; John 16:13; Romans 15:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 9:14; 10:15-17.

His Work

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind which He does by working through the Church that He indwells. The Holy Spirit's sovereign activity includes creation, the incarnation, written revelation, and the work of salvation. Genesis 1:2; John 3:5-7; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

The Holy Spirit began His work in this age at Pentecost when He came from the Father, as promised by Christ, to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is the Church. The broad scope of His work includes convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and

judgment, glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, and transforming believers into Christ's image. John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22.

The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration who baptizes all believers into the body of Christ. He indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers to service, fills, and seals the Church until the day of redemption. 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18.

The Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the writers of Scripture into all truth as they committed into writing God's revelation, the Bible. The Holy Spirit teaches the Church with the Scriptures. John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20, 27.

Every believer possesses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation. It is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled (controlled) by the Spirit. Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18.

The Holy Spirit administers gifts to the Church. He 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 faith through the gifts He bestows on the Church. John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 14:33, 40; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today. Speaking in tongues and the working of other sign gifts in the beginning days of the Church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth. The sign gifts were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers throughout the church age. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4.

MANKIND

Origin

Mankind was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. The image of God in man includes distinct and immutable genders of male and female, which are complementary. Each gender bears fully the image of God, although each gender is a distinct expression of that image. Rejection of one's biological sex/gender (as genetically defined), is a rejection of the image of God within that person. Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 19:4.

Because man—male and female—bears the image of God, every person is to be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or sound

doctrine. Genesis 9:6; Mark 12:28–31; Luke 6:31; Galatians 6:10; 2 Timothy 2:24–25; James 3:9–10.

Mankind was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility. Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9.

God's intention in the creation of human beings was that they should glorify God, enjoy His fellowship, live life in the will of God as both authoritatively and principally revealed in Scripture, and accomplish God's purpose for mankind in the world. Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11.

Fall

In Adam's voluntary 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, became inherently corrupt, and became utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8.

Because all people are in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all people of all ages except for Jesus Christ. All people are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration. Psalms 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12.

Marriage

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. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-19, 23-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:2.

The union of a husband (man) and wife (woman) is reflective of the very nature of God and His relationship with His people. Genesis 1:28; Isaiah 54:5; Hosea 1:2; 3:1; 1 Corinthians 11:1-3; Ephesians 5:31-32; Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9.

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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. Genesis 2:24; 18:20; 19:5-7, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Matthew 5:27-32; Romans 1:18-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4.

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 they are not a born-again Christian who has tasted of God's saving grace. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; John 14:15; Romans 8:5-9; Galatians 5:17-23; John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-5; 3:4-10; Revelation 21:8, 27.

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. Matthew 5:31-33; 19:3-9; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-17, 39.

Sanctity of Human Life

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.

SALVATION

Salvation is God's work of rescuing a person from eternal death and giving eternal life. It is wholly and completely a free work of God by grace on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ and the merit of His sacrificial death on the cross and not on the basis of any human merit or works. Salvation is the prerequisite to obeying God, not the goal of obedience to God. Psalm 119:146; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 1:7; 2:1-10; Titus 3:5-8; Hebrews 2:10; 5:9; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Election

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

Sovereign election does not contradict nor negate the responsibility of individuals to repent and put their faith in 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.

Sovereign grace includes both the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself. The result is that all whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive. Sovereign election will result in what God determines; the elect cannot resist God's grace. John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48.

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. Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4-7, 11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 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. Matthew 11:25-28; Romans 9:11-23; 2 Timothy 1:9.

Regeneration

Regeneration is exclusively a work of God by which the elect partake of the divine nature. It is the initial and instantaneous supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in which God imparts new life. Regeneration is divine life because it is from God, but it is not divine in the sense that we become gods ourselves. John 1:13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Romans 1:16; Colossians 1:21; 2:13; Titus 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4.

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 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:1-10, 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10; 1 John 3:2-3.

Atonement

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. Leviticus 17:11; Mark 10:45; Romans 5:6-10; 6:10; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 4:10.

Sacrifice and Vicarious Substitution

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. Isaiah 53; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 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. Romans 1:18; 2:4-13; 3:25; 5:8-9; 9:22-23; Ephesians 2:3-5; 5:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10.

Expiation

Christ bore not only our sins but also the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross. Christ suffered in our place for our sins. Romans 3:23-25.

Redemption

The work of Christ on the cross paid in full the price of releasing sinners from the bondage and judgment of sin and bringing them into a right relationship with God. Jesus Christ Himself was paid as the ransom for the price of human sin that is required by the outraged holiness of God. There is no other price to be paid than the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a result, the believing offender is released from bondage to sin and liberated to live a life pleasing to God. Galatians 3:13; 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:13-14.

Justification

Justification before God is an act of God by which He *declares* righteous those whom He has *made* righteous by grace through faith in Christ. This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. Being righteous before God is the condition of the believer. Being justified is God's declaration about the righteous believer. By this means God is both "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 3:20-30; 4:6; 5:1; 8:33; 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 7:10; Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24.

Imputation

The perfect righteousness of Christ is credited to the believing sinner as a result of being justified. Romans 3:24; 5:9, 19; 8:1; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 2:14.

Reconciliation

The work of Christ on the cross completely changes believing sinners personally and in their relationship to God by removing all grounds for their condemnation. As a result, redeemed and justified individuals are reconciled to God and now live in a right relationship with Him. Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 2:20.

Faith and Repentance

Faith and repentance are two distinct, yet inextricable and necessary, responses of man to God's saving accomplishments in His Son as revealed in Scripture and in order for sinful man to partake and benefit from God's saving work in Christ. Faith involves acknowledging the truthfulness of and personally appropriating all that God has revealed in Scripture, particularly concerning Himself, Christ, redemption, and man. Repentance is the act of turning from sin to Christ. It is by faith exchanging one's own life to gain life in Christ. Repentance involves both the initial act of faith whereby the sinner submits to the Lordship of Christ and an ongoing process in a believer's life of turning from sin to walk in obedience. Matthew 16:24-26; 19:16-23; Luke 9:23; John 3:16-21, 36; Hebrews 11:1-6; 1 John 2:3-5; 3:1-10.

Forgiveness

Through the death of Christ believing sinners have their transgressions put away from them forever. The forgiveness of God is complete and sufficient for all sin. Matthew 26:27-28; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 9:22; 10:17.

Sanctification

Every believer has been sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is thus identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional, instantaneous, and has to do with a believer's standing before God, not his present walk or condition, and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. 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.

There is also, by the continuing work of the Holy Spirit, progressive sanctification by which the current state of the believer is brought closer to his eternal standing which he enjoys positionally 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, progressively 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 every saved person is in a daily conflict. The new creation in Christ is doing battle against sinful thought patterns, the flesh, this world system, and evil spiritual powers, but adequate provision is made for victory in every situation through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is only completely ended in physical death or when Christ returns. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but that is the standard all believers are called to and the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin. 1 Corinthians 10:13; 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.

Security

Once saved, all of the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. John 5:24; 6:37-50; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24.

Assurance

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 (Matthew 7) made by those who eventually fall away (Matthew 13:19-21; 1 John 2:19). Therefore, we must apply ourselves to growth in Gospel graces (2 Peter 1:5-9), perseverance in faith, righteousness,

and the manifestation of religious affections, such as love for God (Psalm 42; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Matthew 10:37-39), godly sorrow that leads to repentance from sin (Psalm 32:5, 51; Proverbs 28:13; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11), and separation from the world (1 Corinthians 2:12; James 4:4ff; 1 John 2:15-17). We are responsible before God to be all the more diligent concerning our calling and election (2 Peter 1:5, 10). Romans 6:15-22; 13:11-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:5.

THE CHURCH

The Universal Church

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

The formation of the Church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture. Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ and made up of all born-again believers in this present age. The Church is distinct from Israel and is the mystery not revealed until this age. 1 Corinthians 10:32; Ephesians 2:11–3:6; 5:32.

The one supreme authority for the Church is Christ. The 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 as overseers and deacons must each meet biblical qualifications. Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5.

The Local Church

The establishment and continuity of local churches are clearly taught and defined in the New Testament. The members of the one spiritual body, the Church, are to associate themselves together in local assemblies. Acts 14:23-27; 20:17, 28; 1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Hebrews 10:25.

The local church is free from any external authority or control. It has the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. 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 leadership and interpretation and application of Scripture will be the sole judge of the measure and method of such

cooperation. The leadership should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government. Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

The Ordinances

Two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian (believers) baptism by immersion is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer exhibiting his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the local expression of the body of Christ. Acts 2:38-42; 8:36-39; Romans 6:1-11.

The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes again and should always be preceded by self-examination. The elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ. The Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people. 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:28-32.

Separation

Separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Bible, which teaches that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase. 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Out of deep gratitude for undeserved grace and because the Lord is worthy of our total consecration to Him, all believers should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our love to God. This life is demonstrated by righteousness, godly attitudes, and a continual pursuit of holiness. We must not bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. Separation from religious apostasy, heresy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded by God. Matthew 5:2-12; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:1-2, 14; 1 John 2:15-17; 3:1-10; 2 John 9-11.

Civil Government

Civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of society. Governmental authorities are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed—except in things opposed to the will of God as contained in His Word, the Bible. Proverbs 8:15-16; Ecclesiastes 10:20; Matthew 22:18-21; Acts 4:17-21; 5:27-29; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:12-17.

ANGELS

Holy Angels

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 and worship God. Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9.

Fallen Angels

Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator. He took numerous angels with him in his fall, and he also introduced sin to the human race by his temptation of Eve. Genesis 3:1-15; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:1-14.

Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and also of mankind and is the prince of this world. He has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 16:20; Revelation 12:9-10; 20:10.

LAST THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)

Death and Resurrection

Physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness. Upon death there is separation of soul and body and the souls of the redeemed pass immediately into the presence of Christ. For the redeemed such separation will continue until the rapture. The first resurrection takes place at the rapture when soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord. Until that time the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with the Lord. Luke 23:43; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; Revelation 6:9-11; 20:4-6.

All people will be bodily resurrected. The saved will be resurrected to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. At death, the souls of the unsaved are kept under punishment until the second resurrection when the soul and resurrection body will be united. These shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into hell, which is the lake of fire, and cut off from God forever. Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:28-29; 6:39; Romans 8:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:13-15.

The Rapture

Christ will return personally and bodily before the seven-year tribulation to remove His Church from this earth. Between this event and His glorious second coming with His saints, He will reward all believers according to their works. John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 15:51-53; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–5:11; Titus 2:13.

The Tribulation

Immediately following the rapture of the Church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out on an unbelieving world during seven years of Great Tribulation. These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth. This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:24-27; 12:1-3; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16.

The Second Coming

After the tribulation period Christ will come to earth to occupy the Throne of David and establish His Messianic kingdom. At that time the Old Testament and Tribulation saints will be raised and rewarded, living Jews and Gentiles will be judged, and Satan will be bound. Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25; Mark 13:24-26; Luke 21:25-27; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6.

The Millennial Reign

Christ's Messianic kingdom will last for a thousand years on the earth. During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations. This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet and by the removal of Satan from the world. Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-7.

The kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel to restore the people to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience. The result of their disobedience was that they were temporarily set aside but will at this time be renewed through repentance to enter into the land of blessing. Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Isaiah 65:17-25; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17; Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:25-29.

Our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life on the earth. As Christ ends His earthly reign, He will release Satan. Isaiah 11; 65:15-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38; Revelation 20:7.

Judgment of the Lost

Following the release of Satan after the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints at Jerusalem. At this time Satan and his army will be attacked by fire from heaven. After this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire. Christ, the judge of all men, will resurrect and judge the lost, both the great and the small alike, at the Great White Throne Judgment. Matthew 25:41; John 5:22; Revelation 20:7-10.

This resurrection of the unsaved to judgment will be a physical resurrection. Upon receiving their judgment they will be committed to an eternal, conscious punishment in the lake of fire. Matthew 25:41; Romans 14:10-13; Revelation 14:11; 20:11-15.

Eternity

After the close of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers, the saved will enter God's eternal state of glory. The elements of this earth will be dissolved and replaced with a new earth where only righteousness dwells. Ephesians 5:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:7-15.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, having accomplished His mission, will then deliver up the Kingdom of God to the Father so that in all spheres the triune God will reign and be obeyed forever and ever.

1 Corinthians 15:24-2.