



Statement of Faith

# The Holy Scriptures

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21). The Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed.

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

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual 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 teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation.

# The Triune God

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), infinite, all-knowing, perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). Each member of the Godhead, while executing distinct but complementary roles in redemptive history, has precisely the same nature, attributes, and being, and is equally worthy of the same glory and honor and obedience (John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4).

## **God the Father**

We teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and directs all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things and created all things in six literal days (Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:8-11; Ephesians 3:9). We accept the literal, biblical account of creation and reject all other explanations of origins. As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36).

He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). But in His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin and adopts as His own all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

## **God the Son**

We 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 (John 10:30; 14:9).

We teach that Jesus Christ became man without sin, yet never ceasing to be God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (John 1:1-2; John 1:14; Luke 1:35). He, being fully God and fully man (John 14:8-9; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9), lived a sinless life as the God-Man.

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross in our place; for all who place their faith in Him (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We teach 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 declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

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

We teach that Jesus Christ, 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), will return to earth in power and glory to consummate His redemptive mission (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).

## **God the Holy Spirit**

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity. In all the divine attributes 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; Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), the work of salvation (John 3:5-7), to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13), and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

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

to the church (1 Corinthians 12:4–5). Some of these gifts 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 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

## Mankind

We teach that God created mankind—Male and Female—in His image and likeness. Mankind was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9). God’s intention in the creation of mankind was that they should glorify God, enjoy God’s fellowship, live life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God’s purpose for mankind in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We teach that in Adam’s sin mankind fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God (Jesus Christ being the only exception); and that man is totally depraved, and of himself, totally unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12). All are sinner by nature and by choice (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12). With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Therefore, man’s salvation is thereby wholly of God’s grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

## Salvation

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace, on the basis of the Person and finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as the substitutionary atonement in our place, the sole and complete payment for sins, fully satisfying God’s righteous wrath, for each person that turns from sin in repentance and places their faith in Christ alone. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

We teach that those who teach in Christ are not only forgiven, but also justified by God (Romans 8:33), an act by which He declares righteous those who place their faith in and confess Christ as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins’ penalty to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

We teach that at salvation each person is made a new creation by the Holy Spirit, declared righteous before God, and secured as an adopted child of God forever. This work of regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5) through the

instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24).

We teach that genuine faith continues in obedience and love for Jesus Christ with a life eager to glorify God and persevere to the end (Romans 8:37–39; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 12:13). 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).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part, or 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). That before Creation, God chose those who would be saved and granted this unearned grace solely based on His sovereign good pleasure (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2). Yet, that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17).

We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24). However, God's Word 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).

## The Church

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body of Christ, the universal 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). 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).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; 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 teach 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 officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that elders of the church 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). 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 teach the necessity, priority, and obedience 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 love motivated 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 teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (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 teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12); that God gives each member (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7) in the church spiritual gifts for Christian service and the edification of the Church (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing—*given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message* (Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 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 the confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message. In other words, with the completion of the New Testament prophecy, tongues, and other sign gifts ceased, thus making the Scriptures the only and final test of truth.

Though we teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today, God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; 1 John 5:14-15).

## **Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ established two ordinances for the local church: believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer's 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 visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of Jesus death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). 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 Corinthians 10:16).

## Things to Come

We teach and expectantly await the glorious, visible, personal, pretribulation, and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 14:1-3; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:1-7). The blessed hope of His return has vital bearing on the personal life, service, and mission of the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost. The lost will be raised to judgment and experience eternal wrath in hell. The saved will be raised to eternal joy in the new heaven and new earth in the manifested presence of God (Acts 1:3, 9; Hebrews 7:25-26).

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; 21:1-27; 22:1-21), and where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22).

We teach that until the time of Christ's return, 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). The souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8). However, the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment. Until both receive their bodily resurrection, when the soul and the resurrection body will be united. The redeemed to spend eternity in glory with God and the unsaved to spend eternity under God's judgment and wrath (Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15).

This eternal reality compels us to fulfill the Great Commission and make disciples through the declaration of the gospel until Jesus Christ returns (Matthew 28:18-20).