

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

FULL DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

ON DOCTRINE

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The Bible emphasizes throughout that its teaching is essential to true spirituality, fellowship, spiritual sustenance, effectiveness in service and ministry, faith and doctrinal accuracy. The Bible also charges the local church with the responsibilities both to teach sound doctrine and to protect the church from false teachers who promote deceitful doctrine. Thus we believe our most important function and our central thrust is consistent teaching and study of the Word of God (1 Tim. 4:6-7).

The study of the Word of God is not an end in itself but careful application of Biblical truth is the means to advance toward the goal of becoming complete in Christ and to effectively minister to one another and to the world. It will not therefore, be bypassed or made secondary in the interest of social concerns, actions, or activities, but will be so promoted that the Word, and the teaching of the Word, remains the pulse and heartbeat behind all church and non-church related activities or concerns.

Ps. 119:1ff; 138:2; Isa. 77:2b; Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:1-16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:1-3

THE SCRIPTURES

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We Teach "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God "were moved by the Holy Spirit" to write the very words of Scripture. We teach that while there was progress in Revelation from God, this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings—historical, poetical, doctrinal, prophetic and to the smallest word and inflection of a word as appeared in the original manuscripts. We teach that the whole Bible as originally written is therefore without error.

We Teach the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We teach the Bible is sufficient in that it contains all the words of God one needs for life and godliness. This sufficiency is rooted in the sufficiency of God Himself. We teach that, while the Holy Spirit continues to aid the believer in understanding and applying the truth of Scripture, the canon of Scripture was closed at the end of the apostolic age and the Holy Spirit is not revealing new truth to believers today.

We Teach for every passage of Scripture there is only one true interpretation. Every believer is responsible to determine carefully the true original intent and meaning of Scripture. This meaning is to be ascertained as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation. We teach this process requires both effort on the part of the believer and the aid of the Holy Spirit. While there is one truth in a given passage there may be many proper applications.

We Teach all Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming, and hence that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read or understood until it leads to Him. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction.

Matt. 5:18, 24:35; Mark 12:26, 36; Luke 24:27, 24:44; John 5:39; 7:17; 10:35; 16:12-15; 17:17; Acts 1:16; 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 10:1-13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 1 John 2:20; Jude 1:3-4

THE GODHEAD

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We Teach that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience.

Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10,11; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4-6

THE FATHER

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We Teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 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 (Isa. 64:8; Mal. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:14-15; 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 Chr. 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Hab. 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He divest 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. (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9)

JESUS CHRIST

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

We Teach that, as provided and purposed by God and as preannounced in the prophecies of the Scriptures, the eternal Son of God came into this world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was born of the virgin and received a human body and a sinless human nature (Luke 1:30-35; John 1:18; 3:16; Heb. 4:15).

We Teach that on the human side, He became and remained a perfect man but sinless throughout his life; yet He retained His absolute deity being at the same time very God and very man (Luke 2:40; John 1:1-2; Philip. 2:5-8).

We teach that in fulfillment of prophecy, He came first to Israel as her Messiah-King, and that being rejected of that nation, He according to the eternal counsels of God, gave His life as a ransom for people from every tribe, tongue and nation (John 1:11; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rev. 5:9).

We Teach that in infinite love for the lost, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb and took away the sin

of the world, bearing the holy judgments against sin which the righteousness of God must impose. His death was therefore substitutionary in the most absolute sense—the just for the unjust—and by His death, He became the Savior of people from every tribe, tongue and nation (John 1:29; Rom. 3:25-26; 2 Cor. 5:14; 5:21; Heb. 10:5-14; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:2; Rev. 5:9).

We Teach that according to the Scriptures, He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Philip. 3:20-21).

We Teach that on departing from the earth, He was accepted of His Father and that His acceptance is a final assurance to us that His redeeming work was perfectly accomplished (Heb. 1:3).

We Teach that He became Head over all things to the church which is His body, and in this ministry He ceases not to intercede and advocate for the saved (Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We Teach that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the world in a special sense on the day of Pentecost according to the divine promise, dwells in every believer and, by His baptism, unites all to Christ in one body and that He, as the indwelling One, is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. We Teach that He never takes His departure from the church, nor from the feeblest of the saints, but is ever present to testify of Christ; seeking to occupy believers with Him and not with themselves nor with their experiences. We Teach that His abode in the world in this special sense will cease when Christ comes to receive His own at the completion of the church (John 14:16-17; 16:7-15; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; 2 Thess. 2:7).

We Teach that 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), eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa. 40:13-14), omnipotence (Rom. 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial (of the same substance) 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).

We Teach that in this age, based on that which the Holy Spirit is to the believer, the Holy Spirit has certain well defined ministries, and that it is the responsibility of every Christian to humbly yield to the Holy Spirit in his own life and experience. We Teach that the Holy Spirit, as a special provision of God, is an anointing, a seal, and an earnest (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; 1 John 2:20-27). His ministries include: the restraining of evil in the world to the measure of the divine will; the convicting of the world respecting sin, righteousness and judgment; the regenerating of all believers; the indwelling of all who are saved whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption and anointed of God for service; the baptizing into the one body of Christ of all who are saved; and the continued filling for power, witnessing, teaching, leading, and service of those among the saved who are yielded to Him and who are subject to His will (John 3:6; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:3-14; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 John 2:20-27).

We Teach that some gifts of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues and miraculous healings were given for the purpose of authenticating the message of the first century church. We Teach that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary evidence of the baptism of or the filling of the Spirit. We Teach the complete deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection (Acts 4:8, 31; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 13:8; 2 Cor. 12:12). We Teach that in accordance with the sovereign will of God, healing is available through the prayer of believers (Jam. 5:14). We Teach that every believer is given a spiritual gift or gifts by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11). Every believer is to exercise his or her

gift(s) for the purpose of the building up of one another in the church, the Body of Christ.

CREATION

We Teach the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate, creative acts of God over six literal days and those things created did not evolve from a lower order of life. We also Teach that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race.

Gen. 1-2; John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17

MAN CREATED AND FALLEN

We Teach that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God. We Teach man fell through sin and, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and that he became subject to the power of the devil. We Teach that his spiritual death, or totally depraved human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race of man, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably sinful apart from divine grace

Gen. 1:26; 2:17; 6:5; Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer. 17:9; John 3:6; 5:24; 5:40; 6:53; Rom. 3:10-19; 5:12 - 21; 8:6-7; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:6

SALVATION

The Mystery of Salvation

We Teach salvation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension where certain aspects of Salvation are a mystery to us, but not a mystery to God. This inability of man to completely understand certain Biblical truths is also clearly illustrated by other foundational truths in Christianity. For example, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and how two can become one flesh in marriage. Each of these falls into the category of truths that are difficult to understand, yet they are plainly taught in scripture as are certain truths concerning salvation.

The Provision of Salvation

We Teach that God's only provision for salvation is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the promised Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), the Redeemer (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19), and Savior of all those who believe in Him for eternal life (John 3:16). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no one can come to the Father but through Him, and there is no other name under heaven by which men must be saved (Matt. 11:27; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Appropriation of Salvation

We Teach Salvation is not a result of works but it is an undeserved, unearned gift, received by God's grace and mercy, through the faith which God supplies (Gal. 5:4; Eph. 2:8-9; Philip. 1:29; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5). Saving faith is not only an intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel (Jam. 2:19) but a volitional heart commitment to trust in the gospel (Luke 9:23; Luke 14:26) and a willingness to submit and obey the Lord of the gospel who is Jesus Christ (John 3:36; 1 John 2:3-5). Salvation is only appropriated through the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby God draws His people to His Son (John 3:5-8; 6:44). Men, apart from the grace of God, do not seek Him (Rom. 3:10; John 3:19). God seeks men (Luke 5:31-32; 19:10) and men respond to the grace of God which draws them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:27; 13:11; John 6:37; Acts 13:48; Philip. 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:25; 1 Cor. 1:18). Repentance is to have a change of mind, to acknowledge one's sins, turn from them and to pursue righteousness and faith in Jesus Christ as God incarnate, Savior, and Lord.

Isa. 55:6-9; Joel 2:12-13; John 1:12; 8:24; Rom. 14:8-9; 1 Cor. 4:5

The Regeneration in Salvation

We Teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Regeneration is evidenced by good works in the life of the believer (Acts 26:20; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14; 3:8), and will be exhibited to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Eph. 5:17-21; Philip. 2:12b; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

The Election in Salvation

We 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; Rom. 9:16; Eph. 1:4-11; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1-2). We also Teach this great truth never nullifies or diminishes the sinner's responsibility to repent and believe (Eze. 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2 Thes. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17). We also Teach that God's choosing and call is effectual, meaning that all whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; Jam. 4:8).

We Teach that although God knows those who He has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, we do not. Therefore, we teach that it is the privilege and responsibility of every Christian to evangelize the lost (e.g. Ro-mans 10:8-15). We further teach Election is the only hope we have in evangelism. We also Teach the Gospel is to be presented to all persons in the world. God calls all men everywhere to repent and believe in the gospel (Acts 17:30-31). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23; 33:11). Men are without excuse before God because creation, conscience, and the law of God written in men's hearts is enough to show them that God exists, yet all men suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18-20, 25; 2:14-16). Because all men suppress the natural Revelation of God, the only way a person can be saved is by hearing and believing in special Revelation, which is the Word of God, the gospel (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:8-17; 1 Cor. 1:18).

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

We Teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom. 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:25-28; 2 Tim. 1:9).

We Teach, that although a mystery exists in our minds between the Sovereignty of God in Election and the Responsibility of man in repentance and faith, they are compatible, complimentary and are clearly taught in scripture. We also Teach that although we may fail to completely comprehend this great truth, we must humbly trust God and His Sovereign Plan of redemption (Rom. 9).

The Extent of Salvation

We Teach that when an unregenerate person exercises that faith in Christ which is illustrated and described as such in the New Testament, he passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life and from the old creation into the new; being justified from all things, accepted before the Father according as Christ His Son is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his

place and portion linked to Him and one with Him forever. Though the saved one will have occasion to grow in the realization of his blessings through the yielding of his life more fully to God, he is, as soon as he is saved, in possession of every spiritual blessing and absolutely complete in Christ, and is therefore not possible to seek a so-called "second blessing" or a "second work of grace."

John 5:24; 17:23; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; Rom.8:1; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:10; 1 John 4:17; 5:11-12

The Justification in Salvation

We Teach that justification before God is an act of God (Rom. 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sinful rebellion against Him (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; Isa. 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Philip. 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col. 2:14; 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).

The Manifestation of Salvation

We Teach Salvation is the supernatural work of God in a person that manifests itself in a transformed life (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24). All true believers will bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance and will be known by their fruit (Matt. 3:8-10; 7:16-23; 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-45). The kinds of fruit which salvation produces in the life of the believer are things such as: the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25), a hunger for God's Word (1 Pet. 2:2), a pursuit of righteousness (Prov. 4:18), increased godliness and Christ likeness (Philip. 1:6; 2 Cor. 3:18), a desire to be with the saints (Heb. 10:24-27; 1 John 2:19), and a desire to obey God in everything (Eph. 2:10; Tit. 2:11-14; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 2:12).

The Security of Salvation

We Teach that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever. We teach, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that since He cannot overlook the sins of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love; but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He who cannot fail will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son.

John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16-17; 17:11; Rom. 8:29, 32-39; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5 Eph. 1:13-14; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2; 5:13; Jude 24

The Assurance of Salvation

We Teach it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Lord and Savior; and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word, exciting within His children filial love, gratitude and obedience.

Luke 10:20; 22:32; Rom. 8:15-16; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6-8; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 10:22; 1 John 5:13

SANCTIFICATION

We Teach that sanctification is three-fold: it is past, present, and future.

Past

We Teach that every believer has been sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore made holy in Christ and identified as a saint. This sanctification is instantaneous and is not to be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with a believer's standing in Christ, not his state or behavior. (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thes. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2).

Present

We also Teach that the Holy Spirit performs a progressive sanctification by which the state or behavior of the believer is brought closer to the standing in Christ the believer enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Rom. 6:1, 22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thes. 4:3-7; 5:23; Heb. 10:14).

In view of this, we Teach that every believer is in 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. This struggle stays with the believer all through this earthly life. Although the old self has been crucified, the flesh remains and the believer will still sin. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 4:22, 24; Philip. 3:12; Col. 3:9, 10; 1 Pet. 1:14, 16; 1 John 3:5, 9).

We also Teach that part of this present and progressive sanctification includes the Biblical call for believers to separate themselves from sin and the sinful practices of this world and instead continually pursue personal holiness. (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

Future

We also Teach that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state or behavior as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ. This will take place when he shall see his Lord and shall be like Him (1 Thes. 5:23; 1 John 3:2).

THE CHURCH, A UNITY OF BELIEVERS

The Universal Church

We Teach that the church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Son of God, that by the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and thus being members one of another, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently (Matt. 16:16-18; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:20-24; 4:3-10; Col. 3:14-15).

The Local Church

We Teach that God's primary (intended) organization of believers, after the family unit, is local assemblies of believers, committed to the Lord and to each other for the purpose of carrying out the universal church's visible activities; that is, the communication of God's truth to the people of God, the worship of and prayer to God by God's people, the loving care of God's people for one another, and the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Heb. 10:24-25).

THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

The Lord's Supper

We Teach that the Lord's Supper is for those who have personally placed their faith in Christ alone for Salvation. It is first and foremost a time to remember Christ and His redemptive death. This is summed up in Christ's command, "Do this in remembrance of me." The Lord's Supper is also a time of reflection and confession as each individual reflects on their life for

the purpose of confessing any area of known sin that would keep them from being able to truly respond to the significance and meaning of this important ordinance. It is also a time to worship God for making us a new Creation and adopting us into His family. We also believe that fellowship is involved as we take the elements together as a body to demonstrate our common faith, love, and devotion to Christ and the ministry He has called us to together (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

Baptism

We Teach that salvation is a gift of God to all who place their faith in His Son Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Jesus directed new believers to follow that step of faith with water baptism as an outward symbol of their spiritual identification with His death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is not necessary for salvation however it is a command Jesus expects his followers to obey. Immersion is the mode of baptism practiced in the New Testament. Scripture emphasizes the spiritual aspect of this symbolic act, indicating that the mode of baptism is not of primary concern. We will practice immersion, however other modes may be used as substitutes when necessary (Titus 3:5; Matt 28:19; Rom. 6:4-6; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12).

THE CHRISTIAN'S SERVICE

We Teach that divine, enabling gifts for service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit and each is called to his or her own divinely appointed service as the Spirit may will. Redemption in Christ gives women and men an equal standing before God and equal share in the blessings of salvation including the bestowing of spiritual gifts. All Christians are exhorted to exercise their gifts though a variety of ministries but we teach there are God ordained distinctions in masculine and feminine roles within the church. This does not mean that one gender is more valued than another, but simply that, in some cases, God has called each to differing responsibilities.

We Teach that the governing roles in the church, such as Elder and Pastor, are biblically restricted to men. There-fore, we believe men should fulfill the role of teaching/preaching the assembled Body of Christ (for example, at the Sunday worship service). However, this does not mean that women will be prohibited from speaking or praying during a church worship service. When they do, as outlined in the Bible, they will do so under the authority of the Elders. We also Teach that God grants both men and women the gift of teaching to be used in the building up of the body of Christ (for example, women teaching other women and children, as well as men teaching other men and children). (Rom. 12:6; Rom. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Cor. 14:33-35; Gal. 3:28; Ephes. 4:11; Philip. 4:3; 1 Tim. 2:11-12; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.)

We Teach that, wholly apart from salvation benefits which are bestowed equally upon all who believe, rewards are promised according to the faithfulness of each believer in his service for his Lord, and that these rewards will be bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ after He comes to receive His own to Himself (1 Cor. 3:9-15; 9:18-27; 2 Cor. 5:10).

We Teach that divine, enabling gifts for service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit and each is called to his or her own divinely appointed service as the Spirit may will. Redemption in Christ gives women and men an equal standing before God and equal share in the blessings of salvation including the bestowing of spiritual gifts. All Christians are exhorted to exercise their gifts though a variety of ministries but we teach there are God ordained distinctions in masculine and feminine roles within the church. This does not mean that one gender is more valued than another, but simply that, in some cases, God has called each to differing responsibilities.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

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We Teach that it is the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved that they are sent forth by Him into the world even as He was sent forth of His Father into the world. His command in Matt. was to "make disciples of all nations." We teach that after they are saved they are divinely reckoned to be related to this world as strangers and pilgrims, ambassadors and witnesses, and that their primary purpose in life should be to make Christ known to the world (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:11).

ANGELS, FALLEN AND UNFALLEN

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We Teach that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings known as angels; that one, "Lucifer, son of the morning," the highest in rank, sinned through pride thereby becoming Satan; that a great company of the angels followed him in his moral fall (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; 1 Tim. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:3-4).

We Teach that Satan is the originator of sin, and that under the permission of God and as the adversary of God and His character, he through subtlety led our first parents into transgression, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjecting them and their posterity to his own power; that he is the enemy of God and the people of God opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; and that he who in the beginning said, "I will be like the most High," in his warfare appears as an angel of light even counterfeiting the works of God by fostering political and religious movements and systems of doctrine, which systems are characterized by such as the denial of God, the person and work of Christ as the God-man substitute or salvation by grace alone (Gen. 3:1-19; Rom. 5:12-14; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 11:3-4, 13-15; Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3).

We Teach that Satan was judged at the cross, though not then executed, and that he, a usurper, now rules as the "god of this world;" that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years and after the thousand years he will be loosed for a little season and then "cast into the lake of fire and brim-stone" where he "shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:1-3, 10).

We Teach that a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God from whence they are sent forth as ministering spirits to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Luke 15:10; Eph. 1:21; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:11-12).

We Teach that man was made lower than the angels and, that in His incarnation, Christ took for a little time this lower place that He might lift the believer to His own sphere above the angels (Heb. 2:6-10).

ESCHATOLOGY

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We believe in the blessed hope that at the end of the age Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally, visibly, physically, and suddenly in power and great glory; and that He will gather His elect, judge the nations, establish His kingdom, and raise the dead. We believe that the righteous will enter into the everlasting joy of their Master, and those who suppressed the truth in unrighteousness will be consigned to everlasting conscious misery.

We believe that the kingdom of God is already here, but also not yet here. We await the second coming of Christ and believe the millennial kingdom has not yet been inaugurated.

Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15: I Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15

THE ETERNAL STATE

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We Teach that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own, whereupon soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory; but the spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated but, to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power

Luke 16:19-26; 23:42; 2 Cor. 5:8; Philip. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15

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