



## Orchard Bible Church - *Doctrinal Statement*

### ***Concerning the Holy Scriptures***

We believe that the Scriptures (the completed canon of sixty-six books contained in the Old and New Testament) are the inerrant Word of God. We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. By *verbal*, we mean that the original writers were guided by the Holy Spirit in the exact choice of words yet respecting and reflecting the personality, style, and vocabulary of each writer. By *plenary*, we mean that this divine verbal inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original manuscripts – historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic – so that every word is both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority. (John 5:39; 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; 3:16)

We affirm the grammatical-historical method of interpretation which understands a text to have the meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage; whether in writing, speaking, or thinking. We seek to interpret the Bible according to the intention of the author, particularly in its context. We believe that the greater part of the Bible makes sense when interpreted in this manner. Essentially, the text means what it says. This approach accounts for genre, figures of speech, symbolism, allegories, and types. Ultimately, we want to carefully consider all grammatical, literary, and semantic features, and interpret each passage the way it was originally intended.

Two principles are prerequisites to a proper interpretation of the Scriptures: (1) a person must be born again and have an utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit to guide and direct, and (2) a person must interpret according to the context of Scripture, including comparing Scripture with Scripture. (John 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-16)

### ***Concerning God***

We believe in one God who is a personal and eternal Spirit, perfect and unchangeable in all his attributes. God eternally exists as the Trinity in three persons, impossible of division but capable of distinction as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All persons of the Trinity have the same nature, attributes, and perfections; and are worthy of the same worship, allegiance, and obedience. (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Kings 8:60; Psalm 90:1-2; Isaiah 45:5-6; Matthew 3:16-17; 16:16; 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; Luke 11:13; 22:70; John 1:1-14; 10:30; 14:10-11, 16-17; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6)

**God the Father.** We believe that God the Father is creator of heaven and earth, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. God is the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. In *creation*, God is the cause of all that exists. In his *providence*, God has decreed for his own glory all things that come to pass. In *redemption*, he has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom he would have as his own. He saves from sin all who come to him through Jesus Christ; and adopts them as his own. We rejoice that God concerns himself mercifully and lovingly in the affairs of mankind; that he hears and answers prayer according to his purpose; and that he saves from sin, its power over our life, and from spiritual death. God takes the fear out of physical death for all who come to him through faith in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 34:6; 103:19; 147:5; John 1:12; 3:36; 6:27; Romans 1:18-20; 6:1-13; 8:15; 11:36; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:4-6,11; 2:4-5; Hebrews 2:14-15; 12:5-9; 1 John 1:5; 2:1-2; 4:8; Revelation 3:20)

**God the Son.** We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, God the Son. As the second person of the Trinity, he possesses all divine attributes, and in these he is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father. We believe that God the Father created all things through him, and by him all things continue in existence and in operation. We believe he was pre-existent as the eternal Son of God. Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, who was a virgin. Jesus is God incarnate. The purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God to humanity and provide for our salvation. In the incarnation, Jesus Christ took upon himself all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man. (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:23,25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1,3,14,29; 10:30; 14:9; Philipians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-17; 2:9; Hebrews 1:2; 7:25-26)

Jesus Christ accomplished our salvation through his sacrificial death on the cross. His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive. Based on 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. In our redemption, we are declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God. (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8-9; 1 Corinthians 15:2-4; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2)

Justification is made sure by the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he now mediates as our advocate, intercessor, and high priest. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers. We believe in his personal and bodily return to the earth. (Matthew 28:6; Luke 1:30-35; 24:38-39; John 1:1,3,14,29; 5:26-29; 14:19; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:20,23; Colossians 1:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:9-10; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; 9:24; 10:5-14; 1 John 2:1)

**God the Holy Spirit.** We believe in the deity of the Holy Spirit. As the third person of the Trinity, he is eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect, emotions, will, eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and truthfulness. In all the divine attributes, he is coequal with and of the same essence as the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is active in creation, the incarnation, and the work of salvation. (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:13-14; Matthew 1:18; 28:19; John 3:5-7; 16:13; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; Romans 15:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 12:4-6,11; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 9:14)

We believe that the Holy Spirit was the agent in the revelation and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the one who bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word. The Holy Spirit performs the work of regeneration in the heart of believers, baptizing them into the body of Christ, indwelling, and filling them. The work of the Holy Spirit includes the building of the Body of Christ, which is his church. The broad scope of his divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ. (Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 3:5-6; 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 10:15-17)

The Holy Spirit sanctifies, instructs, and seals believers until the day of redemption. He also bestows spiritual gifts upon believers, empowering them for works of service. (John 15:26; 16:7-8,13-14; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 5:5; 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 3:6; Ephesians 1:13; 3:16; 4:30; 5:18; Titus 3:5; 2 Peter 1:21)

## ***Concerning Satan and Angels***

**Their Origin.** The angels were all created by God as a great host of sinless spirit-beings, most of whom kept their first estate of holiness and presently worship God and serve his purposes. (Psalm 148:2-5; Matthew 26:53; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:14)

**The Fall of Some.** One of the angels, Lucifer, fell through the sin of pride, thereby becoming Satan, and influenced a large company of angels to follow him, who thereby became demons. (Isaiah 14:12-17; 1 Timothy 3:6; James 2:19; 2 Peter 2:4)

**Satan's Work.** The work of Satan and the demons is the attempted subversion and supplanting of the work of God. By a subtle suggestion, Satan accomplished the moral fall of the progenitors of the human race, subjecting them and their posterity to his own power. Satan continues as the enemy of God and the accuser of God's people and persistently seeks to counterfeit the work of God and distort the truth of God. (Genesis 3:1-7; Job 1:12; 2:6; Ezekiel 28:13-15; Zechariah 3:1-2; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 4:3-4; 11:13-15; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12,16; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10)

**Satan's Judgment.** We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, and that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years. After the thousand years, he will be loosed for a short season to deceive the nations into rebelling against Christ; and at that time he will be defeated by God and "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where he shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. (John 12:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:1-3,10)

## ***Concerning Man***

**His Original Nature.** Man was directly and immediately created in the image of God, free from sin. He was created an immortal being with a rational nature, high intelligence, and moral responsibility to God. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7,15-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; James 3:9)

**His Original Purpose.** He was originally created with the divine intention that he should glorify God, enjoy his fellowship, and fulfill God's will and purpose on earth. (Genesis 1:26-30; Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11)

**His Subsequent Sin.** Man subsequently fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the revealed will of God. (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; 1 Timothy 2:13-14)

**His Present Condition.** As a consequence, man became subject to the wrath of God, inherently corrupt, and incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. The fall of man was an historical and non-repeatable act, the effects of which are transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All people thus are sinners by divine pronouncement, nature, and deed, and thus face God's wrath and judgment. Thus we are hopelessly lost apart from the salvation which is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; James 2:10; 1 John 1:8)

**Marriage and Family.** We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Almost every good institution found in society is first found, in principle, in the family. Family is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Sin has deeply damaged marriage and the family. We believe that the divine power provided in salvation enables believers to restore and fulfill God's original intentions in creating marriage, rather than remake marriage as egalitarian, genderless, or as a same-sex union.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for life. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and his church and to provide for men and women the framework and boundaries for intimate companionship and sexual pleasure; the means for the procreation of the human race; and a relationship where each gender complements and completes the other for each other's holiness and maturity. (Proverbs 18:22; 19:14; Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:2-3; Ephesians 5:23-24; Hebrews 13:4)

The husband and the wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship reflects how God relates to his people. A husband is to love and lead his wife and family as Christ sacrificially loves and leads the church. His leadership should be clear, God-honoring and servant-like, and never passive or dominating. His wife is to submit herself of her own free will to his loving, servant-like leadership even as the church freely submits itself to Christ. No human submission is absolute, but is as appropriate in the Lord. Submission is given to husbands who seek to bless, to serve and to otherwise enrich according to scriptural principles. A wife has a God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to be his faithful helper in this life, managing the affairs of their household and nurturing the next generation. Importantly, women are not called to submit to men in general, but to their husbands. (Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 5:24-25,33; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:4-5; 1 Peter 3:7)

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and a heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children moral and spiritual values and to lead them, through their lifestyle combined with loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth and to obey and honor their parents. (Psalms 139:13, 16; Proverbs 1:8; 22:6,15; Colossians 3:20)

### ***Concerning Salvation***

We believe salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered to all who receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who by his death obtained eternal salvation for those who believe. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ and his work. Salvation begins with divine regeneration and includes justification, sanctification, and glorification. (John 1:12; Acts 4:12; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 2:4-10; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18)

*Regeneration*, or the new birth, is a work of the Holy Spirit whereby he makes believers alive toward him. Evidence of regeneration includes conviction of sin, repentance of unbelief and immorality, and the restored ability to believe God and what he has done for the sinner in Christ. (John 1:13; 3:5-6; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:4-5,10)

*Justification* is God's gracious acquittal upon principles of his righteousness for all sinners who believe in Christ and repent. In justification, God declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins and confess Him as sovereign Lord. Justification is not based on the believer's righteousness, but on Christ's righteousness imputed by God as an abiding gift to those who believe. (Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 13:38-39; Romans 2:4; 3:24; 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 7:10; Philippians 2:11)

*Sanctification* is the life, beginning at regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes to glorify God through a life of fellowship and service. Because sinful desires are never fully eradicated in this life, the believer must always turn from sin, confess it to God, and humbly and diligently seek ways to make no further provision for sin. (1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-12)

*Glorification* is the culmination of salvation, which includes the resurrection of the body and the perfecting of a believer's reason, emotions, and will and is the final blessed and abiding state of the believer. (Romans 8:30; Revelation 20:6; 21:4)

## **Concerning the Church**

**Its Nature.** We believe that all who place their faith in Christ are united together immediately by the Holy Spirit in one spiritual body, the church, of which Christ is the head. The church was prophesied by Christ, born on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for his own. In addition to the spiritual union and communion which extend to the entirety of the body of Christ, the members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies of believers. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:4-5; 2:46-47; 11:15; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:4-6; 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:25)

**Its Mission.** We believe the church has a three-fold mission:

Worship: The church is a body of believer-priests worshiping and serving the Lord Jesus Christ. New Testament worship includes prayer, praise, the Lord's table, the sacrifices of finances for others, and the offering of our lives to Christ. (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:42; Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 5:13)

Edification: The church is to build up, strengthen, and encourage believers in their faith through the teaching of the Word of God and mutual, loving care of each member for one another. (1 Corinthians 12; 14; Colossians 1:28; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2)

Evangelism: The church is to be a light for God and the gospel in a dark world. The final command of Christ was for his followers to make disciples of all nations. The church thus has a worldwide mission to spread the gospel to all peoples and nations. (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15; Colossians 4:3-6)

**Its Organization and Relationships.** We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government to administer order, discipline, and worship according to Holy Scriptures. We affirm that it is biblical for true churches to cooperate with each other for gospel outreach and to unite in prayer for the community. (Acts 14:23; 20:28, 32; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

We believe it is the divine responsibility of the local church to exercise discipline, as prescribed in the New Testament, of any member living in unrepentant sin. (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

**Offices.** We believe there are two biblically designated offices in the church serving under Christ: elders and deacons. At Orchard Bible Church the elders are the pastors of the church (also called *bishops*, *overseers*, or *shepherds* in the Bible). Some of these pastor-elders are financially supported by the church, and others are self-supporting. There is no one pastor called the senior pastor. Only Christ is acknowledged as senior Pastor of the church. The elders jointly teach, lead, and protect the church under Christ, the chief Shepherd. The elders are also responsible for initiating and directing church discipline. The church is to submit to their God-given leadership. Their leadership should be distinguished as pastoral, shared, male, qualified, and servant-like. (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Corinthians 5; 14:40; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-18; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

The deacons are servants of the church, ministers of mercy. Their ministry is to provide practical care for members of the church in need. Deacons alleviate this burden from the pastor-elders so that they can give priority to teaching the Word and prayer. (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

**Spiritual Gifts.** We believe that every member of the body of Christ has been given at least one spiritual gift according to the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are given in order to serve others, build up the body of Christ, promote unity, and advance the gospel worldwide. (Acts 2; Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 2:1-4; 1 Peter 4:11)

**Gender Roles.** We believe that all believers in Jesus Christ, whether male or female, are full members of the body of Christ enjoying complete equality in personhood, dignity, and worth. We teach that both men and women should use their spiritual gifts to their fullest potential. (Galatians 3:28)

We also affirm that God created men and women differently to fulfill distinct gender roles, and that these differences are to be understood and enjoyed. In the formal gathering of the entire local church, women should not teach or exercise authority over men, but men should lead the church's public worship in prayer and ministry of the Word. Since the biblical order is male headship in the home, the local church family should do all in its power to consistently support and display this pattern in both its official and unofficial meetings. Women with teaching or evangelistic gifts have many opportunities available for teaching other women or children. (1 Corinthians 14:33-36; 1 Timothy 2:8,11-15)

**Baptism.** We believe that water baptism is commanded by Christ for those who have believed in him, and that immersion was practiced and taught by the New Testament church. Water baptism is not regenerative, but is an outward sign and confession of identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-41; 10:48; Romans 6:3-4,6; Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21)

**The Lord's Table.** We believe the Lord's supper is a commemoration of the Lord's body that was given for us, and of his blood that was shed for our sins. There are two requirements that should be met before a person partakes of the Lord's table. First, a person should be born again. Second, a Christian should examine himself or herself to determine if he or she is in fellowship with the Lord. We believe it is the Lord's table and as such is open to all believers. Not only is the Lord's Supper a memorial of what Christ has done on the cross, but it also shows our faith in that past work and faith in his anticipated return. (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-30)

### ***Concerning Last Things***

**The Resurrection.** We believe the bodies of men and women return to dust after death, while the spirits of the righteous return immediately to God to rest with him. The spirits of the wicked are reserved under darkness until the judgment. The bodies of all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will be raised. (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:12-28; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:21-23)

**The Second Coming of Christ.** We believe the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth as he went, in person on the clouds of heaven, and with great power and glory to introduce the millennial age, to reign as King on the earth, to realize God's covenant promises, to bind Satan and place him in the abyss, to lift the curse which is currently affecting all creation, and to bring the whole world to the knowledge of God. (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:9; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Mark 13:24-27; Acts 15:16-17; Romans 8:19-23; 11:25-27; Revelation 19:11-20:6)

**The Judgment.** We believe God has appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when everyone shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life. The righteous are those who have been justified through faith in Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 25:46; John 5:22,27-29; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:6-11; 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 3:4-7; Revelation 20:11-15)

**The Eternal State.** We believe that unbelievers, after they are judged and cast into the lake of fire, will not be annihilated. They will be punished with eternal destruction, endlessly conscious of their condemnation. Those who have been saved by Jesus Christ will enter the new heavens and the new earth to live with him eternally. Having fulfilled his redemptive and kingdom missions as the Son of Abraham and the Son of David, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father that the triune God may reign with his people for his own glory forever. (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:10,15; 21:1-4; 22:5)