

SAN TAN BIBLE CHURCH

GOD'S TRUTH, VERSE BY VERSE

*The Doctrinal Statement of
San Tan Bible Church*

WHAT WE TEACH

PREFACE

All men and councils, since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred. Therefore, it should never be the case that man-made documents be made the rule of faith, or practice. These documents are to be used merely as a help in both (Ephesians 2:20, Acts 17:11, 1 Corinthians 2:5).¹ The Word of God is the final rule of faith and practice.

¹ Paraphrase of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Ch. 31.4)

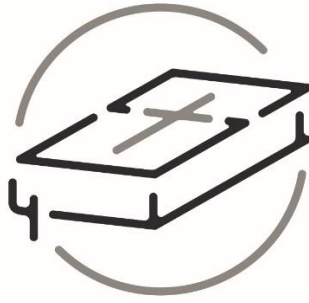


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I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and 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 (1Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that 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 literal, grammatical historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17), creation not evolution ("after their kind" – Gen 1:11, 21, 24), and the global Flood (Gen 7:8-24).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 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 superintended the human authors so 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 (Psalm 19:7; Matthew 5:18; James 1:25; 2 Timothy 3:16). What the human authors wrote is the Word of God, free of private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20-21). We teach that, while there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is only one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20) to understand the original authorial intent, that is to say, to understand what the words meant to the original author and recipients. It is the responsibility of believers to carefully ascertain and understand the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture always stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

II. GOD

We teach that there is only one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all knowing Spirit (John 4:24), 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 equally deserving worship and obedience. God is Love (1 John 4:8, 16). God is Light (1 John 1:5). God is Truth (John 14:6).

A. GOD THE FATHER

We teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1- 31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11) for His own glory according to the good pleasure of His will (Ephesians 1:5, 9, 11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty, He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47; James 1:13), nor does He lessen the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He will have as His own (Ephesians 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; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

B. 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 God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. Remaining what He was, He became what He had not yet been.

In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the characteristics of humanity and became the God Man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9). Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9). In His incarnation, Jesus was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19) for His own glory.

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

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the redemption of His people through shedding His blood and His sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 5:9).

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

We teach that justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. He 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 will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto Himself at the rapture, and returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20).

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

1. Believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
2. Those living on the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46).
3. Those who died without Christ at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

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), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (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). 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).

C. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We teach that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternality (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). 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; and 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 mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13). 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 (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 them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation. It is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:27).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18). The Holy Spirit does not glorify Christ, Himself, nor His gifts by ostentatious displays.

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

III. MAN

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man 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).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. All parts of all men are corrupt. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is completely 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).

We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

A. SALVATION

We teach that salvation is completely of God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

B. ELECTION

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 (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We teach 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). Since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will always result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We teach that God's grace in election is not granted to sinners based upon any initiative of their own part. Nor does God elect them in anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but solely by His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).

We teach that God exercises His sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes including His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 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 (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9).

C. REGENERATION

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the spiritually dead are made spiritually alive (John 3:3-7; Romans 4:17; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (John 5:24) whereby God "gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist" (Rom 4:17). Through regeneration, the repentant sinner is enabled by the Holy Spirit and responds in faith and repentance to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct (Acts 26:20). Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced 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 (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). This conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

D. JUSTIFICATION

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as 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; Galatians 2:16) and involves the imputation of our sins 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; Philippians 3:9). God is "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

E. ADOPTION

We teach that adoption is an act of God by which redeemed sinners forever become part of God's family with all the rights and privileges of being His sons and daughters. His Spirit confirms our adoption, provides comfort in our adoption, and calls us to holy living as a result (Romans 8:15, 19, 23; Ephesians 1:5; 5:1; 1 John 3:1).

F. SANCTIFICATION

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

We teach that through progressive sanctification, the believer is brought closer to the standing he positionally enjoys through justification. 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) through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

We teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict between the new creation he is in Christ and his old sinful flesh. This battle will remain until the saved person is glorified in Christ. Through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, every believer can experience victory over sin. Eradication of sin before glorification is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (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).

G. SECURITY

We teach that all the redeemed 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).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word. This assurance is forbidden to be used as an occasion for sinful living (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

H. SEPARATION FROM SIN

We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and wickedness will increase (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our God is worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in a manner that demonstrates adoring love to God and does not bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also believe that God commands us to separate from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

IV. THE CHURCH

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 that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the 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).

We teach that the formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own people at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the church is a unique spiritual body designed by Christ, made up of all born again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

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 leaders serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (sometimes called overseers, pastors, evangelists, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons, all of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). We teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church as servant-leaders. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We teach the importance 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 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 it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its leadership and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. 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 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 is now the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians 13:13-14:12; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those nonrevelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8). We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: 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 showing his 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 His death until He comes and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). We also believe that 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 fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

V. ANGELS

A. HOLY ANGELS

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. They are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

B. FALLEN ANGELS

We teach that Satan is a created angel and responsible for the entrance of sin into God's creation. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10); the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20); and that he will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

VI. LAST THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)

A. DEATH

We teach that physical death does not involve any 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), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed in Christ, this separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They will then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and will be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

B. THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

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

C. THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

We teach that following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-

18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised, and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2- 3; Revelation 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

D. THE SECOND COMING AND THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

We teach that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11- 16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).

We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).

We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

E. THE JUDGMENT OF UNBELIEVERS

We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) at which point Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment.

We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, where they will receive their judgment (Romans 14:10-13) and be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

F. ETERNITY

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 will be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth where only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22) forever. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) so that the triune God may reign forever and ever in all realms (1 Corinthians 15:28).

VII. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Being a Christian is more than identifying yourself with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, mankind, and salvation. Consider the following truths found in Scripture.

God Is Sovereign Creator. Contemporary thinking says man is the product of evolution. But the

Bible says we were created by a personal God to love, serve, and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals it was Jesus Himself who created everything (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

Therefore, He also owns and rules everything (Psalm 103:19). That means He has authority over our lives, and we owe Him absolute allegiance, obedience, and worship.

God Is Holy. God is absolutely and perfectly holy (Isaiah 6:3), therefore He cannot commit or approve of evil (James 1:13). God requires holiness of us as well. First Peter 1:16 says, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Mankind Is Sinful. According to Scripture, everyone is guilty of sin: "There is no man who does not sin" (1 Kings 8:46). That doesn't mean we're incapable of performing acts of human kindness. But we're utterly incapable of understanding, loving, or pleasing God on our own (Romans 3:10-12).

Sin Demands a Penalty. God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by death (Ezekiel 18:4). That's why simply changing our patterns of behavior can't solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences.

Jesus Is Lord and Savior. The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love has provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for sinners (1 Peter 3:18). Christ's death satisfied the demands of God's justice and Christ's perfect life satisfied the demands of God's holiness (2 Corinthians 5:21), there- by enabling Him to forgive and save those who place their faith in Him (Romans 3:26).

The Character of Saving Faith. True faith is always accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sins to Him, and making a conscious choice to turn from sin (Luke 13:3,5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9) and pursue Christ (Matthew 11:28-30; John 17:3) and obedience to Him (1 John 2:3). It isn't enough to believe certain facts about Christ. Even Satan and his demons believe in the true God (James 2:19), but they don't love and obey Him. True saving faith always responds in obedience (Ephesians 2:10).

If you have questions about how you can become a Christian or want help in knowing how to live the Christian life, please contact us at San Tan Bible Church. We would love to speak, share Scripture, and pray with you.