

Fellowship Bible Church

A stylized cross logo consisting of four thick, black L-shaped bars meeting at a central point. The top-left bar is colored dark red.

What We Teach

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the Bible is the written revelation of God. The 66 books of the Bible constitute the totality of God's Word to us. Therefore, there is no new revelation (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation, verbally inspired in every word, absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed (1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule for formulating our doctrine and directing the practices of the faith (Acts 20:28-32). We reject any extra-biblical references such as "Sacred Tradition", papal infallibility, professed new revelations or writings such as the Book of Mormon as being an objective authority for the church of Jesus Christ.

We teach that the Word of God is the only spiritual diet of the believer and is sufficient for everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man without error in the whole or in part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, but there is only one intended meaning and true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is found when one diligently applies the literal, grammatical, historical method of biblical interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17, 16:12-15, 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20, 27). It is the responsibility of believers to carefully ascertain the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations.

GOD

We teach that there is only one living and true God (Isaiah 44:6, 8, 45:5-7, 18), an infinite, intelligent Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence but eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each equally deserving the same worship and obedience (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Acts 17:24-29).

God the Father. God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purposes and grace (Daniel 2:20-23; Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Corinthians 8:6).

He is the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31). As absolute and higher rule in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and salvation (Job 1:6; Ecclesiastes 8:17; Psalm 103:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). His Fatherhood denotes a spiritual relationship, first of all as His designation within the Trinity, and secondly, within mankind, creatively in relation to

all men, but spiritually only in relation to believers. Therefore, He is the Father of all who are redeemed. He is the creator of all who have ever existed.

We reject the notion of referring to God as a “higher power” because it depersonalizes our God, ignores the tremendous revelation of God’s character and work in the scriptures, and misleads people in their understanding of God.

We teach that God the Father has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass, and continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:10-11; Daniel 4:34-35). This governance is referred to as the providence of God, which is the outworking of God’s sovereignty over His creation.

He has graciously chosen from all eternity those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:3-11). He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, and He relates to the redeemed as their Father whom He has granted the right to be His children through receiving Jesus as their Savior (John 1:12; Romans 8:12-17).

God the Son. Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine attributes and in these He is coequal, the same in substance, and co-eternal with the Father (Hebrews 1:3, 8-10; John 1:1, 10:30; Titus 2:13).

We teach that in the incarnation, He surrendered only the prerogatives of deity, but nothing of the divine essence, neither in degree or kind. In His incarnation, Christ’s divine nature united with a human nature in an indissoluble union, and so He became the God-Man (Philippians 2:5-11).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:25; Luke 1:26-35), that He was and is God incarnate (John 1:1,3,14,18), and that the purpose of the incarnation was to: 1) reveal God, 2) redeem mankind, and 3) rule over God’s kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Peter 1:18-21, 2:22-24).

We teach that in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God to assume the place of a son and an existence appropriate to a servant; however, He did not divest Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:14-18; Romans 3:25; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2, 4:9-10).

We teach that upon the basis of the efficacy of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the penalty, the power and, one day, the very presence of sin, declared righteous, given eternal life and admitted to the family of God (Romans 5:1, 6:12-14, 8:1; Galatians 2:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 2:24, 3:18).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father where He is ministering as our

Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:36-39, 50-52; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:24-25; Hebrews 7:25-28, 9:11-14, 24).

We teach that, in the resurrection of Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of Christ. God accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross and His bodily resurrection as the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:28-29, 14:19; Romans 1:4, 4:25, 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

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 kingdom in its millennial manifestation (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:11-21).

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

- The believer (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10)
- Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46)
- Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)

As the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5); as the head of His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23; Colossians 1:18); and as the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as the Lord of life and the only Savior (John 3:16-18, 36, 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:10-12).

God the Holy Spirit. We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the divine excellencies, and that in these He is coequal and the same in substance with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14). **Compare Isaiah 6:8-9 with Acts 28:25-26, and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17.*

We teach that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of personality:

- Intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13)
- Emotions (Ephesians 4:30)
- Will (1 Corinthians 12:11)

We teach that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of God:

- Eternal (Hebrews 9:14)
- Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10)
- Omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:11)
- Omnipotent (Romans 8:9-11, 15:13) • Truth (John 16:13)

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to the world of mankind (John 16:8-10). 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; Titus 3:5).

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 7:37-39, 14:16-17, 15:26; Acts 1:4-8), 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 concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. He is glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, and transforming believers into Christ-likeness (John 16:7-9, 13-15; Acts 1:5, 2:4; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), in indwelling, sanctifying, instructing, enabling and empowering them for service and sealing them until the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13-14, 5:30).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher who guided the apostles into all truth as they submitted to God's revelation in Scripture. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).

"The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (what is commonly called "illumination") does not involve revelation of new truth or the explanation of all difficult passages of Scripture to our satisfaction. Rather, it is the development of the capacity to appreciate and appropriate God's truth already revealed – making the Bible meaningful in thought and daily living."

(NIV Study Notes – 1 John 2:27)

We teach that the Holy Spirit alone administers spiritual gifts to the Church, not to glorify Himself or the gifts by ostentatious displays, but to glorify Christ and implement His work of redeeming the lost and edifying the saved in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

In this respect, we teach that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today, and that speaking in tongues (the miraculous ability to speak in a foreign, intelligible, known language) and the working of sign miracles through certain selected individuals, have gradually ceased, having achieved their divine purpose in a certain timeframe in God's redemptive history and ended with the completion of the canon of scripture. The purpose of sign gifts was to affirm and confirm the person and work of Christ and the divine calling of some as apostles and messengers of God who were proclaiming the Word of God. This was especially needed while the written Word of God was still in the process of being completed (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-11; Hebrews 2:1-4).

MAN

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. We reject any and all forms of evolutionary theories, including Theistic evolution (that God used evolution as a method in creation). We accept the Genesis account of mankind's beginning by faith. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:15-27, 9:6; James 3:9; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that he 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; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Therefore, salvation is wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23, 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14, Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We teach that because all mankind were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted (imputed) to all mankind of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All mankind are therefore sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3, 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23, 5:10-12; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 2:10; 1 John 1:8-10).

SALVATION

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace, through the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, not on the basis of human merit or work. We teach that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in the redemptive work of Christ alone. Salvation then is of the Lord and from the Lord for His glory. Salvation is not a human enterprise (Titus 3:5; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Acts 4:12, 15:6-11).

Regeneration. We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are communicated to those dead in their sin at the time of the exercise of saving faith (John 3:3-7, 5:24; 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 (1 Peter 1:23). Regeneration, which is a spiritual birth from God causing those who experience it to become the children of God, is manifested by righteous living, which is essentially living in subjection to the will of God (1 John 2:29, 3:7-10).

Good works flow from those who are truly born again, not as a means to secure new birth but rather as evidence of new birth (Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). It is important to note that God does a pre-salvational work in the lives of those whom He is drawing to Himself. Where formerly a person dead in their sins has no disposition, inclination, or desire

for the things of God (Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 3:9-18), the Lord opens his or her heart to accept the Gospel message (Acts 16:14, 13:48, 5:31, 11:18; 2 Peter 1:1), which culminates in a spiritual rebirth from the Father (John 1:12-13).

Election. We teach that election is the eternal act of God in which He, in His sovereign good pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in those who are His elect, chooses certain persons to be the recipients of His saving grace, manifested in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, and granting His elect eternal salvation (Ephesians 1:3-14; 2 Timothy 2:8-9; Romans 8:28-30; Acts 13:48; John 6:37, 44, 65; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

We teach that just as God has chosen some for salvation as an exercise of His sovereignty, He has also chosen the means for bringing His elect into that salvation. This means is the faithful preaching of the Gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23-24).

We teach that a biblical view of salvation does not exclude the human responsibility to willfully trust in Jesus for the salvation of your soul (John 3:16; Romans 10:13), or divine sovereignty, but allows both to remain in tension. We resist the attempt to harmonize these two components because Scripture does not. We are content to know that our Lord is a righteous God. Whatever He does always conforms to His perfect, holy, and loving character.

Justification. We teach that justification before God is an act of God by which He declares righteous those who believe in Christ (Romans 5:1, 8:33). We teach that no one can earn justification by good works or law-keeping (Romans 3:21-28; Galatians 2:16,21; Philippians 3:7-9). We teach that the righteousness that is imputed to those who trust in Christ for their salvation involves the imputation of our sins to Jesus (1 Peter 3:18) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (Romans 1:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Repentance and faith are the only necessary conditions to receive the imputation of the merits of Christ. We teach that justification requires a living and real faith, not a mere profession of faith (James 2:14-26; 1 John 2:3-6).

Sanctification. We teach that every believer is "set apart" (sanctified) unto God by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every believer is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This is not descriptive of progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present state (1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:10-11, 10:10,14, 13:12; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We teach that there is, by the work of the Holy Spirit, an experiential sanctification, by which the state of the believer is progressively brought closer to the standing 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 the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17; Romans 6:1-22; 1 Peter 1:13-16).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a conflict – the new creation in Christ is set against the flesh – but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 John 3:5-10).

Perseverance of the Saints. We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24, 6:37-50; 10:24-30; Romans 5:9-10, 8:1, 31-39; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of the indwelling Holy Spirit and God's Word (Romans 8:16; 1 Peter 1:23). However, the Scriptures forbid the use of Christian liberty as an excuse for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-15).

We teach the eternal security of the genuine believer—while at the same time teaching the insecurity of the “make-believer”—of being in Christ (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Separation. We teach that the doctrine of separation from sin is clearly evident throughout the entire Bible, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that, in the last days, apostasy and worldliness will increase (1 Peter 1:13-16; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that separation does not mean isolation from our fallen world (John 17:15-17). There is a need for the believer to have contact with those who are unsaved for the purpose of giving witness to the saving work of Christ. Believers then must be in the world, but not of the world.

We teach that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord, and that separation from the world system, whose god is Satan, with its life views and standards of morality and ethics in opposition to God and His Word, is mandated by the Lord (Romans 12:1-2; James 4:4; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 John 2:15-17).

THE CHURCH

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:13), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22, 4:15; Colossians 1:18), and the Church is His espoused bride (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8).

We teach that the foundation of this Body began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own in the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the Church is, therefore, a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ (Matthew 16:18), 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 being that which was once not revealed, but which now has (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 this one spiritual body are instructed 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 the order, discipline, and worship are appointed through His sovereignty. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders, also called bishops, pastors, pastor-teachers, (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons, all of whom must fit biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:18).

We teach that it is the responsibility of a plurality of elders, raised up by the Holy Spirit in each congregation, to mediate the authority of Christ to that local assembly. The deacons are to serve in such a manner as to assist the elders and liberate them to stay focused on those duties articulated to them in the Word of God (1 Peter 5:1-4; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 5:17-22; James 5:14).

We teach that the Church is best served when the congregation submits to the leadership of the elders (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17). The congregation is to hold those who teach them in high esteem (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17). It is the responsibility of the congregation to support financially those elders who preach and teach the Word of God as their vocation (1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 9:14).

We teach that individuals in a local church are not to spread or receive any accusations against an elder unless two or three witnesses can substantiate that an elder has violated God's Word (1 Timothy 5:19). If an elder has sinned and refuses to repent of his sin, he is to be rebuked publicly. This is a means of deterring sin in others (1 Timothy 5:20-21).

We teach discipline of sinning members of the congregation according to the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 5:1-42; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 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 in submission to the Word of God and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. However, each local church, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation as well as on all matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government (Acts 15:19-31, 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

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, by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8, 2:42).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

Spiritual Gifts. We teach the accomplishment of God's purpose in the world.

For the accomplishment of that purpose, He has given the Church spiritual gifts. He gave gifted men for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities

to each member of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11). At the moment of spiritual birth, every believer receives such a gift or gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-13). These gifts are sovereignly bestowed and cannot be sought (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is essential that every believer discovers, develops, and employs his or her spiritual gift or gifts for the edification of the Body of Christ and the accomplishment of the work of Christ in the world (Romans 12:3-8; 2 Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there are two kinds of gifts – temporary confirming gifts and permanent edifying gifts. With the completion of the Word of God and the faith being once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3), there is no longer a need for confirming gifts (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).

The temporary confirming gifts were used by the Lord to validate certain individuals as God's messengers proclaiming God's message (2 Corinthians 12:12). Permanent edifying gifts are those that have been in existence since the beginning of the Church and continue to this day for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ. Spiritual gifts were never intended for the purpose of self-edification but for the edification of others, especially those in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:4-5, 12, 26).

We teach that the "gift of tongues" is the miraculous ability to speak in a foreign language without the normal educative process (Acts 2:1-12). This is to be distinguished from ecstatic utterances which are referred to by some today as the "gift of tongues." The true "gift of tongues," as found in the pages of Scripture, is produced by the Holy Spirit, whereas ecstatic utterances are not divine in origin, but rather self-induced and perhaps counterfeited by our enemy.

We teach that the temporary confirming gifts (i.e. healing, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and the working of sign miracles) gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. We teach that although God still heals people through the vehicle of prayer, He no longer uses certain persons with the "gift of healing" as His human agents to effect healing, because such a gift was primarily a confirming gift of new revelation.

God does hear and answer the prayer of faith on the part of every believer and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-7; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

We teach that it is necessary to establish one's theology on the basis of God's Word and not on the basis of one's experiences. All experiences must be tested by God's Word. We are to avoid justifying one's experience with God's Word (e.g., "slain in the Spirit," "laughing in the Spirit"). Just because something is perceived to be miraculous, it does not necessarily mean that it was initiated by God (Matthew 7:21-23; Revelation 13:11-18).

The Ordinances. 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) is the external testimony of the internal exercise of repentance and faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ. It is a believer's baptism that implies that one has the mental faculties to acknowledge their sinfulness, their inability to save themselves, and their willingness to trust exclusively in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls. This, therefore, would exclude any form of infant baptism. Believer's baptism also symbolizes the identification and union all true believers have with Christ and His Church (Romans 6:1-11; Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of the unmatched significance of the substitutionary death of Christ. This ordinance is to be observed until the Second Coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-32). We teach that participation in this ordinance should always be preceded by solemn self-examination and confession, if necessary.

We do not teach that the elements of communion become literal body and blood of Christ. We do teach that the bread and juice symbolically represent the willful surrender of the body and blood of Christ in dying for our sins.

ANGELS

Holy Angels. We teach that angels are created beings and, therefore, are not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God, to worship Him, and to minister to those who will inherit salvation (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:5-14, 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14, 19:10, 22:9).

Fallen Angels. We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgement of God by rebelling against the Creator, involving numerous angels in his fall (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), and tempted Eve to sin and succeeded (Genesis 3:1-15).

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

LAST THINGS

Death. We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11; Matthew 10:28), that there is a separation of soul and body (James 2:26), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of the Lord (Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Corinthians 5:7-8; Luke 23:43), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), when the spirit, soul, and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with the 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 the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men; the saved to eternal life (Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the lost to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:6,13-15).

We teach that the souls of the lost at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelations 20:1-15), when the soul and the resurrection body are united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into 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).

The Rapture. We teach that the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ will occur before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13). At this time, He will return to receive the Church, who is His body, unto Himself (i.e. the rapture), and returning with His Church in glory, will establish His kingdom in its millennial manifestation (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:11-21).

We teach that although all true Bible-believing churches teach that the true Church will be “raptured,” not all agree on when this miraculous event will occur during the end times. This disagreement stems from the fact that interpretations of the timing of the rapture are accepted on the basis of implications from Scripture, but not from explicit statements in God’s Word. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to be tolerant of those reasonable interpretations of the time of the rapture.

The Last Days. We teach that world history as we know it will culminate with a final, literal seven year period of time, in which will occur many wonderful and/or terrible events, including the rapture of the Church, the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22), the Second Coming of Christ (see below), and the outpouring of the wrath of God. This period of time is referred to in Scripture as the 70th week or 70th Seven (Daniel 9:24-27). During this time, the Antichrist will rise to power, deceive many, and ultimately be destroyed (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

The righteous judgments of God will be expressed and poured out against sin and upon an unbelieving world in these last days (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; Revelation 6:15-17,

15:5; 16:1-21). We teach that true believers are promised to be kept from the wrath of God to come on the inhabitants of the world (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9; Revelation 3:10). This period of time will climax with the Second Coming of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:14-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 19:11-21).

The Tribulation Period. We teach that God will exercise His righteous wrath for a final time on this earth and that this time is referred to as The Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22), a time of distress (Daniel 12:1), the 70th Week of Daniel (Daniel 9:27), the Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7) and the Day of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2). The wrath of God will be given its full expression near the end of this final period (Revelation 16:1-21).

The Second Coming. We teach that after the Tribulation period, Jesus Christ will come to this earth a second time. He will establish His Millennial Kingdom and occupy the throne of David (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11, 2:29-30). His Millennial rule on this earth will continue for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7).

During this time the 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 (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68, 30:1-10). The result of that 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 11:1-16, 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38) and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7-10).

The Judgment of the Lost. 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 (Jerusalem), 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), whereupon 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 lost dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

The Eternal State. We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan and the judgment of the lost (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. That the elements of this earth are to be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22). And that the heavenly city that comes down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) is to be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy fellowship forever with God and one another (John 17:3; Ephesians 2:11-16; Revelation 21:22).

The Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father (Ephesians 1:18-23; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Most of "What We Teach" was adapted from "Overview of Theology," John MacArthur's Study Bible.