

Scripture

We believe the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible are God breathed, inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts. They are the supreme and final authority of life and faith, for testing what is true and right (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 24:35; Hebrews 4:12).

The Word of God was written by the use of human agents. The Holy Spirit so superintended the 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 the part (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation (2 Peter 1:20-21). The meaning of Scripture is to be found in the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13). The truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men, never do men stand in judgment of the truth of Scripture (Hebrews 4:12).

God

There is only one living and true God, who exists eternally in three infinitely excellent Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each person in the Godhead is fully and completely God, and each member of the Holy Trinity equally deserving of worship, trust, and obedience (Deut 6:4, John 1:1; Matthew 16:16, 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14, Hebrew 1:2-3)

God the Father

God is the Father, the first person of the Trinity, decrees and works all things according to his own purpose and for his own glory, being sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. He created the universe out of nothing. He continually sustains, directs and governs all creatures and events, accomplishing this without being the author or approver of sin nor

minimizing human responsibility. He has graciously chosen the elect from all eternity, he saves from sin all who come to him through Jesus Christ, and he personally relates to his children as their Father.

God the Son

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, 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 believe 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 believe 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.

In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God Man (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9). We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

We believe 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).

We believe that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity 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 believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We believe 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 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 believe 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 believe 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 believe 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. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46)
3. Unbelieving dead 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 believe 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).

God the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. We believe that the Holy Spirit 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), eternity (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 believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We believe 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 believe 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 believe 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, and 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; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We believe the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the believer spiritual gifts for the edification of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Creation

God created the entire universe out of nothing as well as all living beings for the purpose of displaying His glory. God created the earth in six literal days (Genesis 1:1, 31, John 1:3).

Man's fall and sin

Man was created with the intention that he would glorify God, enjoy his fellowship and fulfill God's will and purposes on the earth. Man has been created in the image and likeness of God, and fell, turning away from the relationship with God as intended. As a consequence of the fall, man is spiritually and physically dead, subject to the wrath, the righteous judgment of God and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace (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).

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 and by choice (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

Salvation

We believe that salvation comes through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This faith is by God's grace alone and cannot be obtained by any human efforts or works.

We believe salvation occurs at conversion when the Holy Spirit convicts of sin and regenerates the elect, enabling them to hear the Gospel and understand Scripture; seeing the preciousness of Christ and their own unworthiness, they freely choose to repent and believe. Yet without the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would believe; therefore, no one can boast. After conversion, the Spirit dwells in all believers, empowering them

to live lives worthy of the calling they have received, to the glory and praise of God. [Jeremiah 31:33,34, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Matthew 11:27, Mark 1:15, 9:23,24, Luke 5:8, John 3:8, John 6:44, Acts 1:8, 11:18, 16:14, Romans 6:17,18, 15:18,19, 2 Corinthians 3:17,18, 6:16, Ephesians 1:13,14, 2:1-9, 4:1, Philippians 2:12,13, 2 Thessalonians 1:11,12, 2 Timothy 2:24,25, 1 Peter 2:4]

Election

God choose before the foundation of the world in his sovereign will those who would be holy and blameless before him, having predestined those who believe for adoption as children in Jesus Christ to Himself according to His good pleasure and will. This election is solely based upon God and not on any human merit, which will result in salvation under God's sovereignty.

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 sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins 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). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits

worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. 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). Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

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 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 there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (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).

Security

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

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

Church

We believe the Church of Jesus Christ consists of all Jews and Gentiles out of every country and culture who from the day of Pentecost to the Rapture have been born of the Spirit of God and by that same Spirit have been baptized into the body of Christ (Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:1-21, 47; Ephesians 2:14-22; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 12:22-23; 1 Peter 1:3, 22-25; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

We believe the Church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ (Matthew 16:18), distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We believe Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church. All those who are born again should be members of a local assembly of believers (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18; Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). They should associate with other assemblies of like precious faith and maintain a regular assembling of themselves together (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25; Romans 12:6-8).

We believe God has given the Church spiritual gifts. He has gifted men for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12) giving 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). As each believer discovers, develops and employs his spiritual gift or gifts, the body will be edified and the work of Christ will be accomplished in the world (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We believe in the autonomy of this local church with biblically designated officers who serve under Christ as elders, also called bishops and pastors (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-17; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 15:1-6). They lead and direct as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) with the congregation submitting to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We believe the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21). This is accomplished by edification, which involves building one another up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16); by instruction in the Word of God; by the maturing of every believer in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17); by evangelism to communicate and advance the Gospel of Christ to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:41-42; John 20:21); by discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2); by the development of mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Hebrews 10:25; Matthew 18:5-14); by the disciplining of sinning members of the congregation in accordance with biblical standards (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); by fellowship (Acts 2:42, 47; 1 John 1:3); by prayer (Acts 2:42) and by the keeping of the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42).

We believe our Lord Jesus Christ gave His church two ordinances that are to be practiced faithfully in local congregations worldwide. These are water baptism and the partaking of the bread and the cup (Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28).

We believe every Christian is to be immersed in water as a public witness of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 16:30-34).

We believe the bread and cup symbolize the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we are commanded to remember His death until He comes. Its observance provides regular opportunity for self-examination (1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23-28).

Last Things

We believe physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11; Matthew 10:28). We believe the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23), there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24) and such separation will continue until the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6) when spirit, soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (Job 19:25-27; 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 20:6, 13-15).

We believe the souls of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades (Job 3:11-19) where they are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:1-15), when the soul and a 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 and brimstone (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off forever from God (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

We believe in the physical bodily return of Jesus Christ to come and rule during the millennial reign. It will be during the thousand year reign that Christ will rule on this earth. At the end of this time, Satan will be released for a final battle (Revelation 20:7) in which Jesus will be victorious and will thus cast Satan and his demons into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

We believe following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign (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's 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 believe this resurrection of the unsaved dead will be a physical resurrection. Receiving judgment (Romans 14:10-13), the unsaved will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

We believe 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. At this time, the elements of this earth are to be "dissolved" (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; 21; 22). 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 eternal fellowship 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).