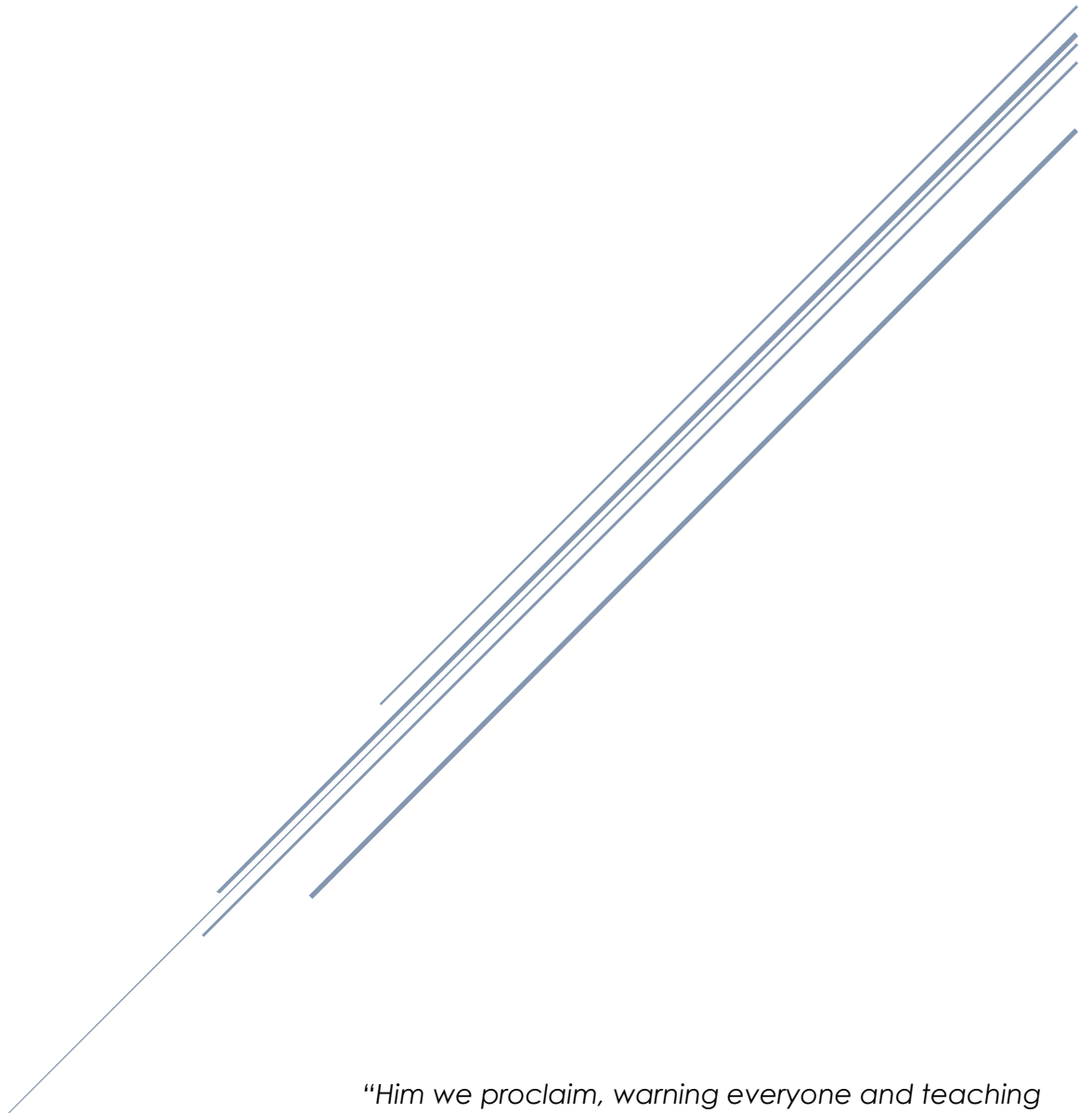


WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

First Baptist Church of Arlington



"Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ." Colossians 1:28

Ratified September, 2022

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INTRODUCTION

God values truth! Jesus petitioned the Father to “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). The Lord understood the absolute necessity of truth and requested the Father to use truth to set apart His disciples for the purpose of bringing Him glory. Christian leaders are commanded by God to “teach what accords with sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). The careful attention to biblical detail in this Doctrinal Statement is presented to our local church with joy and great anticipation. John wrote, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 4).

This statement of faith is created to be the guide of what we teach at First Baptist Church. It represents the consensus of belief and conviction of the Elders of the church concerning what the Scriptures teach. It is provided for the general instruction, unity, and guidance of our people concerning what is taught in the Scriptures, as well as theological guardrails from which we will not deviate.

It is not expected that one must agree with the entire Doctrinal Statement before becoming a member of the church; only belief in and commitment to the Essential Doctrines below are necessary for membership (the full explanation and Scriptural basis for which are found on the following pages). Rather, the detailed statement is a challenge to everyone to search the Scriptures and see if these things are true.

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

- A. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life.
- B. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C. We believe Jesus Christ was begotten by the Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is fully God and fully man. We believe that He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, His bodily ascension into heaven, His continuing service as our High Priest and Advocate, and His imminent bodily return to reign.
- D. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer, enabling them to live a godly life.
- E. We believe every human being is created in the image of God. All are born sinners by nature, have sinned, and are therefore separated from God and unfit for eternal life with Christ.
- F. We believe that all who repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become the children of God.
- G. We believe that baptism is the immersion of a believer in water as a testimony of one’s faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Christ and of one’s union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to new life; and that the Lord’s Supper is to be a commemoration of the Lord’s death until He comes.
- H. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the saved to eternal life with Christ and the lost to eternal punishment in hell.

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1. THE SCRIPTURES

SUMMARY: The 66 books of the Bible are the revealed truth of God, given by the Holy Spirit through human authors. Each word has been breathed out by God (inspired) and is therefore without error in the original writings, embodies all that is necessary for a life pleasing to God, and is the supreme and final authority in all matters upon which it speaks.

A. Revelation

- i. The Bible is special revelation, which is direct propositional revelation from God.¹ It is called special for two reasons: it is particular (not given to all of creation), and it is propositional (it is given through human language).²
- ii. There are 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit which together constitute the plenary Word of God (inspired equally in all parts).³
- iii. God's revelation to man is complete. There is no new revelation being given to the church or any individuals today. The Church is to reject any claims of new revelation and guard diligently that which we have once and for all received.⁴ While other writings may be useful in helping us understand the Scriptures, no other writings are inspired by God. The Apocrypha is not the Word of God.

B. Inspired

- i. The Bible is verbally inspired, meaning every word of Scripture is God-breathed.⁵ As such, the Bible does not merely contain the word of God, but it is the Word of God. It is not merely a collection of inspired thoughts but of actual inspired words from the breath of God. It is thus a perfect treasure of divine instruction.⁶

NOTE 1: All footnotes use the ESV translation unless noted.

NOTE 2: Reading verses without their context can lead to erroneous understanding. The Elders have sought to comprehend the context of the references in these footnotes to ensure proper interpretation. You, the reader, are encouraged to read them in their greater context whenever greater clarity is necessary.

¹ **2 Tim 3:16a** "All Scripture is breathed out by God..."

² **2 Kings 17:24** "And the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.'" **2 Chron 36:22** "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom..." **Isa 55:11** "...so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." **Rev 1:1-2** "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw."

³ **1 Cor 2:7-13** "But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.... these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. ... Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual." **2 Pet 1:20-21** "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from

someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

⁴ **Jude 1:3** "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints." **17-21** "But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, 'In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.' It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life." **2 Tim 1:13-14** "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you." **Rev 22:18-19** "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."

⁵ **2 Tim 3:16** "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness..."

⁶ **Ps 19:7-9** "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul ... the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether."

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- ii. God spoke 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.⁷

C. Inerrant

- i. The Bible is a perfect document in its original writings, containing no errors whatsoever in any detail or doctrine.⁸ Since God is the ultimate author of Scripture, and God's character is such that He cannot lie,⁹ the Bible is therefore without error. Everything the Bible asserts is true and accurate, including but not limited to matters of doctrine, ministry, personal living, history, and science.

D. Authoritative

- i. The Bible carries God's full authority and is the only infallible rule for faith and for Christian living.¹⁰ It is fully binding upon every individual, demanding reverence and obedience.¹¹
- ii. The Bible is not shy about its own full authority. Commands are made with regularity.¹² Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, appealed to the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures again and again in His life.¹³ The Apostle Paul fully understood that he was writing with God's full authority.¹⁴

⁷ **2 Pet 1:20-21** "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." **3:15b** "our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him..." **1 Cor 2:12-13** "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual."

⁸ **Ps 119:160** "The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever." **Prov 30:5** "Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him." **John 17:17** "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."

⁹ **Num 23:19** "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" **Titus 1:2** "in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began..." **Heb 6:18** "so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us."

¹⁰ **John 10:35b** "Scripture cannot be broken." **Heb 4:12** "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

¹¹ **Matt 5:18-19** "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

¹² **Ps 119:166** "I hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I do your commandments." **Matt 22:36-40** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" and He said to him, "You shall love the Lord

your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets." **Exod 20:6** "but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." **Rev 14:12** "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus."

¹³ **1 John 5:3** "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome." **Matt 4:4** "But he answered, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."' " **7** "Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."' " **10** "Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."' " **5:17-20** "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

¹⁴ **1 Cor 14:37** "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord." **1 Thes 4:8** "Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you." **2 Thes 3:6** "Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us."

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E. Sufficient

- i. The Bible gives us everything we need to know about God, about salvation, and about sanctification. On its own, the Bible is powerful and effective to transform a lost sinner through faith and repentance into the image of Christ.¹⁵ Nothing else has any power to save or sanctify.¹⁶
- ii. The Scriptures alone are sufficient to restore, counsel, delight, enlighten, sustain, satisfy, and protect us.¹⁷ By them, every Christian shall be outfitted for the complete and active Christian life.¹⁸

F. Clear

- i. The Scriptures are given to us in understandable language and concepts, and God expects us to understand it¹⁹ and to teach it to our children and others.²⁰ The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation²¹ under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.²² While there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation.²³

¹⁵ **1 Pet 1:3** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." **23** "since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God..." **Jam 1:18a** "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth..."

¹⁶ **1 Cor 1:18** "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." **21** "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe." **Luke 16:31** "He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

¹⁷ **Ps 19:7-11** "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

¹⁸ **2 Tim 3:16-17** "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

¹⁹ **Matt 12:3** "He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him...?'" **5** "Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?" **21:42** "Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"'" **John 3:10** "Jesus answered him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?'"

²⁰ **Deut 6:6-7** "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk

by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." **2 Tim 2:2** "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful people, who will be able to teach others also."

²¹ **2 Tim 2:15** "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

²² **1 Cor 1:18-25** "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." **2:14** "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." **Jam 1:5-6** "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind." **1 John 2:20-21** "But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth."

²³ **Matt 22:29-33** "But Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.' And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching."

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- ii. While some individual elements of the Bible are challenging to understand,²⁴ nothing is without explanation. In all things, the less difficult passages help interpret the more difficult, not the other way around. Indeed, the Scriptures are designed to make wise the simple and instruct the naïve.²⁵

G. Preserved

- i. Through God's divine providence, the 66 books of the Bible have been preserved and are available to us today.
- ii. Discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls have verified the Old Testament text was transmitted carefully and has not changed, while the New Testament books boast an overwhelming abundance of early manuscripts close to the original dates of writing. Careful scholarly critiques of these texts and their transmission through time give us incredible confidence today in the preservation of the Bible.

²⁴ **2 Pet 3:15-16** "And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures."

²⁵ **Ps 19:7** "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple..." **119:130**

"The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple." **Jam 1:22-25** "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."

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2. GOD

SUMMARY: There is only one living and true God, self-existent as an infinite, eternal, all-knowing Spirit, perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

A. The Holy Trinity

- i. There is but one true and living God¹ who eternally exists in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.² These three Persons of the Godhead have precisely the same attributes. Each Person deserves worship and obedience.³

B. God's Character

- i. God is at all times all of His attributes. He is never partly one or partly another and He never puts one off to put on another. Each attribute is always fully present, and each harmonizes with one another.
- ii. Among other attributes, God is
 - a. Holy. God is absolutely holy and perfect. Indeed, God is too pure to look upon sin with approval. He cannot be tempted by sin. He is altogether set apart from His creation.⁴
 - b. Unchanging. God's being and attributes are immutable. God does not fluctuate, grow, improve, adapt, learn, or evolve. From eternity past to eternity future, He is the same.⁵
 - c. Eternal. God is eternal in existence, having no beginning and no end. God was not created, born, or caused. He is the eternal "I AM."⁶
 - d. Self-Existent. God is unto Himself all-sufficient, in need of nothing from His creation. God has no needs outside of Himself.⁷

¹ **Deut 6:4** "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." **Isa 45:5-7** "I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things."

² **Matt 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." **2 Cor 13:14** "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." **1 Cor 12:4-6** "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone." **1 Pet 1:2** "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you." **Jude 1:20-21** "But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life." **John 14:16** "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever..." **Matt 3:16-17** "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

³ **2 Cor 3:18** "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one

degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." **Heb 1:3** "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high..." **Rev 5:13** "And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!'"

⁴ **1 Sam 2:2** "There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God." **Ezek 39:7** "And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel." **Jam 1:13a** "God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."

⁵ **Ps 33:11** "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations." **Mal 3:6** "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."

⁶ **Deut 33:27** "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms." **Ps 90:2** "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

⁷ **Acts 17:25** "nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything." **Ps 115:3** "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."

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- e. Creator. God is the foundation of all existence. From Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. Nothing has existed or can exist apart from a creative act of God.⁸
- f. Omnipotent. God is all-powerful. He has absolute power to accomplish whatsoever His will is to accomplish. Everyone, including Satan, is subject to His plans and desires.⁹
- g. Omnipresent. God is all-present. He is infinite in being, having no limits or restrictions to His size or to His presence. He is immense—filling and surpassing the universe. Nowhere can man flee from His presence.¹⁰
- h. Omniscient. God’s knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent of His creation. In His sight, all things are open and manifest so that nothing to Him is contingent or uncertain. God knows the future as well as the past. He knows and examines the hearts of all men.¹¹
- i. Wise. God is of infinite wisdom and applies it to every situation. Every decision and plan of God’s is best. He has never made a mistake nor missed a better course of action.¹²
- j. Faithful. God is faithful to all His promises and covenants. His word is absolutely reliable. His character is completely dependable. His promises of blessing are always fulfilled and His warnings of judgment are real. His predictions of the future always come true.¹³
- k. Loving. God is kind, merciful, and full of steadfast love. God loves and shows mercy based upon His own character—not based upon the goodness or the value of His creation. God’s kindness extends even to His enemies, providing for both the righteous and the unrighteous. He forgives even the worst sinner who turns to Him in repentance and faith.¹⁴
- l. Gracious. God is full of grace, granting forgiveness of sin to the undeserving. He rewards those who diligently seek Him. The desire to graciously forgive is basic to God’s nature. He takes no delight in the death of the wicked.¹⁵

⁸ **Gen 1:1** “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” **Neh 9:6** “You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.”

⁹ **Matt 19:26** “But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” **Phil 3:21b** “by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

¹⁰ **Ps 139:7-10** “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.” **Jer 23:23-24** “Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.”

¹¹ **1 Kings 8:39** “then hear in heaven your dwelling place and forgive and act and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways (for you, you only, know the hearts of all the children of mankind)...” **1 John 3:20** “for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.”

¹² **Rom 11:33** “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” **Eph 3:10** “so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.”

¹³ **Ps 89:1-2** “I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. For I said, ‘Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness.’” **Heb 10:23** “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”

¹⁴ **Lam 3:22** “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end.” **Eph 2:4-5** “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved...” **1 John 4:16** “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

¹⁵ **Exod 33:19** “And he said, ‘I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name “The Lord.” And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.’” **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

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- m. Just. God is entirely just and terrifying in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty. All sin will be judged, and His judgments are always righteous.¹⁶
- n. Sovereign. Everything that has happened or will happen is under God's control. He does whatever He pleases, and nothing can thwart His will.¹⁷ Though God is not responsible for any sin,¹⁸ nor does He tempt people to sin,¹⁹ even wicked and sinful things fall under God's total control.²⁰ He works within all things, including evil, for His divine good purposes,²¹ and especially for the good of His chosen people.²² In all things, God's glory is the purpose and end goal of world history and each event that takes place therein.²³

C. God the Father

- i. The Father is the first person of the Holy Trinity and has all the perfections and powers of God.²⁴
- ii. God the Father designates Himself as Father to reveal the nature of His relationship in the Holy Trinity and His relationship to mankind.²⁵ The relationship He has within the Trinity is not one of superiority in essence. Rather, He is Father according to His role and function within the Godhead.²⁶
- iii. God the Father is a spirit, invisible to man, having no body or physical elements. Therefore, no man has seen or can see God in His essential being. God can and has manifested Himself in various ways and at various times. However, these manifestations are not of His essential being.²⁷

¹⁶ **Deut 32:4** "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he." **Zeph 3:5** "The Lord within her is righteous; he does no injustice; every morning he shows forth his justice; each dawn he does not fail."

¹⁷ **Eph 1:11** "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will..." **Isa 14:24** "The Lord of hosts has sworn: 'As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand...'" **Isa 14:27** "For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?"

¹⁸ **Deut 32:4** "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."

¹⁹ **Jam 1:13** "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."

²⁰ **Isa 45:7** "I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the Lord, who does all these things."

²¹ **Prov 16:4** "The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble." **Acts 2:23** "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."

²² **Rom 8:28** "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

²³ **Psa 72:18-19** "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen!" **Rom 9:17** "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.'" **9:22-23** "What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruct-

tion, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory..."

²⁴ **Luke 10:21-22** "In that same hour he [Jesus] rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'" **John 5:19b-21** "For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will."

²⁵ **John 10:29-30** "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." **Rom 8:14-16** "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." **2 Cor 1:3-4a** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction..."

²⁶ **John 17:1, 5** "When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ... And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.'" **Col 1:3** "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you..."

²⁷ **John 4:24** "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." **1 Tim 6:16** "who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

D. Relationship with Man

- i. God is at once both transcendent and immanent—He is outside of time and space and incomprehensible to the human mind,²⁸ yet He is also close at hand and knowable.²⁹ Though He is beyond total understanding, He can be known personally as He chooses to be known.³⁰
- ii. The Triune God created mankind and chose mankind for a unique relationship with Himself. God enters into a special eternal relationship with those whom He chose from before time to save.³¹ He has given us the Scriptures and opened His ear to our prayers. God the Father sent God the Son to live among us, be related to us, empathize with us, and die for us to redeem us to Himself.³² God the Spirit abides in every believer, making them living temples of God and His adopted children, thereby heirs with Christ.³³

²⁸ **Job 11:7-8** "Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?" **Eccl 3:11** "He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."

²⁹ **Isa 57:15** "For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"

John 14:23 "Jesus answered him, 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.'"

³⁰ **Isa 40:28-31** "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

³¹ **Eph 1:4-5** "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will..." **2 Thes 2:13** "But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth."

³² **Rom 5:8** "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." **Heb 2:10-18** "For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through

suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, 'I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Behold, I and the children God has given me.' Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

³³ **1 Cor 3:16** "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" **Rom 8:9-17a** "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

3. JESUS

SUMMARY: As the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus possesses the full attributes of divinity, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial (of one and the same essence), and coeternal with the Father. He alone is the Mediator between God and man, the Head of His Body the church, and the coming universal King. He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior.

A. Preincarnate

- i. Jesus is eternal and not a created being.¹ He dwells in perfect oneness with the Father and Spirit forever.² God created all things through Christ, by whom all things continue to exist and operate.³

B. Incarnation

- i. Jesus was born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit,⁴ and while remaining God also became man.⁵ The purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom.⁶
- ii. In the incarnation, Jesus laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and became a humble servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes.⁷ In this act, He surrendered nothing of the divine essence, in either degree or kind, but voluntarily set aside (emptied Himself of) His preincarnate glory,⁸ the full open display of His divine attributes,⁹ His eternal riches,¹⁰ and His face-to-face relationship with the Father.¹¹ By taking on manhood, Jesus

¹ **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

² **John 10:30** "I and the Father are one." **14:9** "Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" **17:5** "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."

³ **John 1:3** "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." **Col 1:15-17** "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." **Heb 1:2** "but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."

⁴ **Matt 1:20** "But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'" **23** "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us)."

⁵ **John 1:1, 14** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." **1 John 1:1-2** "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us..."

⁶ **Ps 2:7-9** "I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'" **Phil 2:9-11** "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." **Heb 7:25-26** "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens."

⁷ **Phil 2:6-8** "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

⁸ **John 17:5** "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."

⁹ **Matt 24:36** "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

¹⁰ **2 Cor 8:9** "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."

¹¹ **Matt 27:46** "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'"

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and became the God-Man, fully God and fully man,¹² yet without sin.¹³

C. Life and Death

- i. In His earthly life, Jesus faced the hardships and temptations common to all mankind, yet He never sinned—He was perfect in all His ways.¹⁴ As such, He alone is the spotless sacrifice on our behalf,¹⁵ imputing perfect law-fulfilling righteousness to those who believe.¹⁶ His death was voluntary,¹⁷ substitutionary,¹⁸ propitiatory,¹⁹ and redemptive.²⁰ On the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is instantly freed from the punishment and power of sin,²¹ and one day even the very presence of sin.²²

D. Resurrection and Ascension

- i. In the bodily, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave,²³ God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that He has accepted His atoning work on the cross.²⁴ After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest.²⁵
- ii. For the believer, one's justification (right-standing) before God is made sure by Christ's resurrection from the dead.²⁶ This bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection and embodied life for all believers.²⁷

¹² **Col 2:9** "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily..."

¹³ **2 Cor 5:21** "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." **Heb 4:15** "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." **7:26** "For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens."

¹⁴ **Heb 4:15** "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

¹⁵ **1 Pet 3:18** "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit..."

¹⁶ **Rom 5:19** "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." **2 Cor 5:21** "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." **Heb 10:14** "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."

¹⁷ **John 10:15** "just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep."

¹⁸ **Isa 53:5-6** "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." **1 Pet 2:24** "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

¹⁹ **Heb 2:17** "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." **1 John 4:10** "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

²⁰ **Eph 1:7** "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace..."

²¹ **Rom 6:14** "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." **18** "and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." **23** "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

²² **1 Cor 15:42-43** "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." **52** "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

²³ **Luke 24:38-39** "And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.'" **1 Cor 15:5-6** "and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep."

²⁴ **Rom 1:4** "and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord..."

²⁵ **Rom 8:34** "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." **1 Tim 2:5** "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus..." **Heb 7:25** "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." **9:23** "Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." **1 John 2:1** "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

²⁶ **Rom 4:25** "who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."

²⁷ **John 14:19** "Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live." **Rom 6:5** "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

E. Future Reign and Judgment

- i. Jesus Christ will return to receive all true believers to Himself at the rapture and will return with them in glory to establish His millennial kingdom on earth.²⁸ Jesus Himself will judge all mankind.²⁹ Believers will be evaluated for their faithfulness and character of their works, not with respect to salvation.³⁰ Unbelievers will be judged according to their deeds and condemned to eternal torment.³¹

²⁸ **Acts 1:9-11** "And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'" **1 Thes 4:13-17** "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." **Rev 19:7-9** "Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are the true words of God.'" **11-14** "Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses."

²⁹ **John 5:22** "For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son..." **Acts 17:31** "because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." **1 Cor 3:12-15** "Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—

each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." **2 Cor 5:10** "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." **Matt 25:31-46** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ... And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." **Rev 20:11-15** "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

³⁰ **2 Cor 5:10** "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

³¹ **Matt 25:41** "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" **2 Thes 1:8-9** "inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed."

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT

SUMMARY: As the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit possesses the full attributes of divinity, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial (of one and the same essence), and coeternal with the Father and the Son. The Spirit works in perfect concert with the will of the Father to carry out divine activity on earth and in believers.

A. Personality

- i. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal and underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect,¹ emotions,² will,³ eternity,⁴ omnipresence,⁵ omniscience,⁶ omnipotence,⁷ and truthfulness.⁸

B. Ministry

- i. The Holy Spirit is constantly engaged in executing the divine will with relation to all mankind. His sovereign activity is clearly seen in creation,⁹ the incarnation,¹⁰ the writing of the Scriptures,¹¹ the work of salvation,¹² and in convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.¹³
- ii. As promised by Christ, the Holy Spirit came from the Father¹⁴ at Pentecost to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church.¹⁵ The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration,¹⁶ baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ.¹⁷ The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption.¹⁸

¹ **1 Cor 2:10** "For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." **13** "And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual."

² **Eph 4:30** "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

³ **1 Cor 12:11** "All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."

⁴ **Heb 9:14** "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

⁵ **Ps 139:7-8** "Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!"

⁶ **Isa 40:13-14** "Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?"

⁷ **Rom 15:13** "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

⁸ **John 16:13** "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

⁹ **Gen 1:2** "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

¹⁰ **Matt 1:18** "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit."

¹¹ **2 Pet 1:21** "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." **16:13** "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

¹² **John 3:5** "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'"

¹³ **John 16:8** "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment..."

¹⁴ **John 14:16** "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever..." **15:26** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."

¹⁵ **1 Cor 12:13** "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

¹⁶ **Titus 3:5** "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

¹⁷ **1 Cor 12:13** "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

¹⁸ **Rom 8:9** "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the

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C. Spiritual Gifts

- i. Believers' spiritual gifts are administered by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Every gift given is designed to glorify Christ and edify other believers, never to glorify or edify the one exercising the gift.²⁰
- ii. In this respect, God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of spiritual gifts for the perfecting of the saints today.²¹ Certain, specific gifts, namely speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles, were temporary gifts for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the Apostles as revealers of divine truth in the beginning days of the church, and were never intended to be characteristic of all believers or normative in the church age.²² All the biblical miraculous sign gifts have ceased.

D. Baptism, Indwelling, and Filling

- i. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a unique work of Christ by the Holy Spirit upon everyone who comes to saving faith. It is not a second work of grace given only to some believers who seek it. It began at Pentecost and subsequently occurs at the moment of salvation.²³ Through this baptism of the Spirit, Christians are placed into the universal body of Christ, the church.²⁴
- ii. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer permanently from the moment of salvation,²⁵ guaranteeing our eternal inheritance and sealing us unto the day of redemption.²⁶ The filling of the Holy Spirit is not the same as being baptized or indwelt by the Spirit, but instead is a duty and

Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." **2 Cor 3:6** "who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." **Eph 1:13** "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit..."

¹⁹ **Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." **1 Cor 12:11** "All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."

²⁰ **John 16:14** "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." **2 Cor 3:18** "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

²¹ **1 Cor 12:4-10** "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues."

²² **Heb 2:3-4** "how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." **1 Cor 13:8-10** "Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways." **2 Cor 12:12**

"The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works."

²³ **Acts 11:15-16** "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"

²⁴ **1 Cor 12:13** "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

²⁵ **John 7:39** "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." **14:17** "even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." **Rom 8:9-11** "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. ... If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." **1 Cor 6:19** "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?" **Gal 4:6** "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" **1 John 3:24** "Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us."

²⁶ **2 Cor 1:22** "Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us." **5:5** "He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee." **Eph 1:13-14** "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." **4:30** "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

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command for Christians to be filled (or controlled) by the Spirit in our life²⁷ and thus produce the fruit of the Spirit in our character.²⁸

²⁷ **Eph 5:18** "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit."

²⁸ **Gal 5:22-23** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

5. MAN

SUMMARY: Man was created in the image of God, to glorify God and accomplish God's good purposes. God made man and woman equal, but different, and gifted mankind with marriage. Man sinned and rejected God, has incurred death and corruption, and is incapable of restoring what was lost and being saved from the punishment of sin.

A. Created Nature, Purpose, and Value

- i. Man was directly created by God on the sixth day of creation in His image and likeness.¹ Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God.² God created man as a two-part being: a material body and an immaterial soul or spirit.³
- ii. God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life within the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world.⁴
- iii. Man's value is derived from God and is not self-originating. Mankind was created in the image of God, giving all human life sacred value.⁵ Therefore, every life is valuable to God, the born and the unborn, the healthy and the infirm.⁶ Man is distinct from animals and of infinitely greater value because man alone was made in the image of God. God further expressed that man should have dominion over animals.⁷ However, man being made in God's image does not make man to be God or "littles gods."

B. Gender

- i. Man and woman were both created in the image of God⁸ and are thus positionally equal before God.⁹ Man is not greater than woman, neither is woman greater than man.¹⁰

¹ **Gen 1:26-31** "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. ...' And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." **Gen 9:6b** "for God made man in his own image." **Jam 3:9b** "people who are made in the likeness of God."

² **Gen 2:15-20** "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' ... Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him."

³ **Matt 10:28** "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." **Rom 8:10** "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

⁴ **Isa 43:7** "everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." **Col 1:16b** "all things were created through him and for him." **Rev 4:11** "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

⁵ **Gen 1:26-27** "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. ...' So God created man in his own image, in the image

of God he created him; male and female he created them." **Jam 3:9b** "people who are made in the likeness of God."

⁶ **Exod 21:22-25** "When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."

⁷ **Gen 1:26, 28** "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. ... And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" **Ps 8:6-8** "You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas."

⁸ **Gen 1:27** "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

⁹ **Gal 3:28** "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

¹⁰ **1 Cor 11:11-12** "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God."

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- ii. Though man and woman were created equal, they were not created identical. God formed man with a male body intending man to act with masculine traits and to fulfill his distinct role as a man. God fashioned woman with a female body intending woman to act with feminine traits and to fulfill her distinct role as a woman.¹¹ One's gender and sex are permanent, given by God at conception, and are not malleable or transitory.¹²

C. Marriage

- i. God instituted marriage to be between one man and one woman for one lifetime¹³ in a covenant of companionship in which the two become one.¹⁴ Marriage is further a picture of the relationship God has with His people.¹⁵ It is not required of every person—some men and women are gifted by God to live a single life to God's glory.¹⁶
- ii. By God's design, man was made first, and thus he is the wife's head and her servant-leader. This role was established at creation—before the fall into sin.¹⁷ Since the woman was made from the man, she is his body and support. Woman was made for man to complement and complete him. This role also was established at creation—before the fall into sin.¹⁸

¹¹ **1 Tim 2:8-12** "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." **Titus 2:2-6** "Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled."

¹² **Mark 10:6** "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'"

¹³ **Rom 7:2-3** "For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress." **Matt 22:30** "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."

¹⁴ **Gen 2:24** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." **Matt 19:5-6** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

¹⁵ **Eph 5:22-33** "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to

Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

¹⁶ **Matt 19:10-12** "The disciples said to him, 'If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.' But he said to them, 'Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.'" **1 Cor 7:8-9** "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion." **9:5** "Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?"

¹⁷ **Gen 2:21-24** "So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." **1 Cor 11:3-16** "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ... For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ..." **Eph 5:25-33** "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ... In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ... Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' ... However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

¹⁸ **Gen 2:18** "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'" **Eph 5:22-24** "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands." **Col 3:18** "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." **1 Tim 2:12-14** "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor."

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- iii. Any sexual activity outside of the bond of marriage is a perversion of God's will and design and is therefore both harmful and sinful.¹⁹

D. Free Will

- i. Man has a volitional will in that God has given him the capacity to choose that which he desires.²⁰ However, no unregenerate human being desires God.²¹ Because man can only choose according to his desires, outside of Christ, man's will is incapable of choosing righteousness.²²
- ii. Unredeemed human beings have free will but lack true freedom—all are slaves to sin.²³ Until the heart is changed by the Holy Spirit, there is no desire for Christ and man cannot choose Him.²⁴
- iii. When God changes a person's heart, He gives a desire for Himself that the person otherwise would not have. He does not act counter to a person's will, but rather the person's will is changed by God when God transforms the disposition of the heart and plants a desire for Himself within it.²⁵

E. Corruption

- i. In Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence,²⁶ incurred the penalty of spiritual death,²⁷ physical death,²⁸ and eternal death,²⁹ and became subject to the wrath of God.³⁰ With no recuperative powers to save himself, man is hopelessly lost.³¹

¹⁹ **1 Cor 6:15-20** "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two will become one flesh.' But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." **1 Thes 4:3-4** "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor..." **Heb 13:4** "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

²⁰ **Deut 30:19-20** "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

²¹ **Rom 3:10-12** "as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.'"

²² **Rom 8:5** "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit." **7-8** "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

²³ **Prov. 5:22** "The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin." **John 8:34** "everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin." **Jam 1:14-15** "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."

²⁴ **John 6:44** "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." **65** "no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

²⁵ **John 15:16** "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide..." **2 Thes 2:13-14** "But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." **Jam 1:18** "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

²⁶ **Gen 3:7** "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."

²⁷ **Gen 3:22-24** "Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—' therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

²⁸ **Gen 5:5** "Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died."

²⁹ **Matt 25:46** "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." **2 Thes 1:9** "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might..."

³⁰ **John 3:36** "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

³¹ **1 Cor 2:14** "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." **Eph 2:1** "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins..." **Rom 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

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- ii. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Only by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit may we be brought out of this state of spiritual death.³² It is God alone by grace alone who makes us alive.³³

³² **Titus 3:5** "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit..."

³³ **Eph 2:4-5** "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our

trespass-es, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved" **9-10** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

6. SIN

SUMMARY: Adam's first sin plunged mankind into spiritual darkness and alienation from God. Every human is thus born a sinner by nature, and therefore chooses to sin. Man is dead in sin, cannot free himself from slavery to sin, and, apart from God's salvation, must suffer God's just punishment for sin.

A. Definition

- i. Sin is an attitude or action that expresses independence and/or rebellion from God and His standards. It is any thought, word, or deed with which God is not pleased.¹ It is disobedience to the revealed will of God. Sin involves both sins of commission (doing what God forbids), and sins of omission (failing to act in the way God commands).²
- ii. Furthermore, sin is believing a lie and doubting the truth of God.³ It is living pridefully rather than for the glory of God.⁴ It is living selfishly rather than as a reflection of God's love.⁵ It is loving the things of the world rather than the things of God.⁶

B. Original Sin

- i. In Adam's initial sin, sin was imputed to us—charged to our account.⁷ Because all men were in Adam, a corrupt nature has been transmitted to all people of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception.⁸ Therefore, all people are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration.⁹

C. Total Depravity

- i. Unregenerate man is totally depraved, fundamentally evil at the core of his being.¹⁰ There is no part of man that is left untouched by sin; man's desires, thinking, will, emotions, conscience, relationships, and more have all been tainted with sin. Sin is all-encompassing, such that our minds, wills, and bodies are affected by it.¹¹ The Scriptures reject the false idea that all people

¹ **Prov 24:8-9** "Whoever plans to do evil will be called a schemer. The devising of folly is sin, and the scoffer is an abomination to mankind." **Mark 7:20-23** "And he said, 'What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'"

² **Jam 4:17** "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."

³ **Rom 1:25** "they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen." **Heb 11:6** "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

⁴ **2 Chron 12:14** "And [King Rehoboam] did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek the Lord." **Jer 7:24** "But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward."

⁵ **Ps 95:10** "For forty years I loathed that generation and said, 'They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.'"

⁶ **1 John 2:15-16** "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world."

⁷ **Rom 5:19a** "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners..."

⁸ **Rom 5:12** "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned..." **17-19** "For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."

⁹ **Ps 14:1-3** "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one." **Rom 3:23** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

¹⁰ **Jer 17:9** "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

¹¹ **Eccl 7:20** "Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins." **Eph 4:17-19** "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."

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struggle with sin yet are inherently good.¹² From the point of conception all mankind is sinful in every aspect of his being.¹³ However, total depravity is not absolute depravity, such that man is not always as wicked as he possibly could be.¹⁴

- ii. Unregenerate man is a slave to sin.¹⁵ Left to himself, man cannot break the power of sin over his attitudes and actions because man is both dead in sin and delights in sin.¹⁶ Instead, continuing in sin, man's understanding is darkened and his heart is only further hardened against God.¹⁷

D. Sin's Penalty

- i. Despite being a sinner by nature and unable to stop sinning, man is still fully responsible for his sin and will be held to account by God. Sin must be punished, and the penalty for sin is death.¹⁸ Just one sin is enough to deserve eternal damnation, for one sin offends God's holiness, breaks His perfect Law, and severs the relationship with Him.¹⁹ God, being holy and just, is right to condemn sinful man to eternal hell.²⁰

¹² **Jer 13:23** "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil." **Rom 3:10-12** "as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.'"

¹³ **Ps 51:5** "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

¹⁴ **Isa 64:6** "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."

¹⁵ **John 8:34** "Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who practices sin is a slave to sin.'" **Rom 6:16** "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" **17** "you who were once slaves of sin..." **19** "you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness..." **20** "you were slaves of sin..."

¹⁶ **Eph 2:1-3** "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

¹⁷ **Rom 1:21-22** "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools..." **Eph 4:18-19** "They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."

¹⁸ **Rom 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death..."

¹⁹ **Jam 2:10** "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it." **Gen 3:6** "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."

²⁰ **Rom 1:18-32** "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ... Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them." **2 Thes 1:5-9** "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God... since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction..."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

7. SALVATION

SUMMARY: Salvation is that gracious act of God, where, through the atoning death of Christ He redeems and reconciles certain individuals to Himself. Salvation is not on the basis of merit or works of any kind or degree. It is received as a gift through personal repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. All who die in their sins apart from Christ have no salvation.

A. Atonement

- i. Christ Himself bore the penalty of sin in His body on the cross, making atonement for the sins of man.¹ Man's sin is a legal and relational barrier between him and God. Christ's death was an act of penal substitution,² by which Christ took upon Himself God's stored-up wrath, paying the penalty in full for those who believe, ransoming them out of sin and reconciling them legally and relationally to God, and procuring forgiveness for all who believe.³
- ii. Jesus' death accomplished complete atonement for all time. The death of Christ never needs to be repeated, and no other atonement of any kind is needed. In offering up Himself—a spotless, perfect sacrifice—He took away sin once and for all.⁴

B. Election

- i. 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.⁵ His sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and believe.⁶

¹ **Eph 1:7** "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" **Heb 9:12, 14** "he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ... how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

² **Isa 53:5-6** "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." **1 Pet 2:24** "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

³ **Col 2:13-14** "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." **1 Tim 2:5-6a** "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all."

⁴ **Heb 9:25-26** "Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." **1 Pet 1:18-19** "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb with-

out blemish or spot." **3:18** "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God..."

⁵ **Rom 8:29-30** "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." **Gal 1:15** "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace..." **Eph 1:4-5** "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will..." **2 Thes 2:13** "But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth."

⁶ **Matt 7:26-27** "And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." **Luke 13:34** "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" **John 5:40** "yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." **John 12:48** "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." **Rom 2:4-5** "do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

- ii. Since election will result in what God determines, His glorious grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself.⁷ All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith will be received by the Father.⁸
- iii. The unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own, nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy.⁹ Thus, election excludes any possibility of boasting on the part of man and promotes humility and eternal gratitude.¹⁰
- iv. God is completely sovereign over election. He exercises His sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love.¹¹ His sovereignty will always exalt His will in a manner totally consistent with His character.¹²

C. Regeneration

- i. Regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the new nature and divine life are imparted to the believer.¹³ It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy

⁷ **Eph 1:11** "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will..."

⁸ **John 8:37** "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." **40** "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." **Acts 13:48** "And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." **Eph 2:8-9** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

⁹ **Rom 11:5-6** "So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace." **2 Tim 1:9** "who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began..."

¹⁰ **Deut 7:6-8a** "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you..." **Rom 9:14-16** "What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy." **11:33, 36** "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ... For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." **Titus 3:4-5** "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

¹¹ **Deut 7:6-8** "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has

brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." **John 12:37-41** "Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?' Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.'" **Rom 2:5-8** "But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury."

¹² **Rom 9:14-24** "What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, 'Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?' But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me like this?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?"

¹³ **Titus 3:5** "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit..." **1 John 3:9-10** "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother."

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Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God as the repentant sinner, enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation.¹⁴

- ii. Genuine regeneration is manifested by the fruits of repentance, such as righteous attitudes and conduct.¹⁵ Good works contribute nothing to one's rebirth but are its proper evidence and fruit.¹⁶

D. Conversion (Faith and Repentance)

- i. Faith and repentance are man's immediate response to the inward work of regeneration upon the soul.¹⁷ They are not works performed to earn salvation but are the appropriate response of a sinner who is moved by God to come to Christ. Both repentance and faith are described in Scripture as gifts from God.¹⁸
- ii. Faith that saves is not mere knowledge of gospel facts, nor even an acceptance of those facts as true.¹⁹ Knowledge and assent are necessary, but true saving faith also involves an earnest trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,²⁰ submitting oneself to the person and will of Christ with a desire and willingness to know, love, and obey Him.²¹

¹⁴ **John 3:3-8** "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' ... Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ... The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'" **1 Pet 1:23** "since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." **Jam 1:18a** "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth..."

¹⁵ **Matt 3:8** "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance." **John 15:4-6** "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned." **Rom 6:17-18** "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."

¹⁶ **Gal 5:22-24** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." **Eph 2:8-10** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before-hand, that we should walk in them."

¹⁷ **Mark 1:14-15** "Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" **Acts 16:30-32** "Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house." **Acts 17:30-31** "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere

to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

¹⁸ **Eph 2:8** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God..." **2 Tim 2:25** "God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth."

¹⁹ **John 2:23-25** "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man." **Jam 2:19b** "Even the demons believe—and shudder!"

²⁰ **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." **36** "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." **Rom 10:9-10** "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." **13** "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

²¹ **John 8:31-32** "So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" **Gal 5:6** "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love." **2 Thes 1:7b-8** "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." **1 John 2:4-6** "Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

- iii. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, having a genuine sorrow for your sin,²² confessing your sins to Him,²³ making a conscious choice to turn from sin,²⁴ and pursuing Christ with obedience to Him.²⁵ Repentance is a necessary part of conversion, inseparable from saving faith.²⁶

E. Justification

- i. Justification before God is an act of God²⁷ by which, based on the death of Christ and motivated by His own love,²⁸ He declares righteous those who confess Christ as Lord through faith and repentance. This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man²⁹ and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ³⁰ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us.³¹ By this means God is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.³²
- ii. Justification is not a process of becoming righteous but is an instantaneous act of God whereby He declares the sinner to be righteous based upon the righteousness of Christ. The believer is not justified after death, but at the moment of faith in Christ.³³ Therefore, there is no condemnation for the believer because all the believer's guilt has been removed.³⁴ Justification brings the believer into a permanent state of peace and favor with God.³⁵

²² **2 Cor 7:9-10** "As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."

²³ **1 John 1:8-9** "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

²⁴ **Luke 13:3, 5** "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. ... unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." **1 Thes 1:9** "For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God..."

²⁵ **Matt 11:28-30** "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." **John 17:3** "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

²⁶ **Mark 1:15** "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." **Acts 20:21** "testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." **Heb 6:1** "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God..."

²⁷ **Rom 8:33** "It is God who justifies."

²⁸ **1 John 4:10** "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

²⁹ **Rom 3:20** "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin." **4:4-6** "Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works..."

³⁰ **Isa 53:6b** "the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." **12b** "because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors." **Col 2:14** "by canceling the record of

debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." **1 Pet 2:24** "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

³¹ **Isa 53:11** "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities." **1 Cor 1:30** "And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption." **2 Cor 5:21** "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

³² **Rom 3:22-26** "the righteousness of God [is] through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

³³ **Rom 4:5** "And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness..." **5:1-2** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." **1 Cor 6:11b** "you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

³⁴ **Rom 8:1** "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." **33-34** "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us."

³⁵ **Rom 5:1** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." **6:22-23** "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

F. Sanctification

- i. Coupled with one's justification, a believer is instantaneously set apart (sanctified) unto God.³⁶ Christ's righteousness is credited to the believer, and he is made positionally holy and perfect before God.³⁷ Based upon this standing before God, the believer is called a saint—a "holy one."³⁸
- ii. Sanctification is also a process—a work of the Holy Spirit by which the believer is progressively sanctified.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰
- iii. In this respect, every saved person is involved in daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh. Adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.⁴¹ The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. Total eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit provides increasing victory over sin.⁴²
- iv. At the moment we die or when Christ returns, by an act of God believers will be perfectly sanctified, whereby their practice is conformed to their position, being blameless without spot or blemish.⁴³

G. Perseverance and Assurance

- i. All the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are secure in Christ forever. No born-again person can or will lose his salvation.⁴⁴ Genuine believers persevere in their faith to the end.

³⁶ **1 Cor 6:11** "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." **2 Thes 2:13b** "God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth." **Heb 10:10** "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

³⁷ **Rom 4:24** "It [righteousness] will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord." **Heb 10:14** "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."

³⁸ **1 Cor 1:2** "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours."

³⁹ **2 Cor 3:18** "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." **1 Thes 4:3-4** "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor..."

⁴⁰ **Rom 6:19, 22** "For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ... But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life." **Eph 4:22-24** "to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." **1 Thes 5:23** "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

⁴¹ **2 Cor 7:1** "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." **1 Pet 1:14-16** "As obedient

children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

⁴² **Gal 5:16** "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." **Phil 3:12** "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own." **1 John 1:8-10** "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

⁴³ **1 Cor 15:51-53** "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality." **Eph 5:25-27** "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." **Phil 3:20-21** "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." **1 Thes 3:13** "so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints." **1 John 3:2** "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."

⁴⁴ **John 10:28-29** "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." **Rom 8:30** "And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also

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Their continuance in the Christian walk and Christian doctrine is the mark that distinguishes them from those who merely profess Christianity and at some point fall away.⁴⁵ A special providence of God cares for the saved and keeps them from falling away permanently⁴⁶ and is guaranteed by God's provision of new life in Christ,⁴⁷ the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁸ and the intercessory work of Christ at the right hand of the Father.⁴⁹

- ii. It is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation⁵⁰ through the testimony of God's Word⁵¹ and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.⁵²

H. Separation and Freedom

- i. Separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, such that we are to be separated from sin, the world, and the devil, unto our Lord Jesus Christ.⁵³ Out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and because our glorious God is so

justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." **35-39** "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." **11:29** "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." **1 Pet 1:5** "who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." **1 John 5:13** "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

⁴⁵ **Matt 24:13** "But the one who endures to the end will be saved." **Rom 8:17** "and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." **Gal 5:4** "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace." **Col 1:21-23a** "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard..." **2 Pet 2:20-21** "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them." **1 John 2:18-19, 28** "Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. ... And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming."

⁴⁶ **Luke 22:31-32** "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." **John 17:9-12** "I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." **1 Pet 1:5** "who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

⁴⁷ **2 Cor 5:17** "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." **Col 3:3-4** "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

⁴⁸ **2 Tim 1:14** "By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you."

⁴⁹ **Heb 7:25** "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." **1 John 2:1** "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

⁵⁰ **Rom 5:2** "Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." **7:25-8:1** "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! ... There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

⁵¹ **Phil 1:6** "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." **2 Tim 4:7-8** "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." **1 Pet 1:3-4** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you..." **1 John 3:1a** "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are."

⁵² **Rom 8:16** "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." **1 John 3:24b** "And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us."

⁵³ **Heb 12:1-2** "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." **Jam 4:4** "You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." **7** "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." **1 John 2:15-17** "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

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- worthy of our total consecration, all the saved shall pursue obedient righteousness, actively putting off sin and actively putting on holiness.⁵⁴
- ii. Separation from sin does not mean that the believer is restricted from interacting with unbelievers in the normal course of life.⁵⁵ However, we are commanded to separate from worldly and sinful practices and all religious apostasy. Therefore, ecumenical efforts with gospel-denying “churches” and denominations constitutes sin.⁵⁶
 - iii. Christians have been called to freedom.⁵⁷ Christian freedom does not give the believer liberty to engage in sin,⁵⁸ but to now follow the law of Christ by loving God with one’s whole being and loving one’s neighbor as themselves.⁵⁹ Since the point of Christian liberty is to set us free from the power of sin, the believer should never let himself be mastered by sin.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ **John 14:23** “Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’” **Rom 12:1-2** “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” **13:12-14** “The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” **1 Pet 2:11-12** “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

⁵⁵ **John 2:1-2** “On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.” **4:7** “A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’” **17:15** “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” **1 Cor 5:9-10** “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.”

⁵⁶ **1 Cor 5:11-13** “But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. ‘Purge the evil person from among you.’” **2 Cor 6:14-16** “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God...” **Gal 1:8-9** “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.” **2 John 9-11** “Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and

the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.”

⁵⁷ **Gal 5:1** “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

⁵⁸ **Rom 6:14-19** “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” **1 John 2:3-6** “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

⁵⁹ **Rom 13:8-10** “Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” **Gal 5:13-14** “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

⁶⁰ **John 8:31-32** “So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” **Rom 6:1-2** “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” **12-14** “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” **Titus 2:11-12** “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”

8. ANGELS & DEMONS

SUMMARY: God created angelic beings to worship Him and serve Him by carrying out His will. Fallen angels have rebelled against God, and actively seek to thwart God's purposes. Satan is the chief fallen angel, leading the fallen angels in their opposition to God and the church. He has already been defeated through Christ's death and resurrection.

A. Holy Angels

- i. Angels are spiritual beings, who at times can assume bodily form and have physical properties.¹ They were created by God² and are therefore not to be worshiped.³ They were created to serve and worship God⁴ and also to serve believers.⁵ Angels were created holy and are able to live eternally without sin.⁶
- ii. Angels are intelligent beings, able to study the works of God and continue to learn.⁷ They are vast in number and are ordered amongst themselves with ranks and classifications.⁸ Although they are a higher order of creation than man,⁹ it is man who will judge angels.¹⁰

B. Fallen Angels

- i. Demons are angels who, though created holy, sinned by rebelling against God.¹¹ They work in this world to afflict people with sicknesses, to introduce lies, to propagate false religion, and to oppose the work of the Church,¹² though never outside the sovereign will of God.¹³ Demons can

¹ **Heb 1:14** "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?" **Dan 10:10** "And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees." **18** "Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me." **Luke 2:9** "And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear." **Heb 13:2** "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

² **Col 1:16** "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him."

³ **Col 2:18a** "Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels." **Rev 22:8-9** "And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.'"

⁴ **Psa 103:20** "Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!" **Heb 1:6-7** "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.' Of the angels he says, 'He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.'"

⁵ **Heb 1:14** "Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?"

⁶ **Deut 33:2** "He said, 'The Lord came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.'" **Mark 8:38b** "when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

⁷ **1 Pet 1:12** "It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look."

⁸ **Dan 7:10** "A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the

books were opened." **10:13b** "but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia." **Rev 5:11** "Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands."

⁹ **Heb 2:7** "You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor." **2 Pet 2:11** "whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord."

¹⁰ **1 Cor 6:3a** "Do you not know that we are to judge angels?"

¹¹ **2 Pet 2:4** "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment." **Jude 6** "And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day."

¹² **Job 2:7** "So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." **Eph 6:12** "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." **1 Tim 4:1** "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons."

¹³ **Job 1:12** "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.' So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord." **2:6** "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.'" **2 Cor 12:7-9** "So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." **1 John 4:4** "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

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- and sometimes do possess the bodies of unbelievers, overriding the person's physical properties for nefarious purposes.¹⁴ True believers however cannot be possessed by demons.¹⁵
- ii. Satan was one of the greatest of the created angels. He possesses all the attributes of a created personality.¹⁶ As such, he is not omniscient, omnipotent, nor omnipresent. However, he actively opposes God and the work of the church, making sin seem appealing, introducing destructive teaching, and causing division.¹⁷ He is the author of sin, the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning.¹⁸ Satan, also known as "Lucifer," "Beelzebul," "the Devil," "the Dragon," "the Evil One," and "the Serpent," is the open and declared enemy of God and man.¹⁹
 - iii. Satan stands judged and condemned by God for rebelling against his Creator,²⁰ for taking numerous angels with him in his fall,²¹ and for introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Adam and Eve.²² He is currently the prince of this world system,²³ but has already been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.²⁴ He will be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire.²⁵

¹⁴ **Matt 8:28** "And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way." **Mark 9:17-18** "And someone from the crowd answered him, 'Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.'"

¹⁵ **1 Cor 6:19-20** "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." **2 Cor 6:14b-15** "What fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?"

¹⁶ **Job 1:7** "The Lord said to Satan, 'From where have you come?' Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.'" **Ezek 28:12-14** "You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering ... On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God..."

¹⁷ **Eph 6:11** "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." **1 Pet 5:8** "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." **1 John 3:8** "Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil."

¹⁸ **John 8:44** "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

¹⁹ **Isa 14:15** "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." **Matt 4:1-11** "And the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' ... Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down' ... Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' ..." **Rev 20:2** "And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years..."

²⁰ **Isa 14:12-15** "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit." **Ezek 28:15-17** "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you."

²¹ **Matt 25:41** "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" **Rev 12:7-9** "Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."

²² **Gen 3:1-7** "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden"?' ... But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' ..."

²³ **Eph 2:2** "in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience."

²⁴ **Rom 16:20a** "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." **Col 2:15** "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." **Heb 2:14b** "that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil..." **2 Pet 2:4, 9** "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment ... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment."

²⁵ **Rev 20:10** "and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

9. THE CHURCH

SUMMARY: The church is the body of Christ, consisting of all true Christians. Each local church is to glorify and worship God, disciple and edify believers, and make disciples of the lost. Churches are to be elder led, with deacons specifically and members generally serving one another in love.

A. Universal

- i. All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one universal and united spiritual Body, the Church.¹ The Church is the bride of Christ² and the body of Christ, of which He is the Head.³
- ii. The Church on earth began on the Day of Pentecost⁴ and will end at the rapture when Christ comes for His own.⁵ It is thus a unique spiritual organism made up of all born-again believers in this present age.⁶ The Church is distinct from Israel,⁷ a mystery not revealed until this age.⁸

B. Local

- i. Each local assembly is to be a congregation of baptized believers who regularly gather together,⁹ sharing in the common faith and fellowship of the Spirit, to fulfill God's purposes for the church universal.¹⁰

¹ **1 Cor 12:12-13** "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

² **2 Cor 11:2** "For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ." **Rev 19:7-8** "for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints."

³ **Eph 1:22-23** "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all." **4:15** "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..." **Col 1:18a** "And he is the head of the body, the church."

⁴ **Acts 2:1-41** "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ... So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

⁵ **1 Thes 4:15-17** "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

⁶ **Eph 2:13-22** "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and mem-

bers of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

⁷ **1 Cor 10:32** "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God."

⁸ **Eph 3:4b-6** "the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." **Col 1:24b-26** "for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints."

⁹ **1 Cor 5:4a** "When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus..." **Acts 15:30b** "having gathered the congregation together..." **Heb 10:24-25** "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

¹⁰ **Acts 2:38a** "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized...'" **41** "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." **9:31** "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied." **13:1-3** "Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off." **15:4a** "When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders..."

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- ii. The local church is free from external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations.¹¹ True churches may cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its Elders and their application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation.¹²

C. Priorities of the Church

- i. The purpose of the church is to glorify God¹³ by building itself up in the faith,¹⁴ by instruction of the Word,¹⁵ by fellowship,¹⁶ by keeping the ordinances,¹⁷ and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world.¹⁸

D. Ordinances

- i. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are two ordinances that have been committed to the local church.
- ii. Christian baptism by immersion¹⁹ is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a born-again believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life.²⁰ It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ.²¹

¹¹ **Acts 15:22-31** "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, with the following letter: ... 'For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.' So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement."
1 Pet 5:2a "shepherd the flock of God that is among you..."

¹² **Acts 20:28** "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."
1 Pet 5:1-3 "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."

¹³ **Eph 3:21** "to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

¹⁴ **Eph 4:13-16** "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

¹⁵ **Matt 28:20a** "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." **2 Tim 2:2** "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." **15** "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly

handling the word of truth." **3:16-17** "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." **4:2a** "Preach the word."

¹⁶ **Acts 2:42** "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."
1 John 1:3 "that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

¹⁷ **Luke 22:19** "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'" **Acts 2:38a** "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...'"

¹⁸ **Matt 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." **Acts 1:8b** "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

¹⁹ **Acts 8:36-39** "And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?' And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing."

²⁰ **Rom 6:3-5** "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."

²¹ **Acts 2:41-42** "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

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- iii. The Lord's Supper, also known as Communion, is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes.²² While the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer, and so is present, fellowshiping with His people.²³

E. Leadership Structure and Duties

- i. The one supreme authority for the church is Christ²⁴ and thus church leadership, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty. Elders are the biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly (also called overseers, pastors, and shepherds).²⁵ They must meet biblical qualifications²⁶ and carry out their service in a godly manner.²⁷
- ii. Elders are men²⁸ of a local church responsible to shepherd, oversee, and lead that local body, having Christ's authority in directing the church and keeping watch over their souls.²⁹ Elders are to be men of godly character worthy of imitation.³⁰ The Elders' primary roles are ministering the Word, praying,³¹ and equipping the saints for the work of ministry.³² It is appropriate to pay some or all Elders for their work.³³

²² **Luke 22:19** "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'" **1 Cor 11:23-26** "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

²³ **1 Cor 10:16** "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"

²⁴ **Eph 1:22** "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church." **Col 1:18a** "And he is the head of the body, the church."

²⁵ **Acts 20:28** "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." **1 Pet 5:1-4** "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, ... And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory"

²⁶ **1 Tim 3:1-7** "Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ..." **Titus 1:5-9** "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, ..."

²⁷ **1 Pet 5:2-3** "shepherd the flock of God ... not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."

²⁸ **1 Tim 2:11-12** "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet."

²⁹ **Acts 20:28** "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." **Titus 1:7a** "For an overseer, as God's steward..." **1 Pet 5:1-4** "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." **Heb 13:17** "they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account."

³⁰ **1 Tim 3:2a** "Therefore an overseer must be above reproach..." **Heb 13:7** "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."

³¹ **Acts 6:4** "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." **1 Tim 5:17** "elders ... who labor in preaching and teaching."

³² **Eph 4:11-13** "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ..."

³³ **1 Tim 5:17-18** "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves his wages.'"

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- iii. Deacons are men or women³⁴ who serve under the Elders, assisting the Elders in the ministry and care of the local church, and enabling the Elders to focus on specific ministry areas.³⁵ They must meet biblical qualifications³⁶ and carry out their service in a godly manner.³⁷
- iv. Believers are expected by God to join a local church and follow its leadership, including becoming formal members, and in so doing are responsible to attend consistently,³⁸ love and serve the church body,³⁹ submit to the leadership,⁴⁰ give faithfully,⁴¹ disciple others,⁴² and hold one another accountable.⁴³ Church membership is biblical, being logically deduced through the example of church records in Acts,⁴⁴ the necessary inference of having enrolled widows on membership rolls,⁴⁵ and for Elders to know who they are responsible for before God.⁴⁶

F. Church Discipline

- i. Just as God the Father disciplines His children for their good,⁴⁷ God expects churches to participate with Him in discipline when necessary.⁴⁸ The goal of church discipline is the

³⁴ **1 Tim 3:11** (NASB1995) "Women [deacons] must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things." **Rom 16:1** "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant [deacon] of the church at Cenchreae..."

³⁵ **Acts 6:2-4** "And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.'" **Phil 1:1b** "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons..." **1 Tim 3:13** "For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."

³⁶ **1 Tim 3:1, 8-10** "Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, ... Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless." **11-12** (NASB1995) "Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households."

³⁷ **1 Pet 5:2-3** "shepherd the flock of God ... not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."

³⁸ **Heb 10:24-25** "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." **1 Cor 11:18a** "in the first place, when you come together as a church..."

³⁹ **John 15:12** "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." **1 Cor 15:58** "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." **Gal 5:13b** "through love serve one another." **Eph 4:12** "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..."

⁴⁰ **1 Cor 16:15-16** "Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints—be subject to such as these, and to every fellow worker and laborer." **Heb 13:7** "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith." **17** "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."

⁴¹ **Luke 16:10-11** "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest

in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?" **1 Cor 16:2** "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come." **2 Cor 9:6-7** "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

⁴² **Matt 28:19-20a** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." **Eph 4:15-16** "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." **Heb 10:24** "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works."

⁴³ **Luke 17:3-4** "Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

⁴⁴ **Acts 2:41b** "And there were added that day about three thousand souls." **4:4** "But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand." **14:27** "And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them."

⁴⁵ **1 Tim 5:9** "Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband,"

⁴⁶ **Acts 20:28** "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." **Heb 13:17a** "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account."

⁴⁷ **Heb 12:5-7** "'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.' It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?" **Rev 3:19** "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent."

⁴⁸ **1 Cor 5:6-7** "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." **11-13** "But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what

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- repentance and restoration of the sinning individual.⁴⁹ It further serves to maintain the purity of the church and deter others from sinning.⁵⁰
- ii. Church discipline is the process of confronting sin in a believer to achieve their repentance and restoration. The four steps of church discipline are: privately confronting the person who sinned; confrontation by two or three witnesses; confrontation by the church; and removal of the sinning person from the church.⁵¹ If the sinning brother repents at any given step, the process stops, and the believer is to be restored in right standing with all involved.⁵²
- iii. All believers are to help one another grow in godliness. This requires the commitment to confront one another when necessary—in humility, gentleness, truth, and love—to determine the facts and to expose sin privately.⁵³ This exercise of self-control guards against gossip, misunderstanding, and divisiveness.⁵⁴ When a sinning believer rejects testimony of their sin validated by two or three witnesses, the matter should be brought to the Elders.⁵⁵ However, at times, the nature of one's sin may require immediate Elder attention and intervention.⁵⁶

have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. 'Purge the evil person from among you.'

⁴⁹ **Matt 18:15** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." **2 Cor 2:6-8** "For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him." **Gal 6:1** "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."

⁵⁰ **1 Tim 5:20** "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear."

⁵¹ **Matt 18:15-17** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." **1 Cor 5:11, 13** "But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. ... Purge the evil person from among you." **2 Thes 3:14-15** "If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother."

⁵² **2 Cor 2:7-8** "so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him." **Jam 5:19-20** "My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."

⁵³ **Eph 4:25** "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." **31-32** "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." **Gal 6:1** "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."

⁵⁴ **2 Cor 19b-21** "It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced."

⁵⁵ **Matt 18:16-17a** "But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church."

⁵⁶ **1 Cor 5:1-5** "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." **Titus 3:10-11** "As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned."

10. THE FUTURE

SUMMARY: Christ will one day rapture His saints to be with Him, followed by a seven-year period of tribulation on earth. Christ will then return, conquer the enemies of God, establish a 1,000-year reign, and usher in His eternal Kingdom. Believers will be bodily resurrected and live with Christ forever on the new earth, while unbelievers will be bodily resurrected, judged, and cast into hell forever. God the Father will then forever dwell on earth with His saints in glory.

A. Death

- i. Physical death results from sin and is a punishment for sin.¹ It is the last enemy to be destroyed.² Death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness,³ though there occurs a separation of the soul and the body.⁴ This separation is impermanent, for all shall be resurrected bodily, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment.⁵
- ii. At death, believers' souls immediately pass into the presence of Christ,⁶ where they remain in joyful fellowship with Him,⁷ awaiting resurrection.⁸ At the Rapture, which initiates the first resurrection,⁹ the deceased Christian's soul and body are reunited and glorified to be with the Lord forever.¹⁰

¹ **Gen 2:17** "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."
Rom 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" **17a** "because of one man's trespass, death reigned..." **6:23a** "For the wages of sin is death..."

² **1 Cor 15:26** "The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

³ **Rev 6:9-11** "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been."

⁴ **Phil 1:21-24** "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account."

⁵ **Dan 12:2** "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." **Matt 25:46** "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." **John 5:29** "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."

⁶ **Luke 23:43** "And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'" **Phil 1:23** "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."

⁷ **2 Cor 5:8** "Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord."

⁸ **John 6:39** "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last

day." **2 Cor 4:14** "Knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence."

⁹ **1 Thes 4:13-17** "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." **Rev 20:4-6** "Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ... This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years."

¹⁰ **Phil 3:21** "Who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." **1 Thes 4:16-17** "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." **1 Cor 15:42-43** "So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." **51-53** "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

- iii. At death, the unbeliever's soul immediately enters Hades and is kept under conscious punishment,¹¹ awaiting resurrection. At the final judgment, which is immediately preceded by the second resurrection,¹² the deceased unbeliever's soul and body are reunited in order to be judged by God and cast into eternal hell.¹³

B. The Rapture and Tribulation

- i. Jesus Christ will soon return personally and bodily before the seven-year tribulation¹⁴ to take His Church from this earth.¹⁵ Between the Rapture and Christ's millennial reign, He will reward believers according to their works of faith.¹⁶
- ii. Immediately following the removal of the church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world over a period of seven years.¹⁷ These tribulation judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth.¹⁸

¹¹ **Luke 16:22-24** "The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'" **Rev. 20:13b** "Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done."

¹² **Dan 12:2** "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." **Rev 20:4b-5a** "[The saints] came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended." **John 5:28-29** "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."

¹³ **Rev 20:12-15** "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

¹⁴ **1 Thes 4:16** "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God." **Titus 2:13** "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..." **Rev 22:20** "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

¹⁵ **John 14:1-3** "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." **1 Cor 15:51-57** "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality." **1 Thes 4:15-17** "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

¹⁶ **1 Cor 3:11-15** "For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." **2 Cor 5:10** "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." **2 Tim 4:8** "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

¹⁷ **Dan 9:27** "And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator." **12:1** "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time." **2 Thes 2:7-12** "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **Rev 16:1-21** "Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, 'Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.' ..."

¹⁸ **Matt 24:27-31** "For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. **25:31-32** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

C. The Second Coming of Christ and His Millennial Reign

- i. After the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David¹⁹ and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years on the earth.²⁰ During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth.²¹ This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet,²² and by the removal of Satan from the world, being cast into the abyss for 1,000 years.²³
- ii. This millennial kingdom will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel²⁴ to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience.²⁵ After rejecting their Messiah, Israel was temporarily set aside,²⁶ but will again be restored through repentance and faith in Christ to enter into the land of blessing.²⁷

¹⁹ **Matt 25:31** "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne." **Luke 1:31-33** "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." **Acts 1:10-11** "And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'"

²⁰ **Rev 20:6** "Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years."

²¹ **Dan 7:18** "The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." **Rev 20:6** "Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years."

²² **Rev 19:20** "And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur."

²³ **Dan 7:25-26** "He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end." **Rev 20:1-3** "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while."

²⁴ **Isa 65:17-25** "'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. ... The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,' says the Lord." **Ezek 37:21-28** "Thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the

nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." **Zech 8:1-17** "And the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. Thus says the Lord: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain. ... Thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness. ...'"

²⁵ **Deut 28:15-68** "But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. ... And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you. And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ..."

²⁶ **Matt 21:43** "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits." **Rom 11:1-26** "...They [the Jews] were broken off because of their unbelief ... And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree."

²⁷ **Jer 31:31-34** "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND TEACH

- iii. This time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life,²⁸ and will conclude with the purposeful release of Satan.²⁹

D. Final Judgment

- i. Following the release of Satan after the 1,000-year reign of Christ, 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.³⁰ Following this, Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire,³¹ whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men,³² will resurrect the unsaved dead and judge them all at the Great White Throne Judgment.³³ Their eternal lot is hell—the Lake of Fire³⁴—where they will be cut off from the presence of the Lord forever.³⁵ They will not be annihilated but will suffer everlasting conscious punishment.³⁶
- ii. No saved persons will appear before God at the Great White Throne Judgment, for all have been declared righteous by God through faith in Christ, and undergo a separate “bema seat” judgment, where Christ judges to either discard or reward their works.³⁷

with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." **Ezek 36:22-32** "... I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. ..." **Rom 11:25-29** "Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved ... As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."

²⁸ **Isa 11:1-9** "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ..." **65:17-25** "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. ... No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, ... The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the Lord."

²⁹ **Rev 20:7** "And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison..."

³⁰ **Rev 20:7-9** "And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the

camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them."

³¹ **Matt 25:41** "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" **Rev 20:10** "and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

³² **John 5:22** "For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son."

³³ **Rev 20:11-12** "Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done."

³⁴ **Matt 25:41** "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" **Rev 20:12-15** "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

³⁵ **2 Thes 1:7-9** "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might..."

³⁶ **Dan 12:2** "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." **Matt 25:46a** "And these will go away into eternal punishment..."

³⁷ **1 Cor 3:12-15** "Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has

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E. Eternity Future

- i. After the closing of the millennium and the final judgment, the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. The elements of this earth are to be dissolved³⁸ and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells, and the heavenly city will come down out of heaven.³⁹
- ii. This new earth will be the eternal dwelling place of the saints, where they will forever enjoy fellowship with God and one another.⁴⁰ Life will be lived in joy forever, without pain, sorrow, sin, or death.⁴¹ Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father,⁴² that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever.⁴³ Amen!

done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." **2 Cor 5:10** "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

³⁸ **2 Pet 3:10** "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed."

³⁹ **Eph 5:5** "For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." **Rev 21:1-4** "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.'"

⁴⁰ **Zeph 3:15-17** "The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: 'Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.'" **Rev 21:3** "And I

heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.'" **22:3-4** "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."

⁴¹ **1 Cor 15:26** "The last enemy to be destroyed is death." **Rev 21:4** "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁴² **1 Cor 15:24-28** "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For 'God has put all things in subjection under his feet.' But when it says, 'all things are put in subjection,' it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all."

⁴³ **1 Cor 15:28** "When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all." **Rev 22:3-5** "No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever."

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APPENDIX

Why a Detailed Doctrinal Statement?

A doctrinal statement is an often-neglected way to minister the Word of God to the people of God. Most churches have a doctrinal statement, but the average member of the church knows little about it, or it is too minimalistic or simplistic to be profitable. For most churches, it exists not as a teaching tool, but as a means to keep certain false teachings out of the church, or as a bare-bones listing of doctrinal beliefs for prospective visitors to review.

FBC's *What We Believe and Teach* was written with the conviction that a church's doctrinal statement should be a carefully written document that defines what the church believes and what members and attendees can expect to be actually taught from Scripture at the church. Rather than attempting to achieve unity by minimizing truth, FBC seeks to bring about true Spirit-led unity that flows from a careful objective analysis of the Spirit's written Word.

Since our church is non-denominational and is therefore not restricted to follow any denomination's tradition, we teach from and hold fast to a doctrinal statement that was independently fleshed out by our Elders through the careful study and exegesis of Scripture. In the process, we took the liberty to borrow from other carefully written confessions and doctrinal statements. The careful observer will note many similarities and at times exact quotations from the doctrinal statements of the following churches: Hope Bible Church (Columbia, MD), Grace Community Church (Sun Valley, CA), Countryside Bible Church (Southlake, TX), Faith Bible Church (Spokane, WA).

Though not inspired and not above Scripture, this doctrinal statement gives our church a strong foundation for life and ministry. It is used to train leaders in the church, extend the message that is preached in the worship service, challenge prospective members with organized biblical truth, expose newcomers to a richer understanding of the Bible, and as a tool for discipleship among believers.

May God establish and edify His people through the unfolding of His perfect Word!