

WE BELIEVE

Doctrinal Statement of
Calvary Bible Church



CALVARY BIBLE
CHURCH

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The Bible

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man. For that reason, the 66 books of the Bible given to mankind by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (*1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21*).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective revelation intended to convey real, unchanging truths from God in a clear form (perspicuity) meant to be known, understood, and believed (*1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13*).

We teach the Bible is verbally inspired in every word (*2 Timothy 3:16*), and absolutely inerrant in the original autographa, infallible, and God-breathed.

We teach the literal grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms that the opening chapters of Genesis are a literal historical record and the book of Revelation is to be understood in its literal sense unless otherwise specified.

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (*Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12*) and that it is sufficient in all things pertaining to life and godliness (*2 Peter 1:20-21*).

We teach that God revealed Himself in the written Word by means of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so sovereignly superintended specific human authors that, through their distinct individual personalities and writing styles, composed and recorded God's Word to man (*2 Peter 1:20-21*) without error in the whole or in the part (*Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16*).

We teach that, while there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is only one true interpretation. We assert that the proper understanding of Scripture is rooted in the Author's intent and is rightly attained through the literal grammatical-historical method under the Spirit's illuminating influence (*John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20*). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully and with diligence (*2 Timothy 2:16*) the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. We teach the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

God

We teach that there is only one true and living God (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4*). One infinite, all-knowing Being who is spirit by nature (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, and eternally existing in three Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14*) — each equally deserving worship and obedience. We affirm the doctrine of Divine Simplicity: that God is not composed of parts, and His attributes are not additions to His being, but are identical with His singular, indivisible essence. God is His attributes.

God the Father

We teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and appoints all things according to His own purpose, will, and work (*Psalms 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6*). He is the Creator of all things (*Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9*). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (*Psalms 103:19; Romans 11:36*). His fatherhood pertains to both His identity within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (*Ephesians 4:6*), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (*Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18*). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (*Ephesians 1:11*). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (*1 Chronicles 29:11; Hebrews 1:3*). In His sovereignty He is neither the source nor the sanctioner of sin (*Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47*), nor does He relieve moral, intelligent creatures of their accountability (*1 Peter 1:17*). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (*Ephesians 1:4-6*); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (*John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9*).

God the Son

We teach that Jesus Christ, Almighty God, second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine attributes, majesties and excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and the Spirit (*John 10:30; 14:9*).

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

We teach that in the incarnation the immutable eternal Son, without altering His divine nature or divesting any of the divine attributes, made Himself of no reputation by taking on a full human nature consubstantial with our own, yet without sin (*Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26*).

We teach that He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary by the work of the Holy Spirit (*Luke 1:35*) and thus born of a woman (*Galatians 4:4-5*), so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures – the divine and the human – were joined together in one person, without confusion, change, division, or separation. He is therefore very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

We teach that in His incarnation, Christ fully possessed His divine nature, attributes, and prerogatives (*Colossians 2:9; cf. Luke 5:18-26; John 16:30; 20:28*). However, in the state of His humiliation, He chose, in accordance to His divine will and purposes, to not always fully express the glories of His majesty, concealing them behind the veil of His genuine humanity (*Matthew 17:2; Mark 13:32; Philippians 2:5-8*). According to His human nature, He acts in submission to the Father (*John 4:34; 5:19, 30; 6:38*) by the power of the Holy Spirit (*Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 12:28; Luke 4:1, 14*), while, according to His divine nature, He acts by His authority and power as the eternal Son (*John 1:14; cf. 2:11; 10:37-38; 14:10-11*). We teach the Simplicity of Christ and object to the Kenotic teaching that Jesus divested, in any manner, any of His divine attributes at His incarnation as God cannot cease to be God at any time.

We teach the doctrine of the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ. That the death of Jesus was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and that His death accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross (*John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24*).

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (*Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18*).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical, bodily resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He presently mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (*Matthew*

28:6; *Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1*).

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

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto Himself at the rapture, and return with His church in glory, establishing His literal millennial kingdom on earth (*Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20*).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (*John 5:22-23*): - Believers (*1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10*) - Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (*Matthew 25:31-46*) - Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (*Revelation 20:11-15*) As the Mediator between God and man (*1 Timothy 2:5*), the Head of His Body the church (*Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18*), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (*Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33*), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (*Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31*).

God the Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, uncreated, possessing all the attributes of deity and personality, including intellect (*1 Corinthians 2:10-13*), emotions (*Ephesians 4:30*), will (*1 Corinthians 12:11*), eternity (*Hebrews 9:14*), omnipresence (*Psalms 139:7-10*), omniscience (*Isaiah 40:13-14*), omnipotence (*Romans 15:13*), and truthfulness (*John 16:13*). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17*).

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

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in the church age began at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (*John 14:16-17; 15:26*) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is the church of God (*1 Corinthians 12:13*). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (*John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22*).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers, once and for all eternity, into the Body of Christ (*1 Corinthians 12:13*). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers all Christians for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (*Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13*).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible (*2 Peter 1:19-21*). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, in full, from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (*John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27*).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church as He wills (*Romans 12:6-8*). The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but glorifies Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the holy faith (*John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 3:18*). Accordingly, we teach that God the Holy Spirit exercises sovereign authority in the distribution of all His gifts for the edification and growth of the saints in the present age. We affirm that certain spirituals (*1 Corinthians 12-14*), such as speaking in tongues, visions, prophesying, and other sign gifts in the early church, served to authenticate the New Testament apostles as bearers of divine revelation and were not intended to be normative for the ongoing experience of believers (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4*).

Man

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (*Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9*).

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

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative or restorative powers to enable the sinner to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8*). We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages (the doctrine of original sin), Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (*Psalms 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12*).

We teach that man is totally depraved apart from God's redemptive and effectual work of grace. By total depravity we do not mean man is as wicked or evil as they can possibly be. Additionally, we do not mean that man is incapable of relative good. Human beings are capable of acts of kindness and compassion. By total depravity we mean that as a result of the fall (*Genesis 3:6*), sin has effected the whole person so that every faculty of human nature—mind, will, emotions, and body—has been tainted by sin, affecting our identity, our thoughts, and our actions.

Salvation

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (*John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19*).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration (spiritual birth) is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given to the genuine believer (*John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5*). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power and work of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (*John 5:24*) when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10*), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (*Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10*). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (*2 Corinthians 3:18*) Such conformity finds its final fulfillment in the glorification of the believer when Christ returns (*Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3*).

Election

We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (*Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2*).

We teach that sovereign election does not contradict, negate, nor is incompatible with the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (*Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17*). As sovereign grace encompasses both the provision of salvation and the means by which it is received, divine election will unfailingly accomplish God's intended outcome. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (*John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8*).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part or to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (*Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2*). Regarding election, God exercises His sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (*Romans 9:11-16*). Thus, His sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner utterly consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9*).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (*Romans 8:33*) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (*Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7*) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (*Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11*). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or meritorious work of man (*Romans 3:20; 4:6*) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (*Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24*) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (*1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21*). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (*Romans 3:26*).

Sanctification

We teach that every believer is positionally, progressively, and ultimately sanctified (set apart) by God and unto Him. Positionally, the believer is sanctified by justification and is therefore declared to be holy; thus, the believer is a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition, nor the final work of God culminating in eternity (*Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2*).

We teach that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (*John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23*). In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict – the new creation in Christ doing battle

against the flesh – but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit as He applies the word of God to each believer. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (*Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9*).

We teach the ultimate or complete sanctification (glorification) of the believer in eternal glory. The glorified state will represent our final sanctification and full setting apart from sin in every regard (*1 Thessalonians 5:23; Colossians 1:27, 3:4; 1 John 3:2*).

Security

We teach that all the redeemed, genuinely and truly saved, are saved by the grace of God alone, and thus kept by the power of God alone; thus, our salvation is assured and secure in Christ forever (*John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24*).

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

Separation

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

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

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

The Church

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

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

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

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (*Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1*) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are commanded to gather themselves together in local assemblies in true fellowship (*1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25*).

We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (*1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18*) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed and regulated through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (*also called bishops, pastors, and pastor/teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11*). Further, we acknowledge the identification biblically qualified deacons (*1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5*) to serve as servants of the local church. Deacons assist the elders/pastors in their work and are overseen by the elders in their service.

We teach that leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (*1 Timothy 5:17-22*) and have His authority in directing the church. We hold to a plurality of elders (*Acts 14:23; 15:2; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18*) who, in submission to Christ and His word, rule as the congregation submits to their leadership (*Acts 20:17-31; 1 Peter 5:1-6, Hebrews 13:7, 17*).

We teach the importance of discipleship (*Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2*), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (*Matthew 18:5-14*), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (*Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16*).

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (*Titus 1:5*).

We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (*Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4*).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (*Ephesians 3:21*) by building itself up in the faith (*Ephesians 4:13-16*), by instruction of the Word (*2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17*), by fellowship (*Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3*), by keeping the ordinances (*Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42*) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42*).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (*1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12*).

We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (*Ephesians 4:7-12*), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (*Romans 12:5-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11*).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given to the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (*Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12*); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another.

Regarding miracles and divine healing, we teach God continues to do miracles and still heals today, according to His will. We teach that God hears and answer the

prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (*Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15*). However, we teach God no longer enables a single individual with the power to heal at his will in authentication of the work of God. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (*1 Corinthians 13:8-12*). Miraculous gifts can be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (*1 Corinthians 13:13-14:12; Revelation 13:13-14*). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (*Romans 12:6-8*).

Ordinances

Baptism

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (*Acts 2:38-42*). Both are exclusive to born-again believers in Jesus only. Christian baptism by immersion (*Acts 8:36-39*) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a 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 (*Romans 6:1-11*). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (*Acts 2:41-42*), but does not contribute any efficacy towards salvation.

Communion

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (*1 Corinthians 11:28-32*). We also teach that, whereas 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 (*1 Corinthians 10:16*).

Last Things

Death

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (*Revelation 6:9-11*), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (*Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8*), that there is a separation of soul and body (*Philippians 1:21-24*), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-17*), which initiates the first resurrection (*Revelation 20:4-6*), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (*Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54*). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (*2 Corinthians 5:8*). Further, we teach the first resurrection is a kind, not intended as mere sequential order.

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

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

The Rapture of the Church

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

The Tribulation Period

We teach that following the removal of the church from the earth, the rapture, (*John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world for 7 years (*Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27*;

12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 6-19), with a special focus upon Israel (*time of Jacob's trouble; Jeremiah 30:7*), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (*Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 19:11-16*). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (*Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6*). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (*Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46*).

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We teach that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (*Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30*) and establish His messianic kingdom for 1,000 years on the earth (*Revelation 20:1-7*). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (*Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16*). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (*Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7*).

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

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

The Judgment of the Lost

We teach that following the release of Satan after the 1,000-year reign of Christ (*Revelation 20:7*), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (*Revelation 20:9*). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (*Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10*), whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (*John 5:22*), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment.

We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (*John 5:28-29*), *they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15)*.

Eternity

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (*2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15*), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (*2 Peter 3:10*) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (*Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; 21:1-27; 22:1-21*). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (*Revelation 21:2*) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (*John 17:3; Revelation 21-22*). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (*1 Corinthians 15:24-28*), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (*1 Corinthians 15:28*).

What it means to be a Christian

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

God Is Sovereign Creator

Exclusively Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent, God is sovereign over all things and is preeminent in power, wisdom, and authority. God's sovereignty means that He is sovereignly providential over the universe, the world, and mankind; to include mankind's salvation. Therefore, as He owns and rules everything (*Psalms 103:19*), God has authority over our lives and we owe Him absolute allegiance, obedience, and worship.

God Is Holy

God is absolutely, entirely, eternally, and perfectly holy (*Isaiah 6:3*). Therefore, He cannot commit nor approve of evil (*James 1:13*) and requires holiness of His people. "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (*1 Peter 1:16*)

Mankind Is Sinful

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

Sin Demands a Penalty

God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by eternal death (*Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23*). That is why simply changing our patterns of behavior cannot solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences.

Jesus Is Lord and Savior

Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love has provided a Savior who paid the

penalty and died for sinners (*1 Peter 3:18*). Christ's death satisfied the righteous demands of God's justice, and Christ's perfect life satisfied the righteous demands of God's holiness (*2 Corinthians 5:21*); thereby enabling Him to forgive and save those who place their faith in Him (*Romans 3:26*).

The Character of Saving Faith

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



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