

What We Believe

Doctrine of the HOLY SCRIPTURES

1. We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Cor 2:7-14; 2 Pet 1:20-21).

2. We believe that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thes 2:13; 1 Cor 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen 1:31; Ex 31:17).

3. We believe that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Mat 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 1:20-21).

4. We believe that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Pet 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Mat 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16).

5. We believe that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

Doctrine of GOD

We believe that there is but one living and true God (Deut 6:4; Is 45:5-7; 1 Cor 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, one eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mat 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

God the Father

We believe that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps 145:8-9; 1 Cor 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1-31; Eph 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps 103:19; Rom 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Eph 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom 8:14; 2 Cor 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chron 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Hab 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Pet 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph 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;

Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Heb 12:5-9).

God the Son

1. We believe that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

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

3. We believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man (Phil 2:5-8; Col 2:9).

4. We believe that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Mic 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Col 2:9). We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Is 7:14; Mat 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps 2:7-9; Is 9:6; John 1:29; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 7:25-26; 1 Pet 1:18-19).

5. We believe that, in the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil 2:5-8).

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

7. We believe that on the basis of the atoning death and resurrection 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 (Rom 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Cor 5:14-15; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18).

8. We believe that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Mat 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom 4:25; 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

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

10. We believe that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto Himself at the rapture, and returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thes 4:13-18; Rev 20).

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

- Believers (1 Cor 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:10)
- Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Mat 25:31-46)
- Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15). As the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the Head of His Body the church (Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col 1:18), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (Is 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 (Mat 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

God the Holy Spirit

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Cor 2:10-13), emotions (Eph 4:30), will (1 Cor 12:11), eternity (Heb 9:14), omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10), omniscience (Is 40:13-14), omnipotence (Rom 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Mat 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Jer 31:31-34 with Heb 10:15-17).

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

3. We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Cor 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; Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 2:22).

4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:6; Eph 1:13).

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

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 2 Cor 3:18).

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

Doctrine of MAN

1. We believe 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 (Gen 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).

2. We believe 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 (Is 43:7; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11).

3. We believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence,

incur the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Tim 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

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

Doctrine of SALVATION

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

Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24) when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration (1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 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 (Eph 5:17-21; Phil 2:12b; Col 3:16; 2 Pet 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:18). Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom 8:17; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

Election

1. We believe that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in sovereignty and foreknowledge those whom in Christ, He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-11; 2 Thes 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2).

2. We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or bypass the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ez 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Rom 9:22-23; 2 Thes 2:10-12; Rev 22:17). Therefore, sovereign grace, the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, does not negate, override, or thwart the free will of man and his choice in the election process. A man may or may not choose Christ as Lord and Savior and thus be redeemed at that moment of Divine enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. Sovereign election and the free will of man act in harmony as God has so determined. All whom the Father calls to Himself, come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; Jam 4:8).

3. We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative or works of their own part but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet 1:2).

4. We believe that God is truly sovereign, and He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience and foreknowledge, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mat 11:25-28; 2 Tim 1:9).

Justification

We believe that justification before God is an act of God (Rom 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; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:10; Is 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 4:5; Phil 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col 2:14; 1 Pet 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:26).

Sanctification

1. We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thes 2:13; Heb 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Pet 1:2).

2. We believe 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; Rom 6:1-22; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Thes 4:3-4; 5:23).

3. In this respect, we believe that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Gal 5:16-25; Eph 4:22-24; Phil 3:12; Col 3:9-10; 1 Pet 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

Security

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Eph 4:30; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24).

2. We believe 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 (Rom 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Gal 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

Separation

1. We believe 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 Cor 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim 3:1-5).

2. We believe that, out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and because our glorious God is so 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 (Rom 12:1-2, 1 Cor 5:9-13; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

3. We believe that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thes 1:11-12; Heb 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 (Rom 12:1-2; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

Doctrine of THE CHURCH

1. We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church (1 Cor 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:23-32; Rev 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Eph 1:22; 4:15; Col 1:18).

2. We believe 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 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thes 4:13-18).

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

4. We believe 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; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:1; 1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Cor 11:18-20; Heb 10:25).

5. We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22; Col 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor teachers; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5).

6. We believe that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Tim 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Heb 13:7, 17).

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

8. We believe 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 Cor 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

9. We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Tim 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 (Mat 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

10. We believe the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Cor 15:58; Eph 4:12; Rev 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 (Eph 4:7-12),

and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Rom 12:5-8; 1 Cor 12:4-31; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

11. We believe that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Heb 2:3-4; 2 Cor 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. 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 Cor 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Cor 13:13-14:12; Rev 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those nonrevelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Rom 12:6-8).

12. We believe that no one possesses the gift of healing today, but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Cor 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

13. We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing 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 (Rom 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

14. We believe 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 Cor 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 Cor 10:16).

Doctrine of ANGELS

Holy Angels

We believe that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Heb 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Rev 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

Fallen Angels

1. We believe that Satan (The Devil, Lucifer) is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Is 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Mat 25:41; Rev 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen 3:1-15).

2. We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Is 14:13-14; Mat 4:1-11; Rev 12:9-10); that he is the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 16:20); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Is 14:12-17; Ez 28:11-19; Mat 25:41; Rev 20:10).

Doctrine of LAST THINGS

Death

1. We believe that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:8), that there is a separation

of soul and body (Phil 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thes 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Rev 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 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 Cor 5:8).

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

3. We believe that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Rev 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 (Rev 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Mat 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Dan 12:2; Mat 25:41-46; 2 Thes 1:7-9).

The Rapture of the Church

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

The Tribulation Period

We believe that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thes 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer 30:7; Dan 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thes 2:7-12; Rev 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Mat 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thes 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Dan 12:2-3; Rev 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9:24-27; Mat 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

1. We believe that after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Mat 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 (Rev 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ez 37:21-28; Dan 7:17-22; Rev 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 (Dan 7:17-27; Rev 20:1-7).

2. We believe that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Is 65:17-25; Ez 37:21-28; Zech 8:1-17) to restore them to the land that they forfeited through their disobedience (Deut 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Mat 21:43; Rom 11:1-26), but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jer 31:31-34; Ez 36:22-32; Rom 11:25-29).

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

The Judgment of the Lost

1. We believe that following the release of Satan after the 1,000-year reign of Christ (Rev 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 (Rev 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Mat 25:41; Rev 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.

2. We believe that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Rom 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in a literal place called the lake of fire (Mat 25:41; Rev 20:11-15).

Eternity

We believe that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thes 1:9; Rev 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 Pet 3:10) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells (Eph 5:5; Rev 20:15; 21:1-27; 22:1-21). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Rev 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; Rev 21-22).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor 15:24-28), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Cor 15:28).

Additional Doctrine

As a result of the changing times in which we live we must often specifically address issues that are prevalent in today's society. Our purpose is to speak to them with a Biblical perspective and give a spiritual response to the rising tide of humanism within the culture. The following are a number of those issues and our doctrinal position.

The Sanctity of Life

We believe the Bible teaches clearly that there is a sacredness to human life and that God created man in his image (Gen 1:27). The key here is that we are made in the image or likeness of God (1 Cor 11:7). The value of life is therefore intrinsic and God-given. To raise a hand, or even a word (James 3:9) against a human being is an assault on God Himself. The concept is further clarified in the law given to Noah: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man" (Gen 9:6).

We believe scripture is far more than a prohibition on the taking of innocent life; it specifies that murder in any form or by any contrived name is absolutely wrong. We are created by God for His purpose and are stewards and not owners of the lives He has given us. Life is entirely a gift of God and its end is determined by His sovereignty: "There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life" (Deut 32:39).

We believe that God has given governments, kings and rulers the power to enforce the law of the land and use capital punishment, if necessary, as a prescribed consequence for murder as defined in scripture, and they are endowed to "bear the sword" against justly-defined high crimes (Gen 9:6; Rom 13:1-5; Num 35:16-21, 30).

We believe that life begins at conception in the mother's womb. That life is precious, miraculous, designed and predestined by God long in advance of conception. (Ps 139:13-16).

We believe that the deliberate aborting of the conceived, innocent child is murder, and that only God has the right to determine the days of a child (2 Sam 12:15, 22-23).

We believe that God determines the length of every person's life (Ps 139:16).

We believe that the quality of life is not the basis for determining whether a person should live or die (Gen 9:5b). The Christian sees God's sovereign hand and purpose in those suffering and facing impending death (Ps 23:4). We can

look forward to a deepened relationship with God as he strengthens us in our time of need. For those who wait upon the Lord, He will renew their strength (Is 40:31). Sickness and illness are not necessarily about recovery, but growing in our relationship with God (James 1:2-4) and the opportunity to be a testimony to His glory (Job 1:6-12).

We believe that any man-made attempt to create, clone or destroy life is a futile attack on the sovereignty of God. Only what God has willed and determined will be part of His sovereign plan of the ages (Ps 2).

The Sanctity of Marriage

We believe that marriage is a covenant before God between one man and one woman as outlined in Scripture, according to God's plan (Gen 2:23-24; 1 Cor 7:1-5; Mark 10:6-9) Biblical marriage is God's provision for mankind to preserve and protect society and provide a safe environment for the rearing of children. Any sexual or intimate relationship outside of marriage is sin before God and demands repentance. Those illicit relationships include fornication (sex with a partner while not married), adultery (sexual relations with someone other than your spouse), polygamy, homosexuality, lesbianism, pedophilia, incest and bestiality. (Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9, 18; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; 1 Thes 4:3-7; 1 Cor 5:1; Lev 18:6-18)

We believe a healthy marriage will be honoring to God and void of worldly influence, including pornography and worldly practices that destroy the beauty of the relationship as God has intended. (Heb 13:4).

We believe that God hates divorce (Mal 2:16). However, the Bible does allow for divorce, but only in the cases of adultery, or abandonment by an unbelieving spouse. There are no scriptural grounds for divorce due to "irreconcilable differences" (Mat 19:3-9; 5:31-32; Rom 7:1-3; I Cor 7:15). The only reason that God allows for divorce in these two areas is due to the hardening of men's hearts (Mark 10:2-5). His desire is to see any troubled marriage reconciled and restored (1 Cor 7:10-13).