



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT **(WHAT WE BELIEVE)**

1. Bibliology

We believe the following concerning the Bible:

I. It is complete in sixty-six books

We believe the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit and accepted by the early church and apostles constitute the complete canon of Scripture.

The extent of the Old Testament canon--which was completed by 435 B.C.--was affirmed by Jesus Himself (Mat 5:17-18). And the New Testament, though not personally validated by Jesus, was through the testimony of His apostles, their authorized companions, and the early church (ex. 2Pe 3:15-16).

Quoting from Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology regarding the New Testament:

“The New Testament writings contain the final, authoritative, and sufficient interpretation of Christ’s work of redemption. The apostles and their close companions report Christ’s words and deeds and interpret them with absolute divine authority. When they have finished their writing, there is no more to be added with the same absolute divine authority. Thus, once the writings of the New Testament apostles and their authorized companions are completed, we have in written form the final record of everything that God wants us to know about the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and its meaning for the lives of believers for all time. Since this is God’s greatest revelation for mankind, no more is to be expected once this is complete. In this way then, Hebrews 1:1-2 shows us why no more writings can be added to the Bible after the time of the New Testament.”

II. It is divine revelation, verbally inspired, and infallible in the original manuscripts

The Bible is objective, divine revelation (1Co 2:13; 1Th 2:13), verbally inspired in every word and part (plenary) (2Ti 3:16), infallible, and absolutely inerrant in the original manuscripts.

The Bible was written through the 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 (2Pe 1:20-21).

III. It is sufficient for life and godliness

The Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, being fully sufficient to address every human need and all that pertains to life and godliness. (Psa 19:7-8, 119:1-11; Isa 8:20; Mat 5:18; 24:35; Joh 10:35; 17:17; 2Ti 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2Pe 1:3, 20-21).

Separate note on interpretation and authority:

Though there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, We believe there is but one true contextual and/or prophetic interpretation. The precise meaning is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the leading of the Holy Spirit (Joh 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Co 2:7-15; 1 Jo 2:20).

Accordingly, We believe that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen 1:1-31; Exo, 31:17).

We believe it is the responsibility of all believers to give themselves to the diligent study of the Word of God in order to be able to ascertain the true intent and meaning of the Scripture, recognizing that proper, accurate application is binding and fully authoritative on all generations (Deu 29:29). The truth of Scripture always stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

2. Theology Proper

We believe the following concerning God:

I. He exists and is the only true God

The Scriptures, nor God Himself ever attempt to prove His existence. Rather, it is accepted as a truth known by all men which leave them without excuse (Rom 1:18-20).

God throughout the Bible proclaims Himself as the only true God that men must worship and obey (Isa 45:5-7; 1Co 8:4).

II. He is spirit in nature, perfect in all His attributes

God exists as Spirit in nature, having no bodily form (Joh 4:24).
He is perfect in all His attributes, possessing each of them in harmony and without compromise to the others.

The following is a list of some of those attributes:

Sovereignty (1Ch 29:11-12; Dan 4:35; Psa 50:10-12, 115:3, 119:91b, 135:6; Isa 43:13)

Immutability (Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8)

Infinity and Eternality (Immortality) (1Ki 8:27; 1Ti 6:16)

Omnipotence (Jer 32:17)

Omnipresence (Psa 139:7-12)

Omniscience (Psa 139:1-6)

Holiness (Lev 11:44; Psa 22:3, 99:5; Isa 6:1-3; 1Pe 1:15-16)

Love (1Jo 4:8)

Goodness (Psa 25:8, 34:8; ex. Mat 5:43-48, 19:17; Act 14:17)

Righteousness (Justice) (Gen 18:25; Deu 32:4; Psa 50:6; Isa 30:18b)

Mercy (Compassionate) (Psa 111:4b)

Wrath (Deu 32:39-41)

III. He is one in essence, yet existing as three persons

God is one in essence, yet eternally existing in the three persons of: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deu 6:4; Mat 3:16-17, 28:19; 2Co 13:14).

IV. He is knowable, yet incomprehensible

Though it is possible to know God through: the revelation of the Son (Mat 11:27; Joh 17:3; 1Jo 5:20), and the Holy Spirit (1Co 2:12), it impossible for us to know God completely because He is incomprehensible (Rom 11:33-34).

3. Christology

We believe the following concerning the person, work and office of Jesus Christ:

I. He is fully God and fully man

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity and therefore possesses all the divine excellencies, being co-equal, consubstantial, and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Joh 5:18, 10:30, 14:9; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3).

During His incarnation Christ condescended to the place of a creature and took on Himself the full nature and existence of man while never divesting Himself of His divine essence and attributes. He surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind (Phi 2:5-8; Col. 2:9).

Jesus Christ therefore represents the fullness of humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Mic 5:2; Joh 14:9-10; Col 2:9; Heb 2:14-17; 1Jo 4:2).

Additionally, We believe Jesus Christ was virgin born as fulfillment of divine prophecy (Isa 7:14; Mat 1:23,25; Luk 1:26-35).

II. He is the divine creator and sustains all things

God the Father created all things according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom, and for whom, all things continue in existence and in operation (Joh 1:3,10; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:2).

III. He has accomplished the salvation of the elect

Jesus Christ accomplished the salvation of the elect through His sacrificial death on the cross. His death was voluntary, vicarious, penal, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (Isa 53:4-6; Joh 10:15; Rom 3:24-25, 5:8; Heb 9:28; 1Pe 2:24).

On the basis of the efficacy of His death, 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; 2Co 5:14-15; 1Pe 2:24, 3:18).

The proof that Christ did indeed accomplish salvation (and subsequently justification for the believing sinner) is seen in His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Mat 28:6; Luk 24:38-39; Act 2:30-32; Rom 4:25).

Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (Joh 5:26-29, 6:39, 14:19; Rom 1:4, 6:5-10; 1Co 15:20, 23; 1Th 4:13-16).

IV. He is the only mediator between God and men

Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man (1Ti 2:5); and therefore the only one through whom men must seek salvation (Joh 14:6; Act 4:12).

V. He is the head of the Church and judge of the world

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church (His body) (Eph 1:22, 5:23; Col 1:18), functioning in heaven as her eternal prophet, priest and king (Joh 6:14, 18:36-37; Acts 3:22-26; 1Ti 6:14-15; Heb 3:1, 5:1-10, 7:1-8:2; Rev 19:16). One day He will return and receive the Church unto Himself (Act 1:6-11; 1Th 4:16-17).

Jesus Christ is also the One through whom God will judge all mankind, both the saved and unsaved in every generation, at the Great White Throne Judgment (Mat 25:31-46; Joh 5:22-23; Rev 20:11-15). He is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Mat 25:14-46; Act 17:30-31).

4. Pneumatology

We believe the following concerning the Holy Spirit:

I. He is fully God and the third member of the Trinity

The Holy Spirit is the divine third person of the Trinity, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1Co 2:10-13), emotions (Eph 4:30), will (1Co 12:11), eternity (Heb 9:14), omnipresence (Psa 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa 40:13-31) and truthfulness (Joh 16:13).

In all the divine attributes He is co-equal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Mat 28:19; Act 5:3-4, 28:25-26; 1Co 12:4-6; 2Co 13:14; Jer 31:31-34 together with Heb 10:15-17).

II. He is responsible for applying Christ's work to the elect

The Holy Spirit is the divine agent responsible for applying Christ's work to the lives of those for whom He died (the elect) through the washing of regeneration (Joh 3:5-7, 6:63; Rom 8:9; 2Co 3:6; Tit 3:5).

Note: During Pentecost (and the beginning of the Church), the Holy Spirit sometimes manifested Himself in the lives of people through a form of "baptism in tongues". This however, was a temporary sign used to reveal God's plan of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 1:5, 2:4, 10:44-45 cf. 11:15-18). We do not believe this baptism still takes place today as part of the Spirit's work in regeneration.

The Holy Spirit is also responsible for the following other tasks:

Building the Church and empowering believers for service (Act 1:8, 4:31; 1Co 2:4, 12:7-13; Eph 2:21-22; 1Th 1:5)

Convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (Joh 16:8-11)

Teaching/Leading believers in the Truth (Luk 12:12; Joh 14:26, 16:13; 1Co 2:10-13)

Glorifying Christ and the Father (Joh 16:14-15)

Giving assurance to believers and transforming them into the image of Christ (Rom 8:16; 2Co 3:18; Eph 1:13; 1 Jo 3:24)

Additionally, the Holy Spirit was sovereignly involved in: the Creation (Gen 1:2); the incarnation of Christ (Mat 1:18); the writing of the Bible (2Pe 1:19-21).

5. Angelology

We believe the following concerning angels:

I. They are created beings

Angels are created spirit beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they cannot procreate and have been created to obey and worship God and to render service to those inheriting salvation (Psa 103:20-21, 148:2; Neh 9:6; Mat 22:30; Luk 2:9-14; Heb 1:6-7, 14, 2:6-7; Rev 5:11-13, 19:10, 22:9).

II. There exists both holy and fallen angels

God created His angels holy and good as He did the rest of His creation (Gen 1:31). However, a number of them fell into sin and rebellion against Him thus creating a new group of fallen and condemned angels (2Pe 2:4; Jud 6).

Satan, the chief of these fallen angels, as a created being is eternally subject to the sovereignty of God (Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6). He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isa 14:12-17; Eze 28:11-19), by taking one third of all the created angels with him in his fall (Rev 12:4), and by tempting and enticing Eve to sin in which Adam followed, thereby relegating the entire human race to ruin and misery (Gen 3:1-15; Rom 3:16-17, 5:12).

These fallen angels (including Satan) are the open and declared enemies of God and man (Isa 14:13-14; Mat 4:1-11; Rev 12:9, 17). Having been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Joh 12:30-31), they, being unredeemable, shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isa 14:12-17; Eze 28:11-19; Mat 25:41; Rev 20:10).

6. Anthropology

We believe the following concerning man:

I. He was created in the image and likeness of God

We believe that man was directly and immediately created by God bearing His image and likeness.

And there are three main ways in which man reflects this:

1. by his dominion over creation.

Man was created to have dominion over all of God's animal kingdom and earthly creation. And it is his responsibility to subdue and rule over it as God has commanded (Gen 1:28, 9:2; Psa 8:4-8).

2. by his state of original righteousness (which is no longer true but can be restored).

Man was originally created in a state of complete moral righteousness, yet because of sin has lost this aspect of God's image. It can however, be restored through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ (Gen 1:31; Ecc 7:29; Rom 3:21-24; 1Co 1:2; 2Co 5:21).

3. because he is a spiritual and rational being.

Man was created in spiritual and physical perfection, with a rational nature consisting of a conscience, intelligence, volition, self determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen 2:7, 15-25; Pro 20:27; Ecc 12:7; Rom 1:18-32, 2:4-8, 8:16; 2Co 5:10).

II. He was created to glorify and obey God

We believe that God created man to glorify and obey Him, and in this way enjoy His fellowship and accomplish His good purpose in the world (Isa 43:7; Rom 11:36; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11).

III. He suffers from the effects of sin, death and spiritual inability

Due to Adam's volitional, self-determined disobedience to God and His commands, man (which includes the entire human race) has suffered the loss of his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, become subject to the wrath of God, and is now inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. As a result, man has no recuperative powers that enable him to recover himself, and thus he is hopelessly lost. Man will never seek after God on his own (Rom 3:10-11), he is enslaved to sin (Joh 8:34; Rom 6:17), spiritual things are complete foolishness to him (1Co 1:18, 2:14), his heart is deceitful and desperately sick (Jer 17:9) and will only do evil continually (Gen 6:5, 8:21).

IV. Adam was the federal head of the human race

We believe that Adam, as the first man, represented the federal head of the entire human race. And therefore, upon his fall into sin, his guilt was justly imputed to every man, and a nature corrupted by his sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception (Rom 5:18-19).

All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psa 14:1-3; Ecc 7:29; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9-18, 23, 5:10-12). Although man is radically and pervasively depraved, he, by the common grace of God, does not always fulfill his full potential to sin (ex. Gen 20:6).

V. Jesus Christ is the redeeming head of the human race

We believe that Jesus Christ is represented in the Scriptures as the second Adam, the One who has come to redeem men from the curse of sin and death represented in the first Adam and his corrupted state (Rom 5:12-19; 1Co 15:45).

7. Hamartiology

We believe the following concerning sin:

Definition:

Sin is any failure to conform to the law of God in act, attitude or nature. It is:

“...lawlessness.” (1Jo 3:4)

“...(falling) short of the glory of God...” (Rom 3:23)

I. It is the free, volitional choice of men and angels

We believe that sin is the free, volitional choice of men and angels against God and therefore is carried out according to their own desires and wills (Gen 3:1-6; Ecc 7:29; Rom 1:18-32).

We believe also that Scripture shows a direct correlation between our lack of knowledge (concerning God) and sin (1Co 15:34).

Additionally it is important to note, sin always finds its origin in the creature (men and angels) and never God. God cannot sin nor can He tempt others to sin (Jam 1:13-15).

II. It is irrational in nature

We believe that sin is by nature, irrational and therefore makes fools of all who persist in its ways regardless of how wise they--at one time-- may have been.(ex. 1Ki 11:1-10 -King Solomon; Psa 14:1; Pro 10:23, 14:7-8, 16).

III. It is hated by God and produces divine judgment and death

We believe that God hates sin and all those who continue in sin (Psa 5:4-5, 11:5, 45:7). The Scriptures say that even their prayers are an abomination and therefore not regarded by Him (Psa 66:18; Pro 28:9). As it concerns those who continue in sin and disobedience, God has prepared a day when He will judge sin and punish all those not found possessing faith in Jesus Christ. They will (according to Scripture), be cast into the eternal flames of Hell, which is the second death (Exo 34:7; Job 10:14; Nah 1:3; Mat 25:31-46; Rom 6:23, 8:3; 2Th 1:8-9; Rev 20:11-15).

IV. It is inherited by all men at conception

We believe that sin is inherited by all men as the result of their connection to Adam as their federal head (Rom 5:12-18). As such the following three things are true from the moment of our conception:

1. We are considered guilty before God (imputation) (Rom 5:12, 18-19).
2. We are sinful by nature and are inclined toward sinful actions and attitudes (original sin) (Gen 6:5, 8:21; Psa 51:5, 58:3; Jer 13:23; Joh 2:24-25; Eph 2:3; Rom 7:18).
3. We are unable to exercise faith and therefore cannot please God in anything we do. (Heb 11:6; Rom 8:8, 14:23).

8. Soteriology

We believe the following concerning salvation and its related areas:

I. It is based on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ

We believe that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (Joh 1:12-13; Eph 1: 7, 2:8-10; Tit 3:5; 1Pe 1:18-19).

II. It is to be understood through several realities (Ordo Salutis)

Salvation, though primarily seen through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, is to be understood through the effectual outworking of several key realities as denoted by Scripture. They are as follows:

1. Election

We believe that election is the sovereign act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He will graciously call, regenerate, save, and sanctify (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-11; 2Th 2:13; 2Ti 2:10; 1Pe 1:1-2). The basis of God's choosing was His own good pleasure and was not based on anything He saw in man (Rom 9:6-23). He did not choose certain men because He saw their faith or knew they would believe. Faith is the gift of God (Eph 2:8-9). He did not choose because He saw any goodness in man - "There is none righteous, not even one" (Rom 3:10-18). He eternally chose men according to His own will, totally independent of anything in man.

The unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative or divinely improved effort of their own, nor to God's anticipation and foreknowledge of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy in accordance with His eternal purpose (Eph 1:4-7; 2Ti 1:8-9; Tit 3:4-7; 1Pe 1:2).

Election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom 9:11-16).

Accordingly, We believe that man exercises no free will in his salvation, but is wholly acted upon by God in his salvation experience. Although it would appear from our own experience that we exercised our own free choice in salvation, we must evaluate our salvation experience from Scripture and find that God alone chose us and drew us to Himself apart from any initiative of our own (Rom 9:10-23; Joh 1:13, 6:44, 15:16; Jam 1:18). This drawing and regenerating work of God is accomplished in such a manner as produces a realignment of the mind, will, and affections of the sinner, causing him to call upon the name of the Lord in repentant faith, come to Christ, and be converted.

While it is true that all who come to Christ will not be cast out (Joh 6:37), all who believe in Christ will be saved (Joh 1:12), and all who confess with their mouth Jesus as Lord will be saved (Rom 10:9), due to the total depravity of man (Gen 6:5, 8:21; Jer 13:23, 17:9; Rom 3:10) the only ones who can come, believe, or confess are those whom God has chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world and effectually draws unto Himself (Joh 1:13, 6:44, 65; Rom 9:15-16; Act 13:48; Eph 1:3-12).

Lastly, We believe that God's act of election does not eliminate the Christian's responsibility to evangelize the lost. Rather, God has established the Christian's duty and privilege to evangelize because He has elected some to salvation and He has determined to save sinners through the preaching of the gospel. "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom 10:13-17; 1Co 1:18-21).

The Christian does not know who God has elected to salvation, so he is responsible to evangelize or share the gospel with as many people as he has opportunity to share with. The Lord Christ preached the gospel (Mat 4:23, 9:35), and commanded His disciples to do the same (Mat 28:19-20). The heart of the Apostle Paul's ministry which he had personally received from Jesus Christ was to preach the gospel (Act 20:24; 1Co 1:17); by Paul's own appraisal, if he failed to heed this command, he was worthy of condemnation (1Co 9:16). Paul commanded Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2Ti 4:5). When Paul desired to be rid of his ministry in Corinth due to surrounding circumstances, the Lord told Paul he must return because, "I have many people in this city" (Act 18:10). Peter likewise recognized that God saves sinners by preaching and evangelism (Act 15:7). The Lord Jesus and the apostles all taught the truth of election while being committed to preaching the gospel.

2. The Atonement

We believe the moving cause of the atonement lay not in the sympathetic love of Christ for sinners but in the good pleasure of God (Isa 53:10; Mat 11:25-26; Luk 2:14; Eph 1:3-14; 2:4-7; Col 1:19-20).

God's good pleasure to save sinners by a substitutionary atonement was founded in the love and justice of God. It was the justice of God that required the demands of the law to be met and His love that provided a way of escape for lost sinners. Considering the sacrifice which Christ paid, the atonement must indeed be the only possible means to the salvation of sinful man (Luk 24:26; Gal 3:21-24; Heb 2:10, 9:11-14, 10:1-14). If there were any other way to satisfy the justice of God, it would have been rendered (Joh 8:23-24, 14:6; Act 4:12).

The atonement made propitiation to God, reconciling Him to elect sinners who were the objects of His judicial wrath by the sacrificial covering of their sin in satisfaction of God's justice and the righteous demands of His law. The Scripture sets forth the atoning work of Christ as propitiation (Rom 3:21-26), sacrifice (Heb 7:26-27, 9:6-15), reconciliation (Rom 5:10; 2Co 5:18-19), and redemption (Mat 20:28; Rom 3:24; 1Co 1:30; Eph 1:7), thereby affirming it to have been fully effectual in accomplishing its eternal intention.

Understanding its purpose and effect, the atonement cannot be universal with regard to its redemptive design, but has as its objects those who are brought into the saving grace of God according to the kind intention of His will (Mat 1:21, 20:28; Joh 6:37-44, 65, 10:14-15 together with verse 26, 17:2-3, 9, 24; Eph 1:3-11).

The work of Christ on the cross did not merely make men savable, but actually purchased and procured the certain salvation of the elect (Mar 10:45; Act 20:28; Rom 5:9-10; 1Pe 1:18-19). The shedding of Christ's blood on behalf of all for whom He died, though applied at a later date, is the sole basis of the salvation of the elect. Jesus Christ's atoning work was finished on the cross (Joh 19:30).

3. Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the soul is quickened and divine life is imparted (Joh 3:3-7; Tit 3:5). It is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (Joh 5:24; Rom 10:13-17; 1Pe 1:23). Having been regenerated, the sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, is brought to repentance and responds in faith (God's gift) to the divine provision of salvation and is converted unto Christ (1Jo 5:1).

Genuine regeneration will manifest itself in fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct (Mat 7:16-21; 1Co 6:18-20; Gal 5:17-25; Eph 2:10). While it is impossible for man to achieve sinless perfection in this life, such attitudes and conduct will be the primary direction of his life and the basis of his assurance (2Pe 1:10-11; 1Jo 1:8, 3:18-22).

Regeneration (and the subsequent faith that follows) are always the expected and necessary outcome for those who have been chosen by God, and whose sins have been atoned for in Christ's death. *"Faith always flows from the cross, NEVER to the cross."*

4. Justification

We believe that the justification of sinners is the act of God (Rom 3:21-26, 8:33) by which He legally declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Isa 55:6-7; Luk 13:3; Act 2:38; 3:19, 11:18; Rom 2:4, 5:1; 2Co 7:10) and confess Him as Sovereign Lord (Rom 10:9-10; 1Co 12:3; 2Co 4:5; Phi 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom 3:20, 28, 4:6), and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col 2:14; 1Pe 2:24), and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1Co 1:30; 2Co 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).

5. Sanctification

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

Progressive sanctification, which begins at the point of conversion, allows the believer to be brought closer to the position he enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Spirit, the believer is both enabled and compelled to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ (Joh 17:17, 19; Rom 6:1-22, 8:29, 12:2; 2Co 3:18; 1Th 4:3-5).

Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom 8:17; Col 3:4; 1Pe 1:3-5; 1Jo 3:2-3).

6. Preservation

We believe that the redeemed are kept and persevere by God's preserving power and are therefore secure in Christ forever (Joh 5:24, 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10, 8:1, 31-39; Eph 1:13-14, 4:30; 1Th 5:23; Heb 7:25, 13:5; 1Pe 1:5; Jud 24).

9. Ecclesiology

We believe the following concerning the Church:

I. It is the unique spiritual body and bride of Christ

We believe the Church is the unique spiritual body and bride of Christ (Eph 5:23-32; Rev 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Eph 1:22, 4:15; Col 1:18), being made up of men in every age who have been saved by grace through faith.

All those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into this unique spiritual body, the Church (1Co 12:12-13), which is the visible proof of Christ's abiding presence on the earth.

II. It is autonomous in nature and self-governing through its elders

We believe in the autonomy, and continuity of local churches as clearly defined in the Scriptures (Act 14:23, 27, 20:17, 28; Gal 1:2; Phi 1:1; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1).

Accordingly, We believe that the local church has the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any external hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Tit 1:5). Local churches are to be elder ruled and based on their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of their cooperation with other churches for the presentation and propagation of the one true faith. The elders are responsible for determining all matters of doctrine, membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government (Act 15:19-31, 20:28; 1Co 5:4-7, 12-13; 2Ti 1:13, 3:14; 1Pe 5:1-4).

We believe also in the obedient submission of believers to the elders and those appointed as leaders within each local body (Heb 13:7, 17).

III. It is the primary means of God's grace to the world

We believe that God uses the church as His primary means to accomplish His purpose in the world (Eph 3:10). To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives pastors and teachers for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:7-12). In addition to that, He also gives other unique spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Rom 12:5-8; 1Co 12:4-31; 1Pe 4:10-11).

Additionally, since the Church is God's primary means of grace in the world, We believe also in its importance to the life of the Christian and his sanctification.

The Church should benefit the believer in the following ways:

1. discipleship (Mat 28:19-20; Eph 4:11-14; 2Ti 2:2)
2. accountability (Mat 18:5-14)
3. discipline (Mat 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1Co 5:1-13; 2Th 3:6-15)
4. edification, worship, prayer, ministry of the word, fellowship and the corporate observance of the Lord's Supper and Believer's Baptism (Act 2:38-47; 1Co 11:23-26, 14:26; Eph 4:13-16; 1Ti 4:13; Heb 10:25)
5. protection against apostasy (Heb 3:12-14).

IV. Christ will return someday and receive the Church to Himself

We believe that Christ will someday return and receive the Church (His Bride) unto Himself (Act 1:6-11; 1Th 4:13-18; Rev 20).

10. Eschatology

We believe the following concerning last things:

I. Christ will someday return to this earth to reign and rule with His saints

We believe in one personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Act 1:6-11; 1Th 4:16-17; Tit 2:11-13) to reign and rule with His saints forever. (2Ti 2:12; Rev 3:21, 5:9-10, 20:6, 22:1-5) The exact time and day of this return is known only by God the Father and therefore cannot be determined by men (Mat 24:36; Mar 13:32).

Note regarding the rapture of the church and Christ's millennial reign:

While we believe the Scriptural evidence regarding the rapture of the saints and the millennial reign of Christ are clearly defined truths that must be believed by all Christians (1Th 4: 16-17; Rev 20:1-6), the timing and nature of their fulfillment is not (as clearly defined in the Scriptures) and therefore should never be the test of Christian fellowship among believers in the Body of Christ.

II. There will be a final judgment of all people before the Throne of God

We believe that God will judge all persons who have lived before His throne (Great White Throne Judgment) and every person whose name is not found in the book of life; all those who have not received (by faith) the saving work of Jesus Christ but chose instead to live in rebellion to God and His commands, will be cast into the lake of fire--or what the Scriptures also refer to as "Hell", where they will be tormented along with the Satan and his angels forever and ever (Mat 7:21-23, 13:40-42, 49-50, 25:31-33, 41-46; Luk 6:46-49; Rev 20:10-15). Those whose names however are found in the book of life; those who are the saved and saints of Christ, will spend eternity in heaven, enjoying the fellowship of God and a state of sinless perfection (Isa 35:8-10; Rev 21-22).

We also believe Christ Himself will be the One responsible for carrying out this final and eternal judgment (Joh 5:22).