

# Bethany Baptist Church Statement of Faith

*April 19, 2015*

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## *Purpose of the Church*

The fundamental purpose of the local church is to glorify God by proclaiming and obeying His Word. This unwavering commitment to God's Word is the most basic and vital obligation of the local church.<sup>1</sup> The proclamation of Scripture includes both the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching and equipping of the saints with the goal of helping each other attain the unity of the faith and the knowledge and maturity that results in Christlikeness.<sup>2</sup> Proceeding out of this foundational commitment to the Word is our love for God. It is only through His Word that the church can rightly know and love Him, and thereby obey the commands and patterns of Scripture such as the administration of the ordinances, the proper leading of corporate worship, and other matters of function.<sup>3</sup>

### *A. Statement of Faith*

#### *1. Concerning the Scriptures*

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is without error as originally written.<sup>4</sup> The author of the Bible was God the Holy Spirit who guided the human authors<sup>5</sup> so that the writings they produced were inspired (God-breathed) in every word and as a whole.<sup>6</sup> Because Scripture is a product of God, who cannot lie,<sup>7</sup> the Bible is entirely without error (inerrant) and is actually incapable of error in all that it affirms, not only in the realm of religion but in every matter upon which it speaks.<sup>8</sup> We believe that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice, the only sufficient and necessary source to establish the doctrine and practice of both the individual believer and of the church as a whole.<sup>9</sup> The foundation of our unity is God's Word.<sup>10</sup>

#### *2. Concerning Our Triune God*

We believe that there is only one living and true God<sup>11</sup> who is infinite, eternal, self-existing, unchanging, perfect Spirit.<sup>12</sup> He is a personal Being and the Creator, Upholder, and supreme Ruler of the universe.<sup>13</sup> He is

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<sup>1</sup> **Acts 2:42** - "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." **Acts 6:4** - "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." **Acts 20:32** - "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

<sup>2</sup> **Ephesians 4:11-16** - "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

<sup>3</sup> **Matthew 22:37-40** "And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' <sup>38</sup> This is the great and foremost commandment. <sup>39</sup> The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." **1 John 2:3** "By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments." See also: Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Revelation 2:2-4

<sup>4</sup> **Proverbs 30:5-6** - "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. <sup>6</sup> Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar." **John 17:17** - "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." See also: Revelation 22:18-19

<sup>5</sup> **2 Peter 1:20-21** - "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." **2 Samuel 23:2** - "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue." **Acts 1:16** - "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus."

<sup>6</sup> **John 10:35** - "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)," **2 Timothy 3:16** - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;" See also: Matthew 5:18

<sup>7</sup> **Numbers 23:19** - "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?" See also: 1 Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:1-2; Hebrews 6:17-18

<sup>8</sup> See 2 Timothy 3:16 above. **Psalms 119:160** - "The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting." **Titus 1:2** - "in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,"

<sup>9</sup> **Ephesians 6:17** - "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." See also: Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 10:6,11; Hebrews 4:12; and 2 Timothy 3:16, above.

<sup>10</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:10** - "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment." **Philippians 3:16** - "however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained." See also: Ephesians 4:3-6; Philippians 2:1-2; 1 Peter 4:10-11

<sup>11</sup> **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** - "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! <sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. See also: Jeremiah 10:10

<sup>12</sup> **Habakkuk 1:12a** - "Are You not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One?" **John 4:24** - "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." See also: Psalm 102:25-27, 147:5; Romans 1:20

<sup>13</sup> **Psalms 83:18** - "That they may know that You alone, whose name is the Lord, Are the Most High over all the earth." **Revelation 4:11** - "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." See also: Genesis 1:1-25; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:10

indescribably glorious in holiness, and worthy of all our worship, trust, and love.<sup>1</sup> Though one God, He exists in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> The Father is – neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is – eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit is – proceeding from the Father and the Son.<sup>3</sup> These Persons are equal in essence and in every divine perfection,<sup>4</sup> but each has His own distinct work to perform.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Concerning God the Father

We believe that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, is – neither begotten nor proceeding. He is the Creator of all things by His word and through His Son.<sup>6</sup> As Creator He is also Owner, the only absolute and all-powerful Ruler in the universe. He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption.<sup>7</sup> His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men, but He is spiritual Father only to believers.<sup>8</sup> He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass.<sup>9</sup> In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin,<sup>10</sup> nor does His sovereignty diminish the accountability of mankind.<sup>11</sup> He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own.<sup>12</sup> He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, Whom He graciously sent into the world to save sinners<sup>13</sup> and Whom He raised from the dead.<sup>14</sup> He adopts as His own all those who come to Him and thus becomes their Father,<sup>15</sup> keeping them for Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup> He has set a day when He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Deuteronomy 6:4-5 above

<sup>2</sup> **Matthew 3:16-17** – “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” See also: Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14

<sup>3</sup> **John 1:14** – “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”; **John 15:26** – “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,”

<sup>4</sup> **John 10:30** – “I and the Father are one.” **Acts 5:3-4** – “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ... You have not lied to men but to God.” See also: John 14:10, 17:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

<sup>5</sup> **Ephesians 1:3-7** – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” See also John 14:26, 15:26; Ephesians 1:13-14, 2:18

<sup>6</sup> **Genesis 1:1** – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” **John 1:2** – “He was in the beginning with God.” **Colossians 1:15-16** – “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

<sup>7</sup> **Genesis 50:20** – “As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

**Psalms 103:19** – “The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.” **Psalms 135:6a** – “Whatever the Lord pleases, He does,” **Ephesians 1:3-5** – “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, <sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,”

<sup>8</sup> **Ephesians 4:6** – “one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” **Romans 8:14** – “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” See also 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

<sup>9</sup> **Ephesians 1:10c-11** – “In Him <sup>11</sup> also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,”

<sup>10</sup> **Habakkuk 1:13a** – “*Your* eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness *with favor*.” See also: James 1:13

<sup>11</sup> **1 Peter 1:17** – “If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*,”

<sup>12</sup> **Ephesians 1:4-6** – “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” See also: John 6:44-45, 65

<sup>13</sup> **John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

<sup>14</sup> **1 Peter 1:21** – “who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

<sup>15</sup> **John 1:12** – “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,” See also: Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9

<sup>16</sup> **John 10:29** – “<sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father’s hand.” See also: Romans 8:35-39; Philippians 1:6; Jude 1

<sup>17</sup> **Acts 17:31** – “because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

#### 4. Concerning God the Son

We believe that God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, is – eternally begotten of the Father.<sup>1</sup> It was through Him and for Him that all things were created.<sup>2</sup> He is both fully God and fully man.<sup>3</sup> His literal human body was miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He was born of a human mother who was a virgin.<sup>4</sup> As our Lord Jesus Christ, He lived a sinless life on earth, died on the cross as our substitute and bore the judgment of our sins,<sup>5</sup> and was raised bodily from the tomb as a testimony to the sufficiency of His sacrifice and as a guarantee of our future resurrection.<sup>6</sup> As the Head of His Body, the Church, He builds, directs, and sustains it.<sup>7</sup> He is now in heaven as the great High Priest interceding for us<sup>8</sup> and will return one day in glory to judge the living and the dead.

#### 5. Concerning God the Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, is – proceeding from the Father and the Son.<sup>9</sup> He is a divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature.<sup>10</sup> He was active in creation,<sup>11</sup> convicts men of sin,<sup>12</sup> and indwells each believer.<sup>13</sup> He also bears witness to the truth of the Scriptures, for it is ultimately the work of the Spirit in our hearts that fully persuades and assures us of its infallible truth and divine authority.<sup>14</sup> He performs various ministries such as regenerating, sealing, guiding, teaching, sanctifying, strengthening, and interceding.<sup>15</sup> The Holy Spirit gives varieties of gifts to believers, which are special abilities for service to the body.<sup>16</sup> He also enables the believer to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires, and He

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<sup>1</sup> See John 1:14, 18 under the section “Concerning Our Triune God”

<sup>2</sup> **John 1:2** – “He was in the beginning with God.” **Col. 1:15-16** – “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.” See also: Gen. 1 (all); Eph. 3:9-12

<sup>3</sup> **John 1:1-2, 14** – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” See also: John 8:58; Philippians 2:7-8

<sup>4</sup> **Isaiah 7:14** – “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” See also: Luke 1:26-38

<sup>5</sup> **1 Peter 2:21-24** – “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, <sup>22</sup>who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; <sup>23</sup>and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; <sup>24</sup>and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” See also: 1 Cor. 15:1-7

<sup>6</sup> **Luke 24:1-6** – “But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,<sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing;<sup>5</sup> and as *the women* were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, *the men* said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee,” See also: 1 Cor. 15:1-7, 23-26

<sup>7</sup> **Ephesians 4:11-12** – “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;” See also: Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:18

<sup>8</sup> **Hebrews 4:14** – “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.” See also: Verses 15-16

<sup>9</sup> **John 15:26** – “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me;” **Galatians 4:6** – “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

<sup>10</sup> **Matthew 28:19** – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit;” **Acts 5:3-4** – “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? <sup>4</sup>While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” Also: John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 9:14

<sup>11</sup> **Genesis 1:1-2** – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”

<sup>12</sup> **John 16:8-9** – “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; <sup>9</sup>concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;”

<sup>13</sup> **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** – “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

<sup>14</sup> **Acts 5:30-32** – “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. <sup>31</sup>He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup>And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” Also: John 16:13,14; 1 Cor. 2:10-13, 12:3; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 2:20,27

<sup>15</sup> **Romans 8:14** – “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” See also: John 3:3-6; Romans 8:26-7; Eph. 1:13, 17, 3:16, 4:30

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 12

produces fruit in the Christian's life.<sup>1</sup> It is the believer's privilege to be filled with the Spirit and thereby to produce fruit unto God's glory and live in joyful obedience.<sup>2</sup>

## 6. *Concerning Angels*

We believe in the existence of angels who are mighty, spiritual beings that were created by God. They serve Him in various ways and are specially appointed to watch over and minister to God's people.<sup>3</sup> We believe that at some time in the past a large number of angels, under the leadership of Satan, rebelled against God and were removed from His presence.<sup>4</sup> They oppose God and His purposes and rule over the spiritual darkness of this world.<sup>5</sup> Satan is the enemy of God's people. Although he is very powerful, he is not equal to God and must give account for his actions.<sup>6</sup> He and the other fallen angels are destined to be judged by Christ at His return and ultimately to be eternally imprisoned in the Lake of Fire.<sup>7</sup>

## 7. *Concerning Creation*

We believe that in the beginning it pleased God to display the glory of His eternal power and divine nature<sup>8</sup> by creating the world and all things, both visible and invisible. He did so in six days, and all things were very good as originally created.<sup>9</sup> We believe the Biblical account of creation is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God; that Adam was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all people are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, who were created in God's image and likeness, and are first parents of the entire human race.<sup>10</sup>

In light of God's creative design, we believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bonds of a Biblically defined marriage. Any other form of marriage or sexual intimacy is immoral and a perversion of God's gracious will.<sup>11</sup>

## 8. *Concerning the Fall of Man*

We believe that man was originally created a sinless being.<sup>12</sup> By voluntary transgression he fell from that sinless state,<sup>1</sup> and, as a result, all are now sinners by nature and conduct<sup>2</sup> and are justly under divine condemnation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Galatians 5:22-24** – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

<sup>2</sup> **Eph. 5:18-20** – “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;”

<sup>3</sup> **Colossians 1:16** – “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.” **Hebrews 1:14** – “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?”

<sup>4</sup> **Isaiah 14:12** – “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!” **Matthew 25:41** – “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;’ See also: Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:3-9

<sup>5</sup> **Ephesians 6:12** – “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” See also 2 Cor. 4:4

<sup>6</sup> **Job 1:6** – “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.” **Jude 9** – “But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

<sup>7</sup> **Revelation 20:1-3, 10** – “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup> and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. <sup>10</sup> And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” See also: Matt. 25:41 above

<sup>8</sup> **Romans 1:20** – “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

<sup>9</sup> **Genesis 1:31** – “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” **Colossians 1:16** – “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.” See also: Exodus 20:11, 31:17

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11, 31:17; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 33:6-9; John 1:3; Romans 5:12-21; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3

<sup>11</sup> **Genesis 2:18, 24-25** – “Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him. <sup>24</sup> For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.” See also: Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 6:18-7:1-4; Eph. 5:22-33; Heb. 13:4

<sup>12</sup> **Ecclesiastes 7:29** – “Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.” See also: Genesis 1:27, 31; 2:16-17

## 9. Concerning Salvation

We believe that an individual's personal guilt and depravity make reconciliation to God essential to escape God's eternal wrath and gain eternal life. Mankind is helpless to provide reconciliation for himself.<sup>4</sup> The good news of the Gospel is that salvation is made free to all by the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>5</sup> It is initiated by God and is accomplished by grace apart from any human works.<sup>6</sup> The sovereignty of God in salvation does not diminish the responsibility of each individual to accept it by personal faith in Christ,<sup>7</sup> which is the only condition of salvation. Repentance toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit is an integral part of saving faith.<sup>8</sup> All who thus believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are forgiven, regenerated, and justified,<sup>9</sup> and the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to them.<sup>10</sup> They are given spiritual life which is manifested in their growth in grace.<sup>11</sup> Each believer has been sanctified positionally in Christ, is being sanctified by the continuing work of the Spirit, and ultimately at Christ's coming will be completely sanctified.<sup>12</sup> True believers are saved forever and can never be lost.<sup>13</sup>

## 10. Concerning the Church

We believe that the universal Church, the Body of Christ, is made up of all true believers who are placed into this Body by the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup> We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of baptized believers<sup>15</sup> associated together by a common faith and fellowship in the Gospel. Its officers are biblically qualified men referred to in Scripture as elders (pastors) and deacons.<sup>16</sup> God has given the local church authority on matters such as membership, leadership, discipline, ministry, and finances as directed in His Word.<sup>17</sup> The purpose of the church is to glorify God by proclaiming and obeying His Word (see "*Purpose of the Church*" statement).

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<sup>1</sup> **Genesis 3:6-7** – "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings." **Romans 5:12** – "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" See also: Romans 5:19

<sup>2</sup> **Psalms 51:5** – "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me." **Isaiah 53:6** – "All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." **Romans 3:23** – "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," See also: Romans 3:9-18, 5:15-19; James 2:10

<sup>3</sup> **John 3:36** – "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." See also: Romans 1:20; 5:18

<sup>4</sup> **2 Cor. 5:18-21** – "Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin to *be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." See also: Romans 5:6

<sup>5</sup> **John 3:16** – "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." See also: Acts 17:30 below

<sup>6</sup> **Ephesians 2:8-9** – "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

<sup>7</sup> **Acts 16:31** – "They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."" See also: John 3:16 above

<sup>8</sup> **Luke 13:3-5** – "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. <sup>4</sup>Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were *worse* culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." **Acts 17:30** – "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent," See also: Acts 2:38; Matt. 3:2, 4:17

<sup>9</sup> **Romans 5:1** – "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," See also: Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:23

<sup>10</sup> See 2 Cor. 5:21 above

<sup>11</sup> **2 Peter 3:18** – "but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

<sup>12</sup> **2 Cor. 3:18** – "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." Also: 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 John 3:2

<sup>13</sup> **John 10:27-30** – "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup>and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one."

<sup>14</sup> **1 Corinthians 12:13** – "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." See also: Eph. 1:22-23

<sup>15</sup> **Acts 2:41-42** – "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup>They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

<sup>16</sup> **1 Timothy 3**

<sup>17</sup> **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." See also: Matthew 18:15-18; Acts 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 13; 1 Tim. 3:15

### 11. Concerning the Ordinances

We believe the local church is to observe the two ordinances of Baptism and Communion as instructed by our Lord in His Word.<sup>1</sup> They are both a remembrance and proclamation of Christ's work until He returns.<sup>2</sup> Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer<sup>3</sup> performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> It is an outward sign of identification with Christ.<sup>5</sup> A fruit of salvation is obedience in baptism. During communion, the church commemorates together the death of Christ on our behalf by the use of the bread and cup.<sup>6</sup> This commemoration should always be preceded by careful self-examination.<sup>7</sup>

### 12. Concerning Future Events

We believe in the imminence of Christ's return.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the age, He will separate the just into His eternal presence and the unjust to endless punishment in the Lake of Fire based on the gift of salvation through faith in Christ or the rejection of this gift.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Matthew 28:19-20** – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” **1 Cor. 11:23-24** – “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;<sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.””

<sup>2</sup> **Romans 6:3-4** – “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” **1 Cor. 11:26** – “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”

<sup>3</sup> **Acts 8:38-39** – “And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.”

<sup>4</sup> See Matt. 28:19 above

<sup>5</sup> See Romans 6:3-4 above

<sup>6</sup> See 1 Cor. 11:26 above; See also: Matt. 26:29

<sup>7</sup> **1 Corinthians 11:28** – “But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”

<sup>8</sup> **Titus 2:11-14** – “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,<sup>12</sup> instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,<sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,<sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” See also: Acts 1:11; Php. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11; 1 Pet. 4:7

<sup>9</sup> **Matthew 13:49** – “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous,” **2 Thessalonians 1:9-10** – “These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,<sup>10</sup> when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.” See also: Matt. 13:37-43, 24:30-31, 25:31-33, 35-41; Rom. 2:2-16; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; **Daniel 12:2** – “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.” **Matt. 5:28-29** – “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,<sup>29</sup> and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.” See also: Acts 10:42, 24:15; 2 Pet. 3:3-13