

Statement of Faith

1. CONCERNING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Scriptures (Old & New Testaments) are the inerrant Word of God. We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. By verbal, we mean that the original writers were guided by the Holy Spirit in the exact choice of words yet respecting and using the personality characteristics, style and vocabulary of each writer. By the word plenary, we mean that this divine verbal inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original manuscripts -- historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic -- so that every word is both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority.

(2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:21; John 10:35; 2 Peter 3:16; John 5:39)

We believe in the literal method of interpretation; which gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether implied in writing, speaking or thinking. We believe that the greater part of the Bible makes sense when interpreted literally; that it is the only sane and safe check on the imaginations of man; that it grounds interpretation in fact; delivers us from both reason and mysticism; and that this approach does not blindly rule out figures of speech, symbols, allegories and types; but if the nature of the sentence so demands, it readily yields to the second sense. Therefore, when the plain sense of the Scriptures makes common sense; we would seek no other sense; we must take every word at its primary, ordinary, literal, usual meaning unless the context indicated clearly otherwise.

However, we believe that the following principles are prerequisites to a proper interpretation of the Scriptures; these are:

1) One must be born again and have an utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. (John 16:7-14; 1 Corinthians 2:7-16)

2) We also believe one must interpret according to the immediate context; according to the larger context, such as the scope or the design of the book itself; and by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

2. CONCERNING GOD

We believe in one God, Who is a personal and eternal Spirit, perfect and unchangeable in all His attributes. This one God eternally exists in three persons, impossible of division, but capable of distinction as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All have precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same honor, confidence and obedience.

(Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Kings 8:60; Psalm 90:1-2; Isaiah 45:5-6; Matthew 3:16-17; 16:16; 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-14; Luke 22:70; 11:13; John 10:30; 14:10,11,16-17; Acts 5:3,4; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

2.1. God the Father - We believe in God the Father as Creator of Heaven and earth, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. We marvel and rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully and lovingly in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer and that He saves from sin, its power over our life, and from spiritual death. He also takes the fear out of physical death for all who come to Him through faith in substitutionary death of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

(Genesis 1:1; Psalm 34:6; 147:5; John 1:3; 3:36; 6:27; Romans 1:18-20; 6:1-13; 1 Corinthians 15:2-4; Ephesians 2:4-5; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 1:5; 2:1-2; 4:8; Revelation 3:20; 19:6)

2.2. Jesus Christ - We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, God the Son. We believe that He was pre-existent and is eternal, that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, and is fully God and fully man. We believe that He was the only man to live a sinless life (Luke 1:35; John 8:46; Matthew 22:15; John 8:29; John 15:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 1:19) We believe that His death on the cross was substitutionary and representative and a sufficient propitiation for the guilt of all men. We believe that He arose bodily from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He now carries on a ministry as Advocate and Intercessor for the saints. We believe in His imminent, personal and bodily return to the earth.

(John 1:1,14; Luke 1:30-35; John 1:29; 1 Timothy 2:6; Romans 3:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 10:5-14; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 1 Corinthians 15; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:9-10)

2.3. The Holy Spirit - We believe in the deity and personality of God, the Holy Spirit and that He is said to be eternally "proceeding" from the Father and the Son. We believe that the Holy Spirit was the agent in the revelation and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and is the one who bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit who performs the work of salvation in the heart of the individual believer, baptizing them into the Body of Christ, sealing, indwelling and filling them. He also bestows spiritual gifts upon them, empowering them for works of service.

(1 Corinthians 2:6-16; Ephesians 4:30; John 16:13-14; 15:26; 16:7-8; Ephesians 1:13; 3:16; Genesis 1:2; 2 Peter 1:21; Acts 5:3-4; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 12; John 3:5-6; Ephesians 5:18)

3. CONCERNING SATAN AND ANGELS

3.1. Their Origin - The angels were all created by God as a great host of sinless spirit-beings, most of whom kept their first estate of holiness and presently worship God and serve His purposes.

(Psalm 148:2-5; Matthew 26:53; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:14)

3.2. The Fall of Some - One of the angels fell through the sin of pride, thereby becoming Satan, and influenced a large company of angels to follow him, who thereby became demons.

(Isaiah 14:12-17; 1 Timothy 3:6; James 2:19; 2 Peter 2:4)

3.3. Satan's Work - The work of Satan and the demons is the attempted subversion and supplanting of the work of God. By a subtle suggestion, Satan accomplished the moral fall of the descendants of the human race, subjecting them and their posterity to his own power. (Genesis 3:1-7; Job 1:12; 2:6; Ezekiel 28:13-15; Zechariah 3:1-2; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:2)

Satan continues as the enemy of God and the accuser of God's people and persistently seeks to counterfeit the works and truth of God. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 11:13-15; Ephesians 6:12,16; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10)

We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, and that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years, and after the thousand years, he will be loosed for a little season and then the judgment will be executed by his being "cast in the lake of fire and brimstone," where he shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (John 12:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:1-3,10)

4. CONCERNING MAN

4.1. His Original Nature - Man was directly and immediately [no evolution] created in the image of God, free from sin. He was created an immortal being with a rational nature, high intelligence and moral responsibility to God. All men and women have inherent and equal dignity and worth. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; James 3:9)

4.2. His Original Purpose - He was originally created with the divine intention that he should glorify God, enjoy His fellowship and fulfill His will and purposes in the earth. (Genesis 1:26-30; Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11)

4.3. His Subsequent Sin - Man subsequently fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the revealed will of God. (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; 1 Timothy 2:13-14)

4.4. His Present Condition - As a consequence, man became subject to the wrath of God, inherently corrupt, and incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Thus he is hopelessly lost apart from the salvation which is in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8)

The fall of man was an historical and non-repeatable act, the effects of which are transmitted to all people of all ages, Jesus Christ excepted. All men thus are sinners by divine pronouncement, nature, and deed, and thus face God's wrath and judgment. (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:12-19; James 2:10)

5. CONCERNING SALVATION

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith based upon the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love, forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God.

(Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:5; 1:12-13)

The purpose of salvation is that the believer might glorify God in his body through a life of fellowship and service for the Lord.

(1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 6:13; 12:1-2; Colossians 3:17; Titus 2:11-14)

The consummation of salvation will occur at the Rapture when the believer will be delivered from the presence of sin, at which time he will also be glorified, being conformed to the image of Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-3)

We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of the immutable [unchanging] covenants of God, because of God's freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory death of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending and effective advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, salvation is eternal and unchangeable.

(John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16-17; 17:11; Romans 8:29-39; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Hebrews 7:25; John 17:15; 1 John 2:1-2; 5:13; Jude 1,24; 2 Timothy 1:8-12)

6. CONCERNING SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting-apart to God, is threefold:

(1) Sanctification is already complete for every saved person because God sees that person as complete in Christ. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart to God in the measure in which Christ is set apart to God.

(2) We believe however, that the saved person retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. While the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. Personal holiness should be the pursuit of every Christian. But when he does sin, he may confess his sin and appropriate the forgiveness which God has provided thus growing in victory over sin while also growing in grace as he is changed by the unhindered power of the Holy Spirit. (1 John 1:9)

(3) We believe, also, that as the child of God is now sanctified in his standing in Christ, he will yet be fully sanctified in this state. This will be when he enters into the presence of his Lord and will be "like Him".

(1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:10,14; Romans 6; John 17:17, 19; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:10; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Peter 1:13-16)

7. CONCERNING THE CHURCH

7.1. Its Nature - All who have placed their faith in Christ are united together immediately by the Holy Spirit in one spiritual body, the Church [Spirit baptism], of which Christ is the Head. The Church was prophesied by Christ (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:4-5), born on the day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15; 2:46,47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own. In addition to the spiritual union and communion which extends to the entirety of the body of Christ, the members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies. (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:4-6; 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:25)

7.2. Its Mission - We believe the church as the Body of Christ has a five-fold mission:

1) Exalt the Lord through worship - The highest privilege and responsibility of the church both gathered and scattered is worship and adoration of our great God, the Father, and our Savior Jesus Christ the Lord through the eternal Spirit.

(John 16:13,14; 4:23-24; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 9:14; 13:15; Revelation 4:11; 5:12-13; Psalms 99:9)

2) Equip the Saints for service (Education) - One of the prime responsibilities of the church is the nurture of the believer through the instruction and warning of our Father's Word in order to prepare the believer for a life of service.

(Colossians 1:28; Acts 20:28,32; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2:2)

3) Evangelize our community and beyond - The last command of the risen Christ was for His followers to make disciples and in so doing permeate the entire world in a continuous effort to disciple men.

(Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15; Colossians 1:28; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 10:13)

4) Edify believers for fellowship - Since the believer is a part of a body, and not simply an isolated individual, one of the primary responsibilities of the church is to so order its corporate life that the result is genuine community among believers.

(Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25; Philippians 2:1-4; 1 John 1:3)

5) Encourage the vulnerable - Recognizing that there are hurting individuals among us, and those who have become hopeless in the body of Christ, the church should share the burdens of their brothers and sisters in the Lord in an organized fashion as a loving family.

(Acts 2:44; Acts 6:1-7; Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14)

7.3. Its Organization and Relationships:

7.3.1. Authority - These local assemblies have been given the needed authority for administering that order, discipline, and worship which Christ the sovereign Head has appointed. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders, consisting of men, and deacons and deaconesses, consisting of men and women.

(Acts 6:1-6, 14:23, ch. 15 1 Corinthians 14:40; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 Corinthians 5; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

8.2. The Rapture of the Church - The next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the personal, bodily coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself those who have died in Christ and all those who are alive at His coming. At that exact moment, every believer will be conformed into His image. This event is the blessed hope set before us in Scripture and we are encouraged to be constantly looking for it. During this time with Christ, two significant events occur; Believers will be judged according to their works and will participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:42-52; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Revelation 19:7-10).

8.3. The Tribulation Period - After the removal of believers from the earth, the wrath of God will be poured out upon the unbelieving world. This period will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth, at which time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will also be raised. This is known as the first resurrection. Also at this time the living non-believers will be judged and Satan and his angels will be bound for a thousand years (Daniel 9:27; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 6; 19:11-21; 20:2).

8.4. The Millennium - After the tribulation, Christ will establish His Messianic Kingdom where He will reign with His saints over Israel and all the nations of the earth for one thousand years. After this, Satan will be loosed and lead a worldwide rebellion against Christ. Satan will finally be defeated by Christ at the Battle of Armageddon (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Isaiah 11:1-16; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Revelation 20:1-6).

8.5. The Eternal State - Finally, the unsaved dead will be raised and judged and committed to eternal punishment. This is the second resurrection and the Great White Throne of Judgment. The saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. Having fulfilled His redemptive and kingdom missions as the Son of Abraham and the Son of David, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father that the Triune God may reign forever in all spheres (Mark 9:43-48; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-4; 22:5,11).