

Doctrinal Statement
For Anchor Bible Church
Updated 2020

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DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

ANCHOR BIBLE CHURCH 2020

The doctrinal statement of Anchor Bible Church exists to express both our teaching position on the major areas of Bible doctrine and what we believe the Bible has to say about various “hot topic” issues facing the church. Anchor Bible Church believes a detailed doctrinal statement is important for both its members and visitors alike for some of the following reasons:

- A church’s view of creation and the meaning of the first three chapters of the book of Genesis has theological implications for the rest of the Bible, the authority of Scripture, the gospel, the truth claims of the authors of Scripture, and Jesus.
- A church’s view of prophecy and end time events (eschatology) has huge implications for one third of the Bible, how we study the Bible (hermeneutics), our understanding of the biblical covenants, the nature of the Church, our hope for the future, and the Church’s relationship to Israel.
- A church’s view of doctrine is necessary for true biblical unity to exist in the church. Biblical unity is “*being of the same mind and same judgment,*” not agreeing to disagree or tolerating all doctrinal views within the church (see Romans 15:5; I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 2:2).
- A church’s view of doctrine is necessary so that the elders of a local church can lead the church in the same direction, both doctrinally and philosophically, as well as obey the command to “*exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict*” (Titus 1:9).
- A church’s view of doctrine is necessary for those looking for a church to attend because *what* and *why* a church does what it does is determined by its doctrinal beliefs. We want visitors to have a clear understanding of what they can expect to hear from the pulpit and taught in the various teaching ministries of Anchor Bible Church.

All elders of Anchor Bible Church must be in agreement with this doctrinal statement before being appointed to the office of elder. Members do not have to agree with every point of the doctrinal statement before becoming members but must agree not to teach contrary to the teaching position of Anchor Bible Church. If there is a change in the primary pastor-teacher of Anchor Bible Church, this doctrinal statement may need to be altered so that unity around agreed upon doctrine can be maintained in the church.

The Bible

The 66 books of the Bible are literally the Word of God, written down by men of God, who were moved by the Holy Spirit, and spoke from God (2 Samuel 23:1-3; 2 Peter 1:20-21). We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration, which means that all of the Bible, in its original documents, both in part

and in whole, is inerrant, infallible, the very Word of God (Psalm 119:160). The Scriptures are the only authoritative, objective, and sufficient standard for all matters of godliness, faith, practice, and doctrine throughout all generations (Psalm 19:7-11; Zechariah 7:12; Matthew 24:35; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4, 19). The Bible is also the only source of objective truth from God (John 5:39; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:1; Jude 3; Revelation 1:19). God's Word stands in authority over all creation, men, and the church and is what all men will be judged by on the last day (John 12:48; Romans 2:16; 1 Timothy 3:15). Because the Bible is the Word of God we are under obligation before God to handle it accurately when we interpret it (2 Timothy 2:15). We believe in the literal, historical, grammatical, contextual method of interpretation, which means the Bible is to be interpreted literally, unless there is clear reason in the context not to do so. Each text is to be interpreted in light of its near, far, and historical contexts, giving priority to the original languages, grammar, and inspired sentence structure. We believe the interpretation of any given text of the Bible is one, though the principles and applications taken from that one interpretation may be one or many. We believe the interpretation of a text is what the original author meant for his original audience to understand by what he wrote (authorial intent).

God

There is one God (Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; Isaiah 44:5-8), perfect and infinite in all of His attributes, who has chosen to reveal Himself in three distinct persons i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three persons have existed from eternity and are separate in their identity and function, but one in purpose and substance, all three together being the one eternal God, worthy of all worship, glory, praise, and obedience (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 48:16; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Titus 3:4-7). God created everything in heaven and on earth, out of nothing, in six, literal, sequential, twenty-four hour periods or days, by His spoken Word (Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 148:1-5; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 11:3).

God the Father

God the Father is the initiator, planner, and organizer of all things, being sovereign over all of His creation (Job 38-41; Isaiah 14:24, 27; 37:26; Acts 4:27-28; Romans 8:29-30; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:5, 11; 2:10).

God the Son

Jesus Christ is God incarnate, which means that He is God become man in the flesh, fully God and fully man (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14, 18; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 1:8). Jesus was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23) and conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Jesus is the one and only Mediator between God and man and lives as an advocate for all who repent of their sins and believe in Him alone for salvation (1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1). Jesus is the Redeemer (Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 3:18-19), Judge (John 5:22-23; Acts 17:31), Priest (Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:10; 7:1, 3, 15, 21), Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; John 6:14; Acts 3:22-26; 7:37), King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16), and the channel of creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2). Jesus lived a perfect life here on earth, both passively and actively obeying the Father's will (Luke 2:21-32; 1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 2:10; 4:15; 5:9; 7:28), died a vicarious or substitutionary death for the sins of men (Isaiah 53:4-6; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:3), and was the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36). Jesus was buried

and rose again with a glorified body on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:4), conquering death (Colossians 2:13-14), and having ascended into heaven He is now seated at the right hand of God (Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 10:12). He has received all power, authority, and dominion in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). He lives as an advocate for the saints (1 John 2:1) and He will come again to set up an earthly kingdom (Luke 22:28-30; Revelation 20:1-6), followed by an eternal kingdom and will rule and reign forever (2 Peter 1:10-11; Revelation 21-22).

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the godhead, fully God in every way (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:11, 18; 2 Corinthians 3:18). The Holy Spirit assisted in creation (Genesis 1:2), was the agent of the virgin birth (Luke 1:35), and is the divine agent of the inspired revelation of God (Zechariah 7:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit is active in convicting the world of sin and judgment (John 16:8) and regenerating and empowering those who are saved (Ezekiel 36:27; John 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 12:1-7; Galatians 5:16; Titus 3:5). The Holy Spirit enables men, through His illuminating work, to understand the written revelation of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 John 2:20,27). The Holy Spirit permanently indwells and enables believers in the process of sanctification (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:13-14; Ephesians 1:15-18; 3:14-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). He is the pledge and guarantee of our future inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

Man

Man was created perfect and without sin on the sixth day of creation to give glory to God (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16-18). Man was formed by God out of the dust of the ground. God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living being (Genesis 2:7). Man is unlike the animals, being created in the image of God, to rule over the earth and all living creatures (Genesis 1:24-31; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 1 Corinthians 15:39). Shortly after man was created, Eve was deceived by Satan into eating the forbidden fruit (2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14), and Adam ate the forbidden fruit willingly (Genesis 3:17; Hosea 6:7). As a result of their sin, both died spiritually (Ephesians 2:1-2; Colossians 2:13) and later physically because the wages of sin is death (Genesis 5:5; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27). Adam was the representative head of the human race and when he sinned the entire human race fell in him. Adam's sin is imputed to all of his descendants (Romans 5:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:22), hence all men are totally depraved, which means every part of their being has been affected by sin. Men are conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5), born in sin (Genesis 8:21; Psalm 58:3), and sin because they are by nature sinners (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 3:10-18, 23; Ephesians 2:1-3). All men suppress the truth in unrighteousness and are sinners both by imputation, nature, and choice (Genesis 6:5; Romans 1:18-25; Titus 1:15). The consequences of sin have made man unable to understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14), unable to please God (Romans 8:5-8), and unwilling to seek God (John 3:19-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Salvation

The Need of Salvation

Unrepentant sinners have God's wrath abiding on them, and hence, all men are in need of salvation from sin and its consequences (John 3:36; Romans 3:23-24; 6:23; Ephesians 2:3). The ultimate

consequence of sin is to suffer the holy wrath of God's justice for eternity in the lake of fire (Nahum 1:3; Revelation 20:14-15).

Predestination of the Elect to Salvation

God chose and predestined some to be saved from before the foundation of the world (Romans 8:29-30). All men are universally called to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, crucified and resurrected from the dead (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 17:30), but only the elect, who are predestined to salvation, believe and are saved (Matthew 22:14; Acts 13:48; Ephesians 1:4-5).

Provision of Salvation

God's only provision for salvation is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the promised Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15), the Redeemer (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19), and Savior of all those who believe in Him for eternal life (John 3:16). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no one can come to the Father but through Him (John 14:6). There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved (Matthew 11:27; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

The Gospel of Salvation

The only way to be delivered from the wrath of God is by hearing and believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God for all who believe (Romans 1:16; 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-24). The essence of the gospel is that Jesus Christ, out of love for mankind, died for the sins of the world on the cross as our substitute, was buried, and rose again on the third day, conquering death (Acts 2:22-32; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Peter 3:18). The gospel message is a call to repent of our sin and believe in Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17; 11:20; Acts 2:38; 3:19-21; 17:30-31; 20:21; 26:19-20; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

Appropriation of Salvation

Salvation is not a result of works, but is an undeserved, unearned gift, received by God's grace and mercy, through faith, which God supplies to the elect (Galatians 5:4; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5). Saving faith is not only an intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel (James 2:19), but a volitional heart commitment to trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ alone for salvation (Luke 9:23; 14:26) and includes a willingness to repent of one's sin and submit to and obey the Lord of the gospel, who is Jesus Christ (Luke 13:1-5; 24:46-47; John 3:36; 1 John 2:3-5). Salvation is only appropriated through the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby God draws the elect to His Son (John 3:5-8; 6:44). Men, apart from the grace of God, do not seek Him (Romans 3:10; John 3:19). God seeks men (Luke 5:31-32; 19:10) and men respond to the irresistible grace of God, which effectually draws them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:27; 13:11; John 6:37; Acts 13:48; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:25; 1 Corinthians 1:18). Repentance is to have a change of mind, having acknowledged one's sin and error, and to turn from sin to pursue a life of obedience and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Isaiah 55:6-9; Joel 2:12-13; John 1:12; 8:24; Romans 14:8-9; 2 Corinthians 4:5).

The Call to Salvation

God calls all men everywhere to repent and believe in the gospel (Acts 17:30-31). God is not willing for any to perish (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9) and takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11). Men are without excuse before God because the natural revelation of creation, conscience, and the law of God is written in their hearts is enough to show them that God

exists. All men, however, suppress the natural revelation of God in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18-20, 25; 2:14-16). Therefore, the only way a person can be saved is by hearing and believing in special revelation, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, accompanied by the Holy Spirit's power (Matthew 24:14; Romans 1:16-17; 10:8-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18).

Atonement of Sins

Christ's sacrificial atonement is sufficient for all mankind, but applied only to the elect who place their faith in the gospel (Romans 5:6, 8; I John 2:2). The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Christ (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus shed His blood to redeem those who would be saved (Leviticus 17:11, 14; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus came to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), died for the world of men (John 3:16-17; 1 John 4:14), is the Savior of all men (1 Timothy 4:10; Titus 2:11), tasted death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9), and is the all-sufficient sacrifice who satisfies the wrath of God for everyone who believes (propitiation). Jesus is the actual propitiation for those who believe and are born again, and the only Savior to be offered to the world of men through the gospel (I John 2:1-2). The gospel is good news for all men, that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-14).

Results of Salvation

Salvation includes total forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13-14), adoption into the family of God (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5-6), reconciliation to God (Romans 5:10-11; 11:15), one time, permanent justification before God based on the merits of Christ (Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16); propitiation before God (I John 2:2; Hebrews 2:17-18); eternal life with God (John 3:16, 36; 10:27-28); redemption from the curse of the law and slavery to sin and Satan (Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 2:14); sanctification—initial, progressive, and final (1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:2-3); deliverance from the lake of fire (John 5:24; Romans 5:9), and glorification (Romans 8:29-30).

The Manifestation of Salvation

Salvation is the supernatural work of God in a person that manifests itself in a transformed life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24). All true believers will bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance and will be known by the fruit that the Holy Spirit and saving grace produces in their life (Matthew 3:8-10; 7:16-23; 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-45). The kinds of fruit salvation produces in the life of every believer is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25), a hunger for God's Word (1 Peter 2:2), a pursuit of righteousness (Proverbs 4:18), increased godliness and Christ-likeness (Philippians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18), a desire to be with the saints (Hebrews 10:24-27; 1 John 2:19), and a desire to obey God in everything (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 5:9; 1 Peter 2:12).

Assurance of Salvation

We can know we are saved by the internal witness of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16-17; 1 John 3:24; 4:12-13) and by the righteousness which true saving faith produces in the life of every believer who receives the truth of the gospel (John 17:17; Colossians 1:3-6; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 2:3-4). A person who practices sin and rebellion against God has no assurance of salvation (James 2:14-26; 1 John 2:29; 3:4-10; 5:2). Everyone should regularly examine themselves to see whether they be in the faith (Psalm 139:23-24; Lamentations 3:40; 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

The Perseverance of the Saints

God saves men while they are His enemies (Romans 5:8). Once a person is saved by grace their salvation can never be lost or rejected (John 6:37, 39; Romans 8:38-39). God seals all believers with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption and He is given to believers as a pledge of their future inheritance (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). God enables every believer to persevere unto the end (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24) and loses none whom He has called (John 6:37, 39; 10:27-30). The saints persevere in their salvation not because of what they do, but because of the grace of God given to them (John 6:44, 65; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Peter 5:10; Jude 1).

The Church

The Purpose of the Church

The ultimate purpose of the Church is to give glory to God (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14) by submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ out of love and obeying His Word (John 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 5:3). The Church gives glory to God by worshiping Him in spirit and truth (John 4:21-24; Romans 12:1-2), by evangelizing the lost (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:23), and by equipping the saints for work of service (Matthew 24:45-47; 25:21-23; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Ephesians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:7-8; Titus 2:11-14).

The Universal Church

There is a Universal Church comprised of all true believers in heaven and on earth, who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and placed into the one spiritual body of Christ through repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:11-16; 4:4-6). The Church did not exist in the Old Testament, but was a mystery, born at Pentecost (Acts 2; Romans 11:25; 16:25-27). The Church-age will continue until the rapture of the Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 5:13-18).

The Local Church

We believe in the existence and autonomy of the local church. Local churches are comprised of all those in a specific geographical location who profess faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). In every local church, there may be those who profess to be believers, but are not (Matthew 7:21-22; Titus 1:15-16; Jude 1:4).

Church Discipline

The local church is responsible to look after the spiritual welfare of any of its members and discipline those who continue in unrepentant sin as instructed in the Scriptures (Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 5:1-11; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13; 3:10-11; Revelation 2:2, 14-15, 20).

The Church's Head, and Leaders

Jesus Christ is the Head, King, and Lord of the Church (Acts 2:36; Ephesians 4:15-16; 5:23; Colossians 1:18). All born-again believers are members of Christ's spiritual body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Jesus speaks to and leads the Church through biblically qualified elders who are His under-shepherds. God's under-shepherds, elders, pastors, or overseers must possess certain spiritual qualifications (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Elder qualified men

must demonstrate a high level of commitment to the local church before being appointed to the office of elder. They must be men who are spiritually mature, sound in doctrine, gifted, trained, and faithful teachers of the Word of God. Those appointed to the office of elder must be spiritual examples to the flock, regularly practicing hospitality, leading the church in prayer, discipling, and shepherding the church as those who will give an account to God (2 Timothy 2:24; Hebrews 13:17). Elders are to be an example of what it means to humbly serve Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:3). The church must also appoint faithful men who meet the qualification of deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13). Deacons are appointed to primarily help meet the physical and operational needs of the church and to assist the elders/pastors/overseers so they can focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4; 1 Timothy 4:6, 10-13, 15-16).

The Ordinances of the Church

The church has two ordinances: water baptism (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:38) and communion, or the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:20-26; Matthew 26:26-29). Both water baptism and communion should be observed in the local church by believers.

Water Baptism

Water baptism is for believers who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and are born again by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. Baptism is not a means of salvation or a means of receiving grace, but is an act of obedience, whereby a believer makes a public profession of his faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38, 41). Baptism symbolizes the inward reality of being united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-6). Baptism is to be by immersion (Mark 1:10; John 3:23; Acts 8:39).

Lord's Supper or Communion

Communion is an act of obedience, whereby a Christian remembers the sacrifice of Christ, proclaims the death of Christ, and anticipates the glories of Christ's kingdom to come (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24). Communion is not a means of salvation or grace. Communion is only for believers who are not living in unrepentant sin (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

Angels

Angels are created spirit beings who worship God and minister to believers (Exodus 20:11; Job 38:4-7; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 7:11-12). All angels were at one time holy, but when Satan rebelled, a third of the holy angels rebelled with him (Revelation 12:3-4). Fallen angels are called demons or evil spirits and will be judged along with Satan and thrown into the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Doctrine of Last Things

The Promises to Israel

Israel has a distinct and special future in God's redemptive plan. The unconditional or unilateral promises of God to Israel, those promises made by God that have no stipulations, in which God is the only binding party, have not and cannot be nullified, nor have they been transferred solely to

the Church. The Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenant promises will be fulfilled as promised to Israel (Genesis 15:1-21; 17:4-8, 13, 19; 22:18; 1 Chronicles 17:1-15; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 11).

The Kingdom

The Scriptures teach that there has always existed a universal kingdom of God (Psalm 29:10; 74:12; 145:13), that there will be a literal, earthly kingdom of Christ (Isaiah 2:2-4; 24:23; Daniel 2:44; Zechariah 14:9), and that there is a spiritual kingdom all believers belong to as servants of Christ, who is their King. Christians serve Christ in this earthly world as aliens, strangers, and ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; 5:20; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:11).

The Church Age

We are living in the Church age, a time where God is offering the kingdom primarily to the Gentiles (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:25-29). The Church age began at Pentecost (Acts 2) and will end at the rapture of the Church.

The Rapture

We believe in the pretribulation rapture of the Church, which is the catching away and instantaneous glorification of believers, both living and dead. We believe the rapture will occur unexpectedly, imminently, and immediately preceding the seven-year tribulation, also called Daniel's Seventieth Week (Daniel 9:24-27; Mt. 24:21-23). The rapture of the Church will occur at the end of the Church age. All the saints, both dead and alive, will be instantly glorified and caught up to meet the Lord in the air and be with Jesus Christ forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Christ's coming to both resurrect and glorify the dead and the living who are in Him can happen at any moment (1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:2; Titus 2:13).

The Tribulation

We believe the seven-year period of tribulation will occur immediately before Jesus Christ returns to earth in glory (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24; Revelation 6-19). During the tribulation, God will primarily focus His redemptive work on the ethnic nation of Israel, bringing many Jews to faith in their previously rejected Messiah (Romans 11:25-27; Hosea 3:5). The tribulation period will close when Christ bodily returns to earth (Zechariah 14:4, 9; Acts 1:11), separating the Sheep from the Goats (Matthew 25:31-34), binding Satan (Revelation 20:1-2), and setting up His literal, earthly kingdom (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4).

The Second Coming

We believe Jesus Christ will return again to earth in great glory, so that all eyes shall see Him. When Jesus comes again a second time in glory, He will slay the wicked and rescue the righteous who believe in Him. Jesus' Second Coming will occur shortly after the seven-year tribulation period. When Jesus returns, He will return physically, bodily, in plain sight, to the Mount of Olives, to rule and reign from Mount Zion, on the throne of David, over the entire world, for a literal thousand years (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4; Zechariah 14:3-4; Acts 1:9-12; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-7).

The Thousand Year Reign of Christ

During the millennial or thousand-year reign of Christ, the saints glorified in the rapture will rule and reign with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12; Rev. 20:6), the curse will be partially lifted (Isaiah 11), and men will live extended lives like they did before the flood (Isaiah 65:20). At the end of the

thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed again for a short time to deceive the nations (Revelation 20:3). Jesus Christ will then judge Satan, demons, and all men, both the living and the dead at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:7-9). After the Great White Throne judgment, the heavens and earth will be recreated, and the eternal state will ensue (Revelation 21-22).

Heaven and Hell

All mankind will end up in one of two eternal destinies—heaven or the lake of fire (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29). It is appointed for all men to die once and be judged (Hebrews 9:27). All unbelievers will appear before the Great White Throne to be judged according to their deeds (Revelation 20:11-15). Those who have repented of their sins and placed their faith in Jesus Christ will enjoy perfect happiness in heaven forever and receive rewards in accordance with their faithful service on earth (Matthew 24:45-47; 25:21-23; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 22:5). Those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ and will not submit to Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior will suffer conscious, eternal torment away from the presence of Christ and His angels in the lake of fire (Matthew 13:42; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 16:24; 12:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10; Revelation 14:11; 20:10, 15).

Teaching Positions on Various “Hot Topic” Issues

Below are a variety of “hot topic” issues arranged in alphabetical order that visitors often ask about when searching for a church. The statements below are not meant to be biblical defenses, but merely summary statements of what people can expect to be taught from the pulpit at Anchor Bible Church over the course of time. Those who desire to become members *do not need to hold to all the teaching positions below*, but they must agree not to teach contrary to them, so that unity can be maintained in the church.

Authority, Inerrancy, Infallibility, Inspiration, and Sufficiency of Scripture

We believe the Bible is literally the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, who moved men to write down God’s Word to mankind without error. Though there are minor copyist errors in ancient manuscripts of the Bible, we believe the Bible has been preserved through God’s providence, so that no doctrines have been corrupted. We believe the best literal translations of the Bible are, for all intents and purposes, the very Word of God. We believe the Scriptures alone are sufficient for all matters of faith, practice, and living the Christian life for the glory of God.

Biblical Counseling/Discipleship

We believe biblical counseling is focused discipleship. The elders should set the example in giving wise biblical counsel to those in need, but all Christians are called upon to help and encourage each other in obeying God’s Word through accurate interpretation and application of the Scriptures.

Calvinism Versus Arminianism

We believe theological labels are often not helpful because there are no standard definitions. In many instances, self-proclaimed followers of John Calvin or Jacobus Arminius don’t believe what Calvin or Arminius taught. Calvin and Arminius, though used by God, were fallible interpreters of the Word of God. Though Anchor Bible Church might generally be labeled as “Reformed Baptist,”

we desire to be known as Christians who place all of the fallible writings of men in subjection to the infallible Word of God (including this doctrinal statement).

Church Discipline

When needed we practice church discipline for members and regular attenders because we desire: 1) to obey and show love to Christ, 2) to show love to those in unrepentant sin, 3) restore people living in unrepentant sin to obedience to God's Word, 4) to encourage a holy fear of sinning in the entire congregation, 5) to maintain purity in the church, and 6) be a God-glorifying testimony to unbelievers in the world.

Church Leadership

We believe the terms *elders*, *pastors*, and *overseers* are used interchangeably to describe those who lead the church. Elder-qualified men must be godly, mature, gifted, trained, and meet all the biblical criteria for elders. Elders are called to lead, feed, protect, manage, and oversee the church as undershepherds of Jesus Christ. The church is required to submit to its elders. Those appointed to the office of elder *must already demonstrate* a high level of commitment to the local church, be gifted teachers, be discipling, be practicing hospitality, and leading the church in prayer. Elders are not merely decision makers, but active shepherds and teachers of God's Word. Deacons are faithful, godly men, appointed by the elders to assist the elders in shepherding the local church, but are not required to be gifted teachers.

Christ-Centered Preaching Versus Christo-exclusive Preaching

We believe Jesus Christ, the gospel, and God's historical redemptive plan of salvation are major themes in the Bible. We also affirm that many churches are failing to clearly and regularly preach the gospel. We do not believe the solution for churches failing to preach the gospel is to read Jesus into every text, contrary to the original author's intent. To do so is to commit "Christological eisegesis," i.e., reading or inserting into the text, adding to the Word of God, content foreign to the original author's intent. Though Christ might be preached in every sermon, He cannot be preached from every text, for He does not appear in every text. We are committed to preaching the gospel regularly and faithfully. We desire to preach the entire counsel of God's Word, all doctrines, all texts, proclaiming whatever the original author meant by what he wrote to his original audience. We reject "Christo-exclusivism," which is the overriding of the authorial intent of a text to insert Jesus Christ. We believe this to be a sinful, twisting of the Scriptures, and sets a bad example by mishandling the Word of God.

Christian Liberties

There are many areas of Christian liberty. Each Christian is to express their Christian liberties in obedience and submission to the Word of God. The Bible gives many instructions concerning the use of our liberties, but they boil down to making sure we show love to God by obeying God's Word and showing love to our neighbors, believer and unbeliever alike. Though forming personal convictions in the use of Christian liberties are necessary for each individual, we must avoid elevating our personal convictions to the same authority as Scripture or condemning others for not holding to our personal convictions. We must exercise our liberties in love, thinking of what is best for others, and not merely think of ourselves. Love should motivate Christians to exercise their liberties in wisdom, caution, for the glory of God, and the good of others.

Continuing Revelation and the Gift of Prophecy

We believe the sixty-six books of the Bible are God's "special revelation" to man. We believe the Bible is sufficient for everything pertaining to life and godliness, and that the biblical canon is closed. We do not believe God is giving inspired special revelation to people today, like He did to the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles of old. Christians are called to live by the Word of God alone, not by feelings, emotions, intuition, what we sense, or our interpretations of God's providential acts or events around us.

Divine Creation Versus Materialistic Evolution

We believe God created the heaven and earth and all they contain supernaturally, out of nothing, in six, literal, sequential, 24-hour days less than ten thousand years ago. We believe evolution is a false religion, based on unscientific assumptions, and a materialistic, man-centered world view. Evolution attacks biblical authority, the truthfulness of the authors of Scripture, and even Jesus Himself. Evolution is merely the best wrong answer that God-hating men have been able to come up with, having ruled out the truth. Evolution is a lie that produces tragic consequences and is incompatible with biblical Christianity.

Expository Preaching

Expository preaching uses objective Bible study principles to extract from biblical texts what the original author meant for his original audience to understand by he wrote i.e., the interpretation of a text. The expository preacher seeks to package truth that is objectively taken from a text of Scripture and then proclaim the truth to his listeners clearly and accurately, so God can speak to His people. We believe sequential expository preaching through books of the Bible is, in general, the best approach. Though other kinds of preaching have been used by God and are sometimes necessary, sequential, expository preaching through books of the Bible allows God to speak most clearly, comprehensively, and objectively to His people.

End Times Events

We believe the study, preaching, and teaching of biblical prophecy is important for the health of the church. Though a person's views of end time events are not a matter of salvation, how we interpret prophetic portions of the Bible has massive implications on what we believe about God, the Bible, how to interpret the Bible, and how we should presently live in light of what the Bible says will happen in the future. We hold to a literal, historical, grammatical, contextual interpretation of the Bible. We believe if the literal interpretation of a text makes sense, we should not seek another sense by adopting a figurative, metaphorical, or spiritualized meaning foreign to the original author's intent. How we study the Bible compels us to hold to a dispensational, premillennial, pretribulationist view of end time events.

Fallible Special Revelation

We do not believe there can be fallible special revelation. The Holy Spirit, being God, cannot err, therefore what He communicates to man cannot err. There is no such thing as fallible prophecy, visions, dreams, or inspired special revelation of any kind. The idea that there can be fallible special revelation is an accommodation to those in Charismatic circles who claim to receive special revelation from God, but what they claim is from the Lord doesn't come true. Those who fallibly make predictions "from the Lord" are either deceived or are false teachers and charlatans.

Gospel Ministry Versus the Social Gospel

We believe all ministry must fall under at least one of three distinct areas: 1) worshiping God in spirit and truth, 2) equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, or 3) evangelizing the lost. If at least one of these areas of ministry is not present, then the activity isn't a ministry, but an attempt to do good deeds, give money, support charitable causes, feed the poor, etc. The social gospel cannot be biblical ministry if it leaves out the preaching the gospel and calling sinners to repentance. The church does not exist to make sinners comfortable on their way to hell, but to love them by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to them as well as meeting physical needs. We believe the Bible makes a clear distinction between, and gives different instructions to, Christians about how they are to treat "the poor," those who want to work, but are prevented because of sickness or circumstances, and those who are lazy, indolent, idle, and sluggardly.

Immorality and Sexual Sins

Any sexual thoughts and activity contrary to the Scriptures and outside of biblically defined marriage comprised of a single biological male and female is sin, e.g., fornication, adultery, polygamy, polyandry, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, pornography, etc. The Bible says repeatedly that those who *practice* sexual sin will not inherit the kingdom of God, which means they cannot be Christians though they may profess otherwise. A life of unrepentant immorality reveals a person has never repented of their sin and been born again by God's grace. Though Christians commit sexual sins, they do not continue to live in unrepentant immorality. True believers keep confessing, repenting, turning from sexual sin to pursue holiness. Sexual intimacy is designed by God to be enjoyed in the context of marriage only. Christians are required by God to submit all their sexual passions to the Word of God and are able to do so by His all sufficient grace.

Interpreting the Scriptures

We believe in the literal, historical, grammatical, contextual method of interpreting the Bible. We also believe that every truly born-again believer is indwelt by the divine interpreter, the Holy Spirit. All things being equal, any believer should be able to understand any biblical text. Spiritual maturity, training in how to study the Bible, our understanding of systematic theology, spiritual giftedness, time spent in study, prayer, and meditation on the Word make a huge difference when trying to understand the meaning of the biblical text. Yet there are no "elite" interpreters of the Bible, who alone can discover the meaning of certain texts which other believers cannot discover.

Legalism and Lawlessness (Antinomianism)

We strive to avoid the extremes of legalism and antinomianism. Legalism appears in the Bible in several forms: 1) elevating man-made tradition to the same authority as Scripture and condemning others as sinning for not adhering to our traditions, 2) trying to be saved, justified, or earn God's favor by our works instead of by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and 3) practicing a cold, dead, orthodoxy, i.e., doing all the right things, yet mechanically and not from the heart out of love to God. We desire to avoid all forms of legalism. We also reject lawlessness or antinomianism, which is the false idea that because we are saved and sanctified by grace, we don't need to obey God and that if we try to obey God, we are sinning, living in the flesh, or legalists. We teach that Christians must obey all of God's Word either directly or in principle. We must walk in the Spirit, trusting in God's grace to obey. We believe that obeying the Bible by God's grace, for His glory, out of love for Christ, is not merely acceptable, but mandatory for all who call themselves Christians.

Marriage

God created and defines marriage in His Word. Genesis 2:24 teaches us that marriage requires: 1) one biological man and one biological woman; 2) the formation of a new family unit that takes priority over all other relationships; 3) the public declaration and willingness on the part of both the man and the woman to be married and 4) physical consummation of the marriage in sexual intimacy. People or governments do not have the authority to change the biblical definition of marriage. God does not acknowledge “same sex marriage,” “homosexual marriage,” “lesbian marriage,” etc., as marriage, but as sexual sin and perversion.

Obeying the Governing Authorities

The Bible teaches that governing authorities are established by God. Christians are repeatedly told in the New Testament to submit to and obey the governing authorities, even wicked governing authorities like those of the first century Roman government. Civil disobedience is only acceptable when the governing authorities tell Christians that they must sin against clear biblical mandates. In that case the Christian must obey God rather than men. Yet even in the rare instances where civil disobedience is necessary, the Christian must display the fruit of the spirit, live in humility, and be willing to suffer the consequences for disobeying the governing authorities in order to obey God.

Psychiatry and Psychology

The fields of modern Psychiatry and Psychology were developed by God-hating atheists and are weak or worthless in helping people with their *spiritual* problems. The Bible and God’s grace are sufficient to help people with all spiritual problems and the sins that plague humanity. Psychiatry and psychology sometimes accurately observe and diagnose people’s spiritual problems, yet they fail to offer biblical solutions. Psychology often misdiagnoses sins as diseases and slavery to sin as addiction. There are over one hundred different competing and contradictory schools of thought concerning how psychiatrists and psychologists should help people with their spiritual problems. History has borne out that psychiatry and psychology are bankrupt fields of study that fail to offer biblical solutions to people’s true spiritual needs.

Psychotropic Medications

People suffer from two general kinds of problems, physiological and spiritual. Medical doctors focus primarily on physical ailments. Psychologists and psychiatrists focus on mental or spiritual problems. There are times when spiritual problems create physical problems and vice versa. Psychotropic medications are in some instances a gracious provision from God. When a person is very traumatized, doesn’t know the Lord, doesn’t know how to cope with sin or the consequences of sin, psychotropic medications might be used to temporarily suppress the symptom of a spiritual problem until the gospel and biblical counsel can be administered. But you cannot cure spiritual problems with psychotropic medications.

Racism

The concept of racism is faulty because racism implies that a person of one race is prejudiced against a person of another race. The Bible, however, teaches there is only one race, the human race, and that all people are blood relatives descended from Adam and Eve. Biblically “racism” is the sin of hating your fellow man because they look, act, speak, or have different cultural or personal preferences than you do. People hate other people for many reasons, but the core sin is failing to obey the second great commandment “to love your neighbor as yourself.” The lie of

“racism” is the evil offspring of the greater lie of Darwinian evolution. Darwin taught that the reason some people groups look different is that they are different races and that some “races” are superior to others.

Roles of Men and Women in the Home and Church

We take a complementarian view of men and women in both the home and church. We believe men and women are equal in value and in salvation, but that God made men and women physically and emotionally different. God assigns to men and women different, but complementary roles in the home and church. In the home, men are called to lovingly lead their wives as servant leaders, submitting to God’s instructions to them as husbands. Wives are required to submit to and support their husband’s leadership in the home as the Word of God instructs them. In the church, biblically qualified men, who are appointed to the office of elder are called to lead the church. Women are never to teach, lead, or exercise authority over men in the church.

Sign Gifts i.e., Gifts of Miracles and Tongues

We believe God still performs miracles—salvation being a regular miracle of God. Sometimes God performs miracles in answer to prayer. Yet God is not giving men miraculous sign gifts in the church today. Sign gifts were given to verify and identify a messenger of God and his message during times when the Bible was being written. Now that we have the completed Biblical canon, the full and sufficient revelation of God, sign gifts are no longer needed. Men were given sign gifts during three distinct periods of history, which always meet these three criteria: 1) sign gifts were only given to a select few, 2) sign gifts were only given in a specific geographical location, and 3) sign gifts were only given while the Bible was being written. The three distinct periods when God gave men sign gifts were the time of Moses, the time of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, and the time of Jesus and the Apostles.

We believe God gave the gift of tongues during the time of the Apostles, while the New Testament was being written. The biblical gift of tongues is when a person is supernaturally gifted by God to speak in a known language, previously unknown to them, so that others who speak that known language can understand the Word of God being preached. Both the preacher who has the biblical gift of tongues and the listeners who hear someone preach with the gift of tongues understand what is being said. Those who do not speak the known language that is being spoken through the gift of tongues need an interpreter. The Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 14, distinguishes between the biblical gift of tongues and pagan ecstatic speech. Ecstatic speech is gibberish, not a known language, not edifying to others, can’t be interpreted, and the speaker doesn’t know what he is saying. The biblical gift of tongues edifies others, is practiced out of love for others, is destined to pass away, is used to evangelize the lost, is never to be practiced by women in the church and is to be used in an orderly manner. Sign gifts have never been the norm for the people of God. The Bible warns that in the latter days Satan will seek to deceive even the elect with false signs and wonders.

Social Justice, Intersectionality, and Critical Race Theory

The Bible teaches that there is one human race, that we are all blood relatives of Adam and Eve, and that all of mankind is corrupt, depraved, and in need of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. God created mankind to give Him glory. We glorify God by loving God and obeying His Word. Social justice, intersectionality, and critical race theory are unbiblical and worldly theoretical frameworks that can only exist where false doctrine, pride, bitterness, greed, and lack of

forgiveness exist. Christians are commanded to love their neighbor, forgive those who sin against them, knowing that all men have intrinsic value because they are all created in God's image.

The Local Church and its Relation to Parachurch Ministries

Parachurch ministries have arisen for two primary reasons. First, because local churches have failed to do what God has commanded. Second, because local churches often don't have the resources to do what parachurch ministries can do with collective resources e.g., mission agencies, Christian colleges, seminaries, etc. We believe the local church must take priority over parachurch ministries. Involvement in parachurch ministry is optional, while involvement in a local church is necessary. We also believe that parachurch ministries must be led by people who are accountable to the leadership of a local church and must operate according to God's Word.

Transgenderism

We believe people are assigned their gender by God at conception and it never changes. Neither surgeries, hormone therapy, seeking to change one's behavior or apparel can change a person's God-given gender. Those who try to change their gender are confused, deceived, miserable, and sinning. Transgenderism is a lie with harmful consequences for all who engage in it.

Traditions

Traditions are extra-biblical religious practices Christians are free to engage as long as they are not forbidden by God's Word. Traditions must not be elevated to the same authority as Scripture, nor are we to judge others because they do not observe our traditions. We do not sin if we violate man-made traditions.

Women Pastors or Elders

We believe the Bible forbids women teaching or exercising authority over men in the church. Women are given spiritual gifts to serve the church in many ways. They can serve children, women, and men, as long as they don't teach or exercise authority over men in the church. Women can never hold or be appointed to the office of elder, pastor, shepherd, or overseer.

Worship and Music

The entire life of a Christian is to be an act of worship. Music is not worship, but one of the many ways God has given that facilitates worship. Music doesn't worship, people worship. All acts of worship must be in accordance with the Word of God. God seeks true worshipers who worship Him in spirit, from the heart, and in truth, according to the Scriptures. It is significant that in the Pastoral Epistles, letters written to local church leaders about how Christians are to conduct themselves in the household of God, music is never mentioned. The Old Testament has much to say about worship in the Psalms, I Chronicles, and II Chronicles. The most significant New Testament text that addresses singing in the church is Col. 3:16, which teaches us the purpose of music and singing is to "teach and admonish one another with songs, hymns, and spiritual songs." Though there are different music styles, it is the goal of Anchor Bible Church to have music and singing that encourages the greatest number of people in the congregation to focus on what the Bible says about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God's works, God's will for our lives, God's plan for the future, and sound doctrine. Listening to the Word of God preached is the highest and most frequently mentioned form of corporate worship in the New Testament. When the Word of God is faithfully and accurately preached, God speaks to His Church.