



What We Teach **Our Doctrinal Distinctives**

Evangelizing | Establishing | Equipping

Faith Bible Church

What We Teach – Our Doctrinal Distinctives A Theological Perspective

Preface

The Apostle Paul gave this charge to the Ephesian elders, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God” (Acts 20:28). These words establish the principle occupation of local church leadership, the shepherding of the flock. To shepherd the flock of God is to take responsibility before God to watch, warn, teach, and lead His church unto holy and blameless living (Ephesians 1:3, 4, 5:26, 27; Philippians 1:9-11). This responsibility is necessarily carried out; not among professors, or counselors, or administrators; but in the plurality of God appointed elders who seek the Father’s full counsel for His flock. In response to this high calling, the elders of Faith Bible Church seek to present God’s people with clear teaching on important matters that confront believers in this generation.

Through this Statement of Faith titled, What We Teach, it is our aim to commend the Word of God to all of our people.

It is our utmost desire to present this Statement of Faith in the pastoral manner described in Scripture. Paul expressed our desired aim when he wrote, we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus sake (II Corinthians 4:5).

Introduction

Recognizing that the Bible is the very Word of the living God to man and understanding the priority of knowing and obeying its truths, the elders at Faith Bible Church are deeply committed to studying and teaching with diligence and authority.

The central ministry of Faith Bible Church is the continuous imparting of Scripture to the people of God that they may know God, serve Him in worship and ministry and reach out with the Gospel of Christ in obeying the Great Commission.

Through study, the elders have come to conviction regarding the major theological truths of the Bible. This booklet presents those major truths. These are the primary doctrines of the Christian faith, and they reflect the heart of the teaching here at Faith Bible Church.

The Holy Scriptures

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man. Thus the sixty-six books of the Bible, given to us by the Holy Spirit, constitute the verbal plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (I Corinthians 2:7-14; II Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is verbally inspired in every word (II Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture; which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; I Corinthians 2:13; II Timothy 3:15&17; Hebrews 4:12; II Peter 1:20&21).

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

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

God

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; I Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14) - each equally deserving worship and obedience.

God the Father

We teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; I Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His

designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; II Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and events (I Chronicles 29:11).

In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-44), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (I Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5, Hebrews 12:5-9).

God the Son

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

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

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

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23-25; Luke 1:26-35), that He was God incarnate (John 1:1-14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; I Peter 1:18-19).

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

We teach that through His death, Christ accomplished redemption for believing sinners. His death was:

- Voluntary, John 19:30,
- Substitutionary (in believer's place) Matthew 20:28; I Timothy 2:6; I Peter 2:24,
- Propitiatory (in satisfaction of God's holy character and perfect Law), I John 2:2,
- Reconciliatory (breaking down the hostility - caused by sin - of God toward the sinner, and the sinner toward God, thus making peace), Romans 5:1-11,
- Redemptive (the purchase of men from the domain of sin to the domain of righteousness), Colossians 1:12-14; Romans 6:5-10; I Peter 2:9-10.

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

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

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

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23): believers (I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:10), living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46), unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

As the mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5), the Head of His Body the church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33); He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14; Acts 17:30-31).

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; I Peter 2:24; 3:18).

God the Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, un-derived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including:

- Intellect (I Corinthians 2:10-13),
- Emotions (Ephesians 4:30),
- Will (I Corinthians 12:11),
- Eternality (Hebrews 9:14),
- Omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10),
- Omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14),
- Omnipotence (Romans 15:13),
- Truthfulness (John 16:13).

In all the divine attributes He is coequal and of the same substance with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 13:14).

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

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (I Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration and in baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (Titus 3:5, I Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; II Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

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

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by excessive displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 12:4-7, 11; II Corinthians 3:18).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of

pointing to and authenticating the apostles and a few other key men as revealers of divine truth, and were a sign for unbelievers and verification that God was working with other people groups beyond the Jews.

We see these special sign gifts were given to provide a foundation for the church. They were never intended to be normative for Christ's Church, like the gift of apostleship. We believe the sign gifts gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed, as authority was established, and as the foundation of the church was completed.

The scriptures do not say verbatim that all the sign gifts will cease, nor do they say that they will continue. It appears to us that they were foundational in nature because signs and wonders were never normative in redemptive history, and they are not mentioned in any of Pau's later epistles to the church.

We believe that the sign gifts have ceased but that, given a situation similar to the apostolic first century; God could sovereignly bestow them today. Certain critical phases in God's program through history have required special evidence. The transitional phase represented by the period of Christ and His apostles were one of those times. Those who had been steeped in Judaism all their lives needed elements of tangible proof that the new movement founded by Jesus Christ was genuinely of God. Those whose background was exclusively heathen also needed these signs. The God of the Old Testament was completely strange to them as was the new message brought by evangelists such as Paul. Divinely produced credentials certainly were in order, for example, tongues and the other sign gifts. (I Corinthians 1:22, I Corinthians 14:22, II Corinthians 12:12, Hebrews 2:4, Ephesians 4:7-12, Ephesians 2:20, Acts 2:43, Acts 5:12, Acts 14:3&4, Acts 15:12 and Acts 19:11).

Man

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15, 25; James 3:9).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, and live his life in the will of God, thus accomplishing God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We teach that men and women alone are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6, James 3:9) and, therefore, are of more value than other parts of God's creation such as animals, plants and other natural resources (Genesis 1:26-30, 9:1-4, I Timothy 4:3-5).

We teach that human life begins at conception, ends when the spirit leaves the body, and that every single instance of human life (no matter the stage or quality of it) is to be valued. Since each life is actively created and sustained by our Creator God (Genesis 25:22-26, Psalm 139:13-16, Jeremiah 1:5, Acts 17:28, Colossians 1:26-27), any intentional termination of a human life (including the unborn or those who are unable to care for themselves) is murder, as such acts usurp God's authority as the Sovereign Creator who alone has the right to end a human life (Genesis 9:6, Job 14:5).

Gender Roles and Marriage

We teach the absolute equality, dignity and worth of both men and women as each gender has been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). Therefore, the specific roles, functions and duties that each gender is called to perform in the home and the church is seen as equally valuable and honorable (Galatians 3:28, I Peter 3:7).

We teach that although men and women are equal in that they are image bearers of the one true God, men and women are not the same. For not only has God created men and women with biological differences, the Scriptures teach that each gender has been created by God for specific roles and responsibilities within the home and church (Genesis 2:18, I Corinthians 11:3, 7, I Timothy 2:12-15).

For men, this includes loving and sacrificial leadership, headship and protection in the home (Ephesians 5:22-27, 6:4, Colossians 3:18, II Corinthians 3:8-9, I Peter 3:5-6, 7); being the primary financial provider of his family (I Timothy 5:8); and leadership and teaching authority in the church if he is qualified and has the desire (I Corinthians 14:34, I Timothy 2:12, 3:1-2, 4-5).

For women, this includes submission to and respect of her husband (Ephesians 5:22, 33, Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:4-5, I Peter 3:1-6); primarily focusing on tending to the home and child-rearing within the context of the family unit (I Timothy 2:15, 5:14, Titus 2:4-5); and serving and using her gifts in the local church without teaching and having authority over men (I Corinthians 14:34, I Tim 2:12-15, 3:1). We realize that married women are at liberty to seek employment outside of the home, so long as her employment is mutually agreed upon between her and her husband, and does not prevent her from fulfilling her clearly God-given role as a wife, mother and keeper of the home.

We teach that marriage was instituted by God during the first week of creation and is to be between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-5, 9, Mark 10:6-7, I Corinthians 7:2-4, Ephesians 5:31).

We teach that God recognizes all marriages between one man and one woman, regardless of the governing body regulating the marriage, the spiritual state of those being married, the person officiating the wedding, or the location of the wedding itself.

God will hold each person in such marriages accountable to fulfill their marital duties, roles and responsibilities (Hebrews 13:4, Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:8-9).

We teach that God's intended design for marriage is that it be a permanent union for life (Malachi 2:16, Matthew 19:9, Mark 10:8, 11-12, I Corinthians 7:10-14, 39). However, we recognize that God, in His graciousness, has allowed for divorce (as a last resort) in the event of unrepentant adultery (Matthew 5:32, 19:9) or desertion by an unbelieving spouse (I Corinthians 7:15).

Total Depravity

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost, totally depraved. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; I Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; I Timothy 2:13-14; Colossians 2:13; I John 1:8).

We teach that the consequence of Adam's sin has been transmitted (imputed) to all people of all ages (Romans 5:12-21, I Corinthians 15:21-22), Jesus Christ being the one sinless exception (Hebrews 4:15, I Peter 2:22, I John 3:5). All men are thus sinners by divine declaration, by nature, and by choice (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18; 23; 5:10-12; James 2:10).

Salvation

We teach that salvation is entirely the work of God and not man (Ephesians 2:4-9). This salvation was determined before the foundation of the world and was predicated solely upon God's love, and not upon anything that man might do in the future. (Ephesians 1:4-6; Romans 8:29-30; Romans 3:10-18)

We teach that it was Christ's redemptive work that atoned for man's sin as He was made sin (II Corinthians 5:21). Men are saved and justified on the grounds of Christ's death alone (Hebrews 10:14) by God's grace through faith alone, sola fide (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The Effectual Call

We teach that the effectual call is God's gracious work in which He, according to His eternal purpose and electing grace, powerfully subdues the sinner's rebellion, causing him to turn to Christ in unfeigned faith and heartfelt repentance. (John 6:44-45; Romans 8:28-30; I Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 1:15-16; II Timothy 1:9)

This means that at God's appointed time (Galatians 1:15-16), He subdues the sinner's rebellion and makes him willing to embrace Christ in saving faith (Psalm 110:3). Whenever sinners freely turn from sin, and receive Christ, they have been enabled to do so by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in their souls (John 1:12-13; 6:44-45; II Thessalonians 2:13-14). It is this inward call that secures obedience to the outward call made through the preaching of the Word. The inward call is irresistible and as such all whom God calls will come to Christ since God, not man, is in complete control of salvation (John 6:45; Matthew 11:20-27; Romans 9:16; I Corinthians 1:30; 4:7; II Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 1:15-16; II Timothy 1:9). The effectual call is extended to the elect only, in accordance with the eternal purpose of God (Romans 8:28; II Timothy 1:9).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are communicated (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and it is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24; I Peter 1:23) so as to secure voluntary obedience to the gospel. It is the cause, not the result, of the believer's saving faith. Regeneration will be manifested by repentance, faith and righteous living. Good works are its proper evidence and fruit (I Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10) They will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; II Peter 1:4-10).

This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 3:18). Such conformity culminates in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; II Corinthians 5:17; I Peter 1:23; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:2-3; Titus 3:5).

Unconditional Election

We teach that election is the unconditional act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; II Thessalonians 2:13-14; II Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1-2; I Peter 1:1-2).

We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:18-19&36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44, 65; Acts 13:48; Romans 3:10-18; I Corinthians 2:14).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own, nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; I Peter 1:2).

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

Particular Redemption

We teach that the redemptive, atoning work of Christ was particular, or limited, in its design, application, and accomplishment to the elect only. (Matthew 20:28; Matthew 26:28; John 10:11, 15-16; John 17:6, 9, 19; Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 9:28) It was not intended to make salvation possible for every person but actually was specifically intended to solely atone for the sins of the elect. (Romans 8:29-30; John 11:51-52) Christ, acting as the representative of all those given to Him by the Father, fully satisfied the infinite demands of God's law, and accomplished eternal redemption for the elect from every tribe, people and nation. (Revelation 5:9) Even though Christ's obedience and sufferings were of infinite value and sufficient to expiate the sins of the entire world had this been God's purpose, the accomplishments of His death were, by God's eternal design, limited to the elect only. (Matthew 1:21; John 6:38-39)

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; II Corinthians 7:10) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 12:3; II Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; I Peter 2:24), as well as the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

Sanctification and the Perseverance of the Saints

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition

(Acts 20:32; I Corinthians 1:2-30; 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10-14; 13:12; I Peter 1:2).

We teach that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing he enjoys positionally through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17-19; Romans 6:1-22; II Corinthians 3:18; I Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

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

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word. This assurance, however, should not be mistaken as an occasion for sin. God in His holiness cannot tolerate persistent sin in His children, and in infinite love He corrects them. True faith in Christ is expressed by a fruitful, God-pleasing life that endures until death (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:6-8; I John 5:13).

Preservation of the Saints (Eternal Security)

We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, will persevere (endure) until the end and are kept by God's power and thus are secure in Christ forever. In short, those who persevere will be preserved. (Matthew 10:22; I Peter 5:10; John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; I Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

Separation

We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; II Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God and out of the conviction that our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior.

We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy, worldliness, and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2, I Corinthians 5:9-13; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; I John 3:1-10).

The Church

We teach that all who put their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church (I Corinthians 12:12-13), the Bride of Christ (II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the Body of Christ was planned from eternity past, began on the day of Pentecost (Ephesians 1:3-5; Acts 2:1-21, 38-47), and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own in the Rapture (I Corinthians 15:15-47; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the Church is distinct from Israel (I Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that the visible pattern for the Church is that of local assemblies, which are the means for fulfillment of the great commission.

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual Body are commanded to associate themselves together in local assemblies (I Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We teach that a particular local church, gathered and completely organized according to the Bible, consists of officers and members (Philippians 1:1). The officers - appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church - are elders and deacons. These elders are appointed for special duties - according to the biblical pattern - to lead, feed and protect the flock under God's care (Acts 20:17-30; I Peter 5:1-4). The duties of the deacons are to order the temporal affairs of the church, such as the care of widows and physical ministry (illustrated in Acts 6:1-7).

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to

cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should also determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; I Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; I Peter 5:1-4).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), through instruction of the Word (II Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), through fellowship (Acts 2:47; I John 1:3), through keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and through advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:47-48; Acts 1:8).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (I Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We teach the need of the church to submit to God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; I Corinthians 12:4-31; I Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another.

The age of miraculous signs came to a close with the end of the apostles (Acts 2:43; 5:12; 15:12; 2 Corinthians 12:12). The only gifts in operation today are the non-revelatory, equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8).

The majority of biblical miracles happened in three relatively brief periods of biblical history through extraordinary messengers from God - Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and the apostles. Miracles introduced new eras of revelation. Moses and Joshua wrote the first six books of the Bible, Elijah and Elisha introduced the prophetic age and the apostles wrote nearly all the New Testament (A.D. 33-96).

With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message. Confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (I Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers.

We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (II Corinthians 12:7-10; James 5:13-16; I John 5:14-15).

We teach that two ordinances have been entrusted to the local church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It signifies the believer's union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (I Corinthians 11:28-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (I Corinthians 10:16).

Gospel Proclamation

We teach that God accomplishes His saving work through the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. (Romans 10:14, 17; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) This proclamation of the gospel includes a free offer of salvation to all who will repent of their sin and turn in saving faith to trust Christ as Lord and Savior. (Isaiah 45:21-22; Matthew 11:28; John 3:16; Romans 10:13) Thus, the sovereign work of God in electing some to eternal life, the redemption accomplished by Christ in His atoning work, and the truth that regeneration is the supernatural sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, is not a hindrance or discouragement to the proclamation of the gospel. On the contrary, this divine saving work of God is the warrant and the ground of our hope that our evangelization is not in vain in the Lord. (Isaiah 55:11; Matthew 28:18-19; John 6:37)

We teach that the commission given by the Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations is binding on His Church to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-28; Acts 1:8)

Angels

We teach that angels are created beings; therefore, they are not to be worshiped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created by God and for God to serve and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 13-14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

Fallen Angels

We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking

numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10); that he is the prince of this world, who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20); and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Last Things (Eschatology)

DEATH

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; II Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (I Thessalonians 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6) when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:20-21; I Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-57). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; II Corinthians 4:14) and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrected body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

We teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air before the seven year tribulation (I Thessalonians 4:16-17; 5:9; Titus 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (John 14:1-3; I Corinthians 15:51-53; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:15-5:11) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10).

THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

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

THE SECOND COMING AND THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

We teach that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).

We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).

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

THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST

We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment.

We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection. Whereupon receiving their judgment, they will be committed to an eternal

conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41&46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15).

ETERNITY

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15); the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (II Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22).

Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy fellowship with God and one another forever (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (I Corinthians 15:24-28) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (I Corinthians 15:28).