

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The whole of our doctrine is the Bible. Below, we have attempted to highlight some of the key truths established in the Scriptures. We do not claim that the below doctrinal statement is infallible or without error. It is what we see revealed in the Word of God as far as the light we currently have. Being finite, we wholeheartedly ask for correction from the Word of God to any portion that does not accurately reflect its teaching. We are not bound by this doctrinal statement, but by the whole counsel of the Word of God.

God

1. We believe that there is but one true and living God^a eternally existent in three Persons: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit;^b all having the same attributes and qualities, yet so as there are not three gods, but one^c - each having the whole of the divine essence, yet distinct from one another so that the persons are not to be confused nor the substance divided.

God is glorious.^d His glory stems from all that He is - all His attributes.^e This holy^f and eternal^g Spirit^h is infinite and unchanging in His being and perfection.ⁱ Thus, He cannot be fully comprehended by finite man.^k

God fully exists everywhere, yet He is separate from and far above His creation.^l He knows all things^m because He has decreed all things.ⁿ He is all-powerful,^o all-great,^p and all-wise,^q and as such rules over all as sovereign^r - working all things according to His own will so that all things will ultimately abound to the praise of His glory.^s He is self-sufficient and is in no way dependent upon His creation.^t He is a God of love who is compassionate and forgiving.^u Yet, He is also pure, righteous, and just, and in righteousness will judge mankind.^v

God can do anything that is consistent with His nature and His eternal purpose. He cannot deny Himself, nor can He lie.^w God is jealous for His own honor and glory and will display it in grace and mercy, as well as in judgment and wrath.^x

a) Isa. 44:6-8; Jer. 10:10; 1 Cor. 8:4-6

b) Mt. 28:19; 1 Jn. 5:7

c) Deut. 6:4

d) Ex. 15:11; Ps. 145:5

e) Ex. 33:18-34:8

f) Isa. 6:3; Rev. 15:4

g) Ps. 90:2; Deut. 33:26-27; 1 Tim. 1:17

h) Jn. 4:24; 1 Tim. 6:16

i) Jer. 23:24; 1 Kings 8:27; Ps. 147:5;
Isa. 40:28

j) Malachi 3:6; James 1:17

k) Rom. 11:33-36; Job 26:14; Ps. 139:6

l) Ps. 139:7-12; Col. 1:16

m) Job 37:16; Ps. 139:1-4; Heb. 4:13

n) Isa. 44:7; Isa. 46:10-11

o) Gen. 18:14; Rev. 19:6

p) Ps. 96:3-4; Ps. 145:3

q) Eph. 3:10; 1 Tim. 1:17

r) From events and rulers

(Dan. 4:25, 34-35; Prov. 21:1)

To the flight of sparrows

(Mt. 10:29)

To the casting of lots

(Prov. 16:33)

To the salvation of sinners

(Eph. 1:3-6; Rom. 9:15-16)

s) 1 Tim. 6:15-16; Eph. 1:9,11-12

Eph. 3:11; Isa. 42:8; 43:7,21;

48:9-11; Num.14:21; Hab. 2:14

t) Acts 17:24-25

u) 1 Jn. 4:8; Ps. 86:5,15

v) 1 Jn. 3:3; Ps.11:7; Nah.1:2-3;

Acts 17:31

w) 2 Tim. 2:13; Titus 1:2

x) Isa. 42:8; 48:9-11; Eph. 1:5-6

Rom. 9:21-23; Ps. 83:17-18

The Bible

2. We believe that God has revealed Himself,^a and all that is necessary to life and salvation^b in the sixty-six books of Holy Scripture which are the written word of God.^c All Scripture was given by the inspiration of God,^d and as such is the final authority - its authority being derived from its Author^e and not from the opinions of men.^f God's Word is truth and as such cannot be broken.^g

We accept as absolute truth only that which is supported by direct proof from Scripture. The Scripture itself, when illumined by the Spirit of God, provides us with all the information that we need to rightly interpret the Word of God.^h The Bible interprets itself. The Old Testament Scriptures are not self-contained revelation, but they find their fulfilment in the New Testament.ⁱ Every passage must be understood in light of the whole counsel of God's Word and the centrality of Jesus Christ.^j

a) Heb. 10:7

b) Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Ps. 19:7-11

2 Peter 1:2-4

c) 1 Thess. 2:13; Jn. 17:17; Ps. 119

d) 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21

e) Isa. 45:23; Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Cor. 14:37

f) 1 Thess. 2:13; Isa. 8:20; Luke 10:16

g) Jn. 17:17; Jn. 10:35; Mt. 5:18

h) 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:10-13

i) Jn. 5:39; Luke 24:25-27,44-49;
Acts 26:22-23; Rom. 1:1-3

j) Heb. 10:7; Col. 2:16;

2 Cor. 3:14-16

Man's Creation and Fall

3. We believe that God, by His powerful word,^a freely created the universe^b out of nothing.^c All things visible and invisible were created by Him and for Him.^d He continues to sustain His creation^e and rule over it, even now.^f As the pinnacle of His creation,^g He made our first father, Adam, in His own image^h - sinless and upright.ⁱ God appointed Adam head and representative of the whole human race.^j Thus, He made all Adam's offspring liable to the effects of Adam's obedience or disobedience to His commandment.^k

a) Gen. 1:3; Jn. 1:1-3; Ps. 33:6,9

b) Ps. 102:25; Ps. 8:3; Acts 17:24-25

Jer. 10:12-13

c) Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3

d) Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11; Isa. 43:7

Ps. 19:1; Rom. 11:36

e) Ps. 119:90-91; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3

f) Ps. 115:3; Isa. 45:5-13; 46:10

Dan. 4:25,34-35; Acts 17:26-28

Ps. 47:7-8

g) Ps. 8:5-6

h) Gen. 1:27; 5:1

i) Gen. 1:31; Eccl. 7:29

j) Rom. 5:12

k) Rom. 5:18; 1 Cor. 15:21

4. We believe that Adam disobeyed God's commandment,^a fell from his original righteousness into sin, and brought death,^b condemnation,^c and corruption^d upon himself and all his offspring.

a) Gen. 3:1-7

b) Gen. 2:17; 3:8-12; Rom. 5:12-17;
1 Cor. 15:21-22; Eph. 2:1;
Col. 2:13

c) Rom. 5:16,18; Eph. 2:3; Jn. 3:18;
Ps. 21:8-10

d) Eph. 4:17; Titus 1:15; Jer. 17:9;
Isa. 1:4-6; Rom. 3:10-12

5. We believe that it is therefore utterly beyond the power and desire of fallen man to understand the things of God^a, to seek Him^b, to keep His commandments^c, to embrace the gospel^d, to repent of sin^e, or to trust in Christ^f. Nevertheless, these are the very things God requires of him^g.

a) Jn 8:43; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:18

b) Jn 5:40; Rom. 3:10-12

c) Rom. 8:7

d) 1 Cor. 1:18; Jn. 1:12-13; 6:44,65

e) Jn 8:34; Rom. 6:20

f) Matt. 12:34; Jer. 13:23

g) Luke 13:1-5; Jn. 3:18-19; Acts 17:30

Election

6. We believe that God, in Christ^a, before the foundation of the world^b and for His own glory^c, did elect an innumerable number of mankind^d to eternal life as an act of His grace^e and an expression of His love^f; and that this election was in no way dependent upon His foresight of their faith^g, decision^h, worksⁱ, or merit^j.

a) Eph. 1:4,6

b) Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13

c) Eph. 1:6,12,14

d) Gen. 15:5; cf. Gal. 3:16,29, 3:7;
Rev. 7:9-10

e) 2 Tim. 1:9

f) Eph. 1:4-5; 2:4; 1 Jn. 4:19

g) Acts 13:48

h) Jn. 1:13; Rom. 9:16

i) Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5

j) Rom. 9:10-13; Eph. 1:6

The Person and Work of Christ

7. We believe that Christ was sent into the world by His heavenly Father^a to redeem the elect of mankind^b and rule over God's kingdom as Lord^c. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit^d in the womb of the virgin Mary^e, and born of her, yet without sin^f. He lived a sinless life^g, perfectly fulfilling the law of God^h. This union of the divine and human made Jesus forever both God and man in one Personⁱ. The Lord Jesus is the mediator between God and man^j. As man, He is our elder brother^k and High Priest^l before God^m, representing us to God the Fatherⁿ. As God, He is the visible image of the invisible Father^o, representing God to us^p.

a) Jn. 17:18; 20:21

b) Mt. 1:21; Luke 19:10; Jn. 17:2;
Eph. 1:4-7; 5:25-27

c) Luke 2:11; Jn. 18:37; Acts 2:30-36;
Phil. 2:8-11

d) Luke 1:35

e) Mt. 1:16; Luke 1:31

f) 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 1:19

g) Heb. 4:15; 7:26

h) Phil. 2:8; Jn. 17:4; Heb. 10:5-9;
Mt. 5:17

i) Jn. 1:1-2,14; Jn.20:28; Mt. 1:23

Heb. 1:3; 2:14,17; Col. 2:9

j) 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 12:24

k) Heb. 2:11-12, 17

l) Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16

m) 1 Peter 3:22

n) Heb. 7:25; 1 Jn. 2:1

o) Jn. 1:18; Col. 1:15; 2:9

p) Jn. 1:18; 14:9

8. We believe that as Prophet and Teacher^a, Christ reveals to the elect^b, by His Word and Spirit, all that is needed for life and godliness^c. As God's Son, Christ reveals God to us and speaks God's Words to us, in a way that no other prophet could^d.

a) Acts 3:22; Jn. 3:34

b) Mt. 11:27

c) Jn. 14:26; 16:12-14; 2 Peter 1:2-4

d) Jn. 14:6; 17:3; Heb. 1:1-3; Jn. 1:14,18; Mt. 7:28-29

9. We believe that as High Priest, Christ once offered Himself up to God^a on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice^b for the elect^c, thereby propitiating God's wrath which was upon them^d, procuring their reconciliation with God^e, and redeeming them from the curse of the law^f. Now, He continually intercedes for them^g in the presence of His Father in heaven^h, thereby assuring their perseverance in holiness unto the endⁱ.

- a) Heb. 7:27
- b) Heb. 10:12; Isa. 53:5; 2 Cor. 5:21
- c) Mt. 1:21; Eph. 5:25; Jn. 10:11
- d) Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17
- e) Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:21-22

- f) Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:14
- g) Heb. 7:25
- h) Rom. 8:34
- i) 1 Cor. 1:8; Jude 24

10. We believe that as King, Christ conquered His enemies^a. He was declared the Son of God with power in His bodily resurrection from the dead^b, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, enthroned in glory as Lord^c; thus inaugurating His Kingdom^d. He poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost to carry forward His work on earth^e. He rules in the hearts of His people^f, subduing their sin^g and enabling them to love and obey Him^h. He rules over all creation, visible and invisibleⁱ, and shall physically return at the end of the age, revealing Himself as Lord and judging the world in righteousness^j.

- a) Col. 2:15; Luke 11:20-22;
1 Peter 3:21c-22;
- b) Rom. 1:4
- c) Acts 2:32-36; Rom. 8:34;
Phil. 2:9-11
- d) Acts 2:30-36; John 18:36-37
- e) Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8, 2:33

- f) Gen. 49:10; Ezek. 36:27; Jer. 31:33;
Heb. 8:10
- g) Titus 2:11-12
- h) Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:11
- i) Col. 1:16; Acts 10:36
- j) Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rev. 19:11-16;
Mt. 24:29-31

The Holy Spirit and Salvation

11. We believe that God the Son has sent forth the Holy Spirit^a to apply the sacrifice of Christ to the elect^b by convincing them of their sin and misery^c, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ^d, and renewing their wills^e, thus persuading and enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ through faith alone, whom has been freely offered to them in the gospel^f. This work of the Holy Spirit, which is called regeneration^g or rebirth^h, is accomplished through the instrumentality of the Word of Godⁱ and gives spiritual life^j to an otherwise spiritually dead sinner^k. All believers have the Spirit of God^l.

- a) Jn. 16:7; Acts 2:33
- b) Titus 3:4-7
- c) Jn. 16:8
- d) Jn. 16:13-14; Acts 16:14;
1 Cor. 2:10-14; Jn. 3:3
- e) Ezek. 36:26; Phil. 2:13

- h) Jn. 3:3; 1 Peter 1:3
- i) Jn. 5:24; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23
- j) Eph. 2:1,5; 2 Cor. 5:17
- k) Jude 19; Eph. 2:1-7
- l) Rom. 8:9,14-17

- f) Ps. 65:4; 110:3; Eph. 2:8-9 Gen 15:6; Jn. 1:12-13; 3:15-18,36; 5:24; 6:28-29; 6:35,47; Acts 16:30-31; Rom. 3:28; 4:5; 5:1-2; 10:4; 10:9-10; 11:6; Phil. 3:9; Titus 3:5; 2 Tim. 1:12.
- g) Titus 3:5

12. We believe that the elect, having been brought to faith by the ministry of the Spirit^a, are justified^b (that is forgiven of all their sins^c and declared righteous in the sight of God^d) on the sole basis of Christ's righteousness imputed to them^e. Although sin may interrupt the joy of the fellowship with God^f and bring upon them the loving discipline of their heavenly Father^g, they are never more nor less justified than when they first believed^h. All the elect, both before Christ's first advent and those after, are justified in the same mannerⁱ. Apart from Christ, there is no salvation^j.

a) Acts 18:27; Gal. 4:6; Phil. 1:29;
Titus 3:5
b) Rom. 3:24; 5:1
c) Eph. 1:7
d) Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21
e) Rom. 5:18-19; Phil. 3:9

f) Ps. 51:12; 2 Cor. 7:9
g) 1 Cor. 11:29-32; Heb. 12:7-10
h) Rom. 8:1
i) Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:9; Hab. 2:4;
Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11
j) Acts 4:12; John 14:6

13. We believe that those who are thus justified are also adopted as God's own children^a and made joint heirs with Christ^b. They are given the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of their redemption^c through Whom they cry out, "Abba, Father^d!" They shall, therefore, bear the fruit of the Spirit^e throughout the remainder of their lives^f.

a) Gal. 4:5-6
b) Rom. 8:17
c) Eph. 1:13-14

d) Rom. 8:15
e) Ezek. 36:27; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 2:10
Jn. 15:1-8,16; Rom. 8:1-17
f) Rom. 8:35-37, 2 Cor. 2:14; Phil. 1:6

14) We believe that the Spirit indwells all true believers^a and works in them, by means of the Scriptures^b, that which is pleasing in His sight^c. Having freed them from the power of sin^d, He conforms them into the image of Christ^e and enables them more and more to put to death the deeds of the body and live unto righteousness^f. Nevertheless, due to their remaining corruption, this process is never perfected in this life but rather gives rise to a continual war (the flesh striving against the Spirit and the Spirit striving against the flesh^g), which shall continue until Christ takes them home in glory and frees them from the presence of sin^h.

a) Rom. 8:9,14
b) Acts 20:32; 1 Peter 1:23
compare Eph. 5:18 with Col. 3:16
c) Rom. 7:4
d) Rom. 6:17-18

e) Rom. 8:29
f) Rom. 8:13
g) Gal. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:11
h) Rom. 8:23

15) We believe that those who profess faith^a yet exhibit a pattern of life governed by sin are self-deceived^b and are still in a lost condition^c.

a) Matt. 7:21

b) Jas. 2:20; 1 Jn. 2:9, 11

c) Gal. 5:19-21; Heb. 12:14; 1 Jn. 2:4-6; 2 Pet. 2:22

God's Covenants and The Law

16) We believe that God has maintained one eternal purpose in Christ^a which has been expressed through a multiplicity of distinct historical covenants^b. Prominent among these^c are those designated the Old Covenant (also known as the Mosaic or First Covenant^d) and the New Covenant^e. The former, confined to the people of Israel alone^f, was established while that nation was assembled before Mt. Sinai^g and was later made obsolete^h through its fulfillment by the life and death of Jesus the Messiahⁱ. The Old Covenant was comprised wholly of shadows^j pointing ultimately to Jesus and His body, the Church^k. Therefore, the age in which it remained operative was at all times a period of immaturity^l as compared to the age of fulfillment which was inaugurated with Christ's first advent^m.

a) Eph. 3:11

b) Eph. 2:12; Rom. 9:4

c) Gal 4:24

d) Heb. 8:7; 9:1

e) Heb 8:13; Luke 22:20

f) Deut. 5:3

g) Deut. 5:2-3; 1 Kings 8:9;

Gal. 3:17

h) Luke 5:36-38; Heb. 8:13, 7:12; Gal. 3:19
2 Cor. 3:6-11

i) Eph. 2:14-15; Matt. 5:17; Rom. 8:3, 10:4

j) Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 10:1

k) Heb. 11:9-10; Gal. 3:8; Jn. 8:56

l) Gal. 3:23-25; 4:3

m) Matt. 1:22; 2:17; 4:14; Luke 1:68-79;
Acts 26:22-23

17) We believe that the Old Covenant, containing a single, unified law code^a, was a legal, conditional covenant^b requiring perfect and complete obedience of all those under it^c. On the one hand, it promised life to all who obeyed it^d, and, on the other hand, it pronounced a curse upon all its transgressors^e. Therefore, it inescapably brought death to all who sought to be justified by it^f -- not because of a deficiency in the law (which in itself is "holy, just, and good"^g), but because of the sinful inability of those under its charge^h. For this reason, it is variously described as a "killing letter,"ⁱ a "ministry of death,"^j and a "ministry of condemnation"^k -- its distinct purpose being to illumine sin^l so as to make manifest the Israelites' and, by implication, all men's need for a redeemer^m.

a) Gal. 5:3

b) Ex. 19:5, "if . . . then"

c) Deut. 5:32-33; Gal. 3:12; Jas. 2:10-11

d) Lev. 18:5; Luke 10:28; Rom. 7:10, 10:5

e) Deut. 11:26-28; 30:15-20; Gal. 3:10

f) Rom. 3:20; 7:5, 10; Gal. 2:16; 3:11;

1 Cor. 15:56

g) Rom. 7:12

h) Rom. 8:3; Heb. 8:8

i) 2 Cor. 3:6

j) 2 Cor. 3:7

k) 2 Cor. 3:9; Rom. 4:15

l) Rom. 7:13

m) Rom. 3:19-20; 5:19-21

18) We believe that, in contrast to the Old Covenant^a, the New Covenant (by virtue of Christ's perfect obedience to the law^b, as well as His bearing of its curse^c) promises only blessing^f to all those who belong to it^d. This second covenant, the "everlasting covenant"^e enacted upon better promises^f, has thus brought to realization all that was anticipated in the covenants made with Abraham^g, Moses^h, and Davidⁱ.

a) Heb. 8:9

e) Heb. 13:20

b) Rom. 5:19 (compare also Ex. 19:5-6 with 1 Peter 2:9)

f) Heb. 8:6

c) Gal. 3:13

g) Gal. 3:29

d) Heb. 7:22; Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:9

h) Ex. 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:9

i) Acts 2:29-31

19) We believe that, under the New Covenant, God's people, having entered the age of fulfillment^a, now stand as mature sons^b. Having been set free^c from the tutelage and bondage of the law code^d written upon tablets of stone^e, they have subsequently been placed under the Spirit's management^f -- having the new and greater Lawgiver's^g own law^h now written upon their heartsⁱ.

a) 1 Cor. 10:11

f) Rom. 7:6, 8:14

b) Gal. 4:4-7

g) Heb. 3:3

c) Acts 13:39; Gal. 5:1; Rom. 8:2

h) Isa. 42:4; Heb. 7:12

d) Rom. 6:14; 7:6; Gal. 3:25

i) Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; 2 Cor. 3:3

e) Deut. 4:13

20) We believe that, as a result, though many of the individual commandments given in the decalogue and the eternal principles upon which the Mosaic Covenant was founded still apply to those under the New Covenant^a, God's people are now totally free from the Old Covenant as a covenant^b. The usefulness of the Mosaic commands is not therefore to be denied, only that these are now understood to come to us through Christ^c, the mediator of the New Covenant^d. In particular, with the obsolescence of the Old Covenant, the fourth commandment, the seventh day Sabbath observance, is no longer obligatory^e ---its relevance now pointing to that rest enjoyed by all those in Christ^f.

a) Jas. 2:11; Eph. 6:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:17

d) Heb. 8:6; 12:24

b) Gal. 4:30; Rom. 10:4

e) Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:9-11

c) Matt. 5:21ff., 17:5; Acts 3:22;

f) Matt. 11:28-12:8; Heb. 4:3

1 Cor. 9:21

Israel

21) We believe that God terminated the Mosaic Economy (i.e., the national, sacrificial and legal institutions associated with the Old Covenant) when He destroyed Jerusalem in a.d. 70^a in fulfillment of His oracles of judgment against apostate Israel^b. As a nation redeemed from bondage in Egypt by the hand of God, Israel of old served to foreshadow the new people of God^c redeemed from sin's bondage by the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God^d. Any theological significance which the nation of Israel once had

has now ended^e and in its place stands the church^f, the pure and spotless bride^g, the fruitful nation^h, the "heavenly Jerusalem," the "city of God,"ⁱ the "one new man"^j comprised of both Jew and Gentile^k, which alone shall receive all the blessings promised throughout the Old Testament by virtue of its relation to Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham^l, in whom all the promises of God are yes and amen^m.

a) Matt. 23:32-24:2; Mark 13:1-2; Luke 19:41-44, 21:5-6, 20-24; Dan. 9:26-27

b) Luke 21:22

c) Gal 6:15-16

d) 1 Cor. 10:1-11; 1 Pet. 2:9-10

e) Matt. 21:43; Rom. 10:12; Gal. 6:15

f) Acts 15:13-18; Phil. 3:3

g) Eph. 5:23-27

22) We believe that those Jews who, in the providence of God, believe in Jesus as the Messiah both now and in the future shall be ingrafted into the Church rather than established as a separate people of God^a.

a) Rom. 11:23-24; Jn. 10:16; Eph. 2:14-22

h) Matt. 21:43

i) Heb. 12:22; Gal.4:25-26

j) Eph. 2:15

k) Rom. 4:9-12; 15:7-12;

Isa. 49:6

l) Gal. 3:16

m) 2 Cor. 1:20; Rom 15:8

The Church

23) We believe that the church is the fulfillment of that which the historical people of Israel served to foreshadow^a. God chose a people from out of the world to Himself^b and to this chosen people He bound Himself by making the covenants and the promises^c. The church - the "called out ones" - consists only of those who have been justified by faith^d. It alone is rightfully designated the body of Christ^e, a chosen race, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and a people for God's own possession^f. It shall flourish^g despite persecution and strife unto the end of the age^h.

a) Acts 2; 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 11:39-40; Col. 2:17; Heb. 3

b) Rom. 4:9-12; Rev. 5:9, 7:9-10

c) Rom. 1:2-6; Heb. 6:13-20

d) Rom. 4:13,24; 5:1; Gal. 3:7,9; Jer. 31:34; Joel 3:17; Zech. 14:21

e) Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24

f) Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9

g) Eph. 1:11-12; Matt. 13:31-33; 2 Tim. 2:10-13; Isa. 11:9

h) Matt. 16:18; Heb. 12:28; Dan. 2:44

24) We believe that the church is ultimately under the authority of Christ alone^a. Its purpose is to glorify God^b and enjoy Him forever through the pure preaching of the Word^c, the proper administration of the gospel ordinances^d, and the diligent exercise of church discipline^e. It has been commissioned by Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all men^f, being assured that God will not cast out any^g who come to Him in true faith and repentance^h. A local church is a visible manifestation of the body of Christ in a given geographical location. Thus a local church is to be composed only of those who have professed faith in Christⁱ and who live lives in accordance with that profession^j. It is to be overseen by a plurality of male

elders^k who shepherd the flock as equals^l. It is consistent with the communion of the saints^m, to recognize and fellowship with all members of Christ's bodyⁿ.

a) Eph. 1:22; 2:20

b) Eph. 3:21

c) 1 Tim. 4:6, 13

d) Acts 2:42

e) 1 Cor. 5:7; Titus 3:10

f) Matt. 28:19-20

g) John 6:37

h) Rom. 10:13

i) 1 Cor. 1:2; Col. 1:2

j) 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14f.; 2 Thess. 3:6

k) Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1;

1 Tim. 2:12

l) Acts 20:17, 28

m) 1 Cor. 10:17

n) Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Jn. 3:14-18

25) We believe that true worship is to be given to God (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and to Him alone^a. Since the fall of man into sin, worship cannot be offered to God without the mediation of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest^b. Whereas in the old covenant era there was a place of worship (i.e. the tabernacle and later the temple), true worship in the New Covenant era is not confined to any particular location or building. Believers are now the temple of the Holy Spirit and they are to worship God in spirit and in truth all the time^c.

a) Matt. 4:10, 22:37

b) Heb. 8:1-6, 9:8-14, 23-28, 10:1-25; 1 Tim. 1:5

c) John 4:20-24; 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19-20; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5,9

26) We believe that, though there are many gifts in the body of Christ^a, there is only one Spirit who bestows them all^b, and that they are therefore to be used for the building up of the church^c and not for personal gratification^d. The church, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets^e, is no longer dependent upon the miraculous and revelatory gifts which were present at its inception^f. Though God is capable of intervening today with a miraculous event^g, the miraculous gifts, as gifts, have passed away^h, their significanceⁱ having now ceased. With the completion of the New Testament canon, revelatory gifts have also ceased^j; and that, of these, tongues (known languages foreign to their speaker^k) signaled the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies^l foretelling the divine judgment against Israel^m in the transition from the Old era to the New.

a) 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10

b) 1 Cor. 12:11

c) 1 Cor. 14:5, 19, 26; 1 Pet. 4:10

d) 1 Cor. 13:5

e) Eph. 2:20

f) 1 Cor. 13:10-11

g) Dan. 4:35

h) 1 Cor. 13:8

i) Acts 5:12; 14:3; Heb. 2:4

j) Dan. 9:24

k) Acts 2:8-11

l) Acts 2:16-21; cf. Joel 2:28-32

m) 1 Cor. 14:21-22; cf. Isa. 28:11-12; also Deut. 28:49; Jer. 5:15

27) We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are gospel ordinances properly belonging to believers alone^a. They are external signs of internal, spiritual, and historical realities. Baptism signifies the recipient's identification with Christ and cleansing from sin^b but it neither guarantees nor accomplishes such cleansing^c. The Lord's supper is a memorial^d wherein the death of Christ for His people, instituting the New Covenant, is proclaimed visually as a comfort to the saints until His return in glory^e.

a) Acts 2:38-39, 8:12, 18:8.

b) Acts 22:16.

c) 1 Cor. 1:17; Acts 8:9-24; 1 Cor. 10:1-5.

d) Luke 22:19; cf. 1 Cor. 11:24-25.

e) 1 Cor. 11:26.

Christ's Return

28) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come again^a at the end of this age^b in great power and glory^c in order to consummate His Kingdom^d and execute judgment on all men^e. The righteous will be raised up to immortality^f in the likeness of Christ's resurrection body^g and will be gathered to dwell forever in His presence, enjoying everlasting communion with their God, to the glory of His grace^h. The unrighteous will be raised to suffer God's wrath in hellⁱ, separated from the Lord Jesus Christ and the beauty of His presence^j, to the glory of His justice^k. This truth, though derided by men^l, forms the basis of our hope and consolation^m, knowing that Christ will cast all His enemies and ours into everlasting condemnationⁿ, but shall take us, together with all His elect, to Himself into heavenly joy and glory^o. Amen.

a) Jn. 14:3; Acts 1:9-11; Heb. 9:28

b) 1 Cor. 15:23-24

c) Matt. 24:29-31; 2 Thess. 1:7-10

d) 1 Cor. 15:24

e) Matt. 25:31-33; Jn. 5:22; Acts 10:42, 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5

f) Matt. 25:46; Jn. 6:40,44; 1 Cor. 15:49-54

g) 1 Cor. 15:49, 52; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:2

h) Matt. 24:31; 2 Thess. 2:1; Ps. 23:6; 41:12; Rev. 21:3; 22:5

i) Matt. 25:41; Mark 9:48; Jude 7

j) 2 Thess. 1:9

k) Rom. 9:22

l) 2 Pet. 3:3-4; cf. Jude 17-21

m) 1 Thess. 4:18; 1 Pet. 1:13

n) Matt. 25:46

o) Matt. 25:34; 2 Tim. 4:8, 18; Rev. 21:1-22:5