

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
**DOCTRINE
& BELIEFS**



A blurred background image of a church service. In the foreground, a person in a red garment is partially visible on the left. The rest of the image shows a crowd of people in a sanctuary, with warm, golden light filtering through the scene, creating a soft, out-of-focus atmosphere.

**WE ARE A
COMMUNITY
OF BIBLE-
CENTERED
BELIEVERS WHO
EXALT JESUS
CHRIST**

THE VISION OF THE CHURCH

In obedience to the Word of God, the Bible, the purpose of First Baptist Church Weaverville (FBCW) shall be three-fold: 1) worship God, 2) build up its members for the work of service and 3) evangelize the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

In the implementation of our vision statement, the purpose of FBCW is to magnify and glorify God by: 1) introducing people to Jesus Christ, 2) discipling believers to spiritual maturity, 3) equipping the saved for ministry, 4) demonstrating God's love through service.

THE CHURCH AND ITS DOCTRINE

Doctrine is essential to the life of the church as food is essential to the life of a body, or as breathing is to the lungs. In the Bible God tells us about who He is, what He has done, what He will do, why we are here, what He expects of us, how we can know Him, and how He wants us to live so that He is pleased. He also tells us history, where the world is headed, and how to make sense of life this side of heaven. The Scriptures are filled with all that God intends for us to know in order to be all that He has called us to be. It is “all that we need for life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3-4).

However, theological interest and precision has fallen under hard times. The churches of modern times are more interested in subjective experiences than objective truth. Pastors are becoming social commentators and political pundits rather than preachers of righteousness. Clear and convicting sermons are being replaced by short, anecdotal, and non-confrontive homilies.

Sadly, it does not matter to many what the church believes and teaches as long as it is a place where they will feel accepted and tolerated in “non-judgmental love.” We must have a commitment to the truth, and we must recover Biblical authority and its place in the church. Without truth we are like a ship without a map or compass, “tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, infallible and inerrant in the original autographs and the complete, sufficient, and final authority in faith and life. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:3, 19-21
2. We believe in one eternally existing God, manifest in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 28:19; John 14:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 2:27
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, is fully man and fully God, lived a perfect life, became a perfect sin-offering through His substitutionary death on the cross, was buried and after three days rose from the dead, conquering death, and is now seated at the right hand of God. Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1, 14; 3:16; 10:30; Romans 3:24-25; 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24
4. We believe that as a result of the fall, all mankind are now sinners without excuse, and are in need of salvation from sin and its consequences. Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 1:20, 32; 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:23
5. We believe the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Our works do not merit any part of Salvation. This is accomplished by means of the gospel, repentance (also a work of God) and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. John. 3:3-5; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 17:30; Romans 1:16; 2:4, 10; 3:21-24; 4:4-5; Galatians 2:21; Ephesians 2:8-9
6. We believe the new birth is necessary for salvation and is instantaneous upon faith in Christ. In this a person is born again, becoming a new creation in Christ. They are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who sanctifies and conforms them into the image of Christ. As a result, they are now able and expected to walk in the Spirit by obeying God and growing in Christlikeness. John 3:3-7; Romans 6:1-23; 8:29-30; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:3
7. We believe in the eternal security of all the saints. That once someone has been born again, they are kept by God's power and persevere in the faith until the end of their earthly life when they are permanently and eternally with Christ. John 6:38-40; John 10:27-29; Romans 8:1, 28-39; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:3-5
8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the crucified Christ, His ascension into Heaven, His present life at the right hand of God acting as our High Priest, Intercessor and Advocate and His imminent return to earth. John 14:2-3; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:20; John 20:1-31; Acts 1:10, 11; Hebrews 7:21, 9:24; 1 John 2:1-2; Revelation 19:11-14
9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost. John 3:18; 3:36; 5:24; 6:39, 40, 44; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 20:1-15
10. We believe in a literal heaven, hell and lake of fire. We believe in the personality of Satan. Matthew 4:1-3; 5:12, 16; 1 Peter 5:8; John. 8:44; Revelation 20:11-15
11. We believe marriage is a sacrament of the Church, ordained and instituted by God and defined as an exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of "marriage" found in these Articles.

Marriage was first established by God in the early chapters of Genesis and codified in the Levitical law. The Old Testament prophets compared it to a relationship between God and his people. Biblical examples of marriage can be found in the historical narratives while the wisdom literature speaks to the unique unity of this relationship. In the gospels Jesus explained the original intention and core elements of marriage and several New Testament Epistles give explicit instructions on this union. Marriage is a typology of Christ and the Church. As such, the Church views marriage as a profound spiritual

institution established by God. Due to the importance of marriage in the biblical witness, this church adopts the following:

A. Clergy:

- 1) Only those recognized by this organization as ordained clergy shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on church property.
- 2) Clergy employed by the church shall be subject to dismissal and/or loss of ordination for officiating a marriage ceremony not consistent with our definition of marriage, e.g. a same-gender marriage ceremony.

B. Marriage Applicants:

- 1) Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a member of the clergy employed by the church, or to use the church facilities, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
- 2) Applicants shall receive premarital counseling by clergy or authorized agents of the church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the pastoral staff of the church, have appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling.

C. Premises:

- 1) Any marriage performed on church premises shall be officiated by a member of the clergy.
- 2) Clergy officiating marriage ceremonies on church premises, whether or not employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
- 3) The clergy assigned by the church to implement the procedures contained in this Marriage Policy may, in his sole discretion, decline to make church facilities available for, and/or decline to officiate at, a ceremony when, in his judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.

12. We believe legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament Greek as *porneia*) including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the Bible. Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:17; Leviticus 18:6-30; Matthew 5:32; 15:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 15; 7:1-5; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

First Baptist Church of Weaverville (FBCW) believes that the Bible is the Word of God and the only perfect source of information to form all doctrines of faith and practice. We believe the Bible contains everything that man needs for life and godliness. Because of this, FBCW exists to preach, teach, and live the truths of God's Word, to evangelize the lost, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, doing all things for the praise and glory of God. What follows is the statement of our doctrinal commitment for teaching and practice. We believe this to reflect precisely what the Bible teaches in each category of theology:

I. THE BIBLE

We believe 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 (II Sam. 23:1-3; II Pet. 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 (Psa. 119:160). We believe the Scriptures are the only authoritative and sufficient standard for all matters of godliness, faith, practice, and doctrine through all generations (Psa. 19:7-11; Zech. 7:12; Mt. 24:35; Jn. 17:17; II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:3-4, 19). We believe the Bible is the only source of objective truth from God (Jn. 5:39; Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11; Heb. 1:1; Jude 3; Rev. 1:19). We believe that 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 (Jn. 12:48; Rom. 2:16; I Tim. 3:15). We believe that because the Bible is the Word of God we are under obligation before God to handle it accurately when we interpret it (II Tim. 2:15). We believe in the literal-historical-grammatical method of interpretation, which means the Bible is to be interpreted literally, taking into account the historical context in which it was written, and by submitting to the original languages and proper rules of grammar and sentence structure. We also believe that the interpretation of any given text of the Bible is one, though the principles and applications taken from the one interpretation may be one or many.

II. GOD

We believe in one God (Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa. 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. We believe 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 worship, praise, and obedience (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; Psa. 2:7; Isa. 48:16; Mt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; Tit. 3:4-7). We believe He created everything in heaven and on earth, out of nothing, in six literal twenty-four hour periods or days, by His spoken Word (Gen. 1:1-31; Ex. 20:11; Psa. 148:1-5; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 11:3).

A. God the Father

We believe God the Father is the initiator, planner, and organizer of all things, being sovereign over all of His creation (Job chs. 38-41; Isa. 14:24, 27; 37:26; Acts 4:27-28; Rom. 8:29-30; I Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11; 2:10).

B. God the Son

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, which means that He is God become man in the flesh, fully God and fully man (Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2; Matt. 1:23; John 1:1, 14, 18; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 1:8). We believe He was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23) and conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). We believe He is the one and only Mediator between God and man and lives as an advocate for the saints (I Tim. 2:5; I Jn.

2:1). He is the Redeemer (Gal. 3:13; I Pet. 3:18-19), Judge (Jn. 5:22-23; Acts 17:31), Priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:10; 7:1, 3, 15, 21), Prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18; Jn. 6:14; Acts 3:22-26; 7:37), King of kings and Lord of lords (I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16), and the channel of creation (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2). We believe He lived a perfect life here on earth (I Pet. 1:19; Heb. 2:10; 4:15; 5:9; 7:28), died a vicarious or substitutionary death for the sins of men (Isa. 53:4-6; I Pet. 3:18; I Cor. 15:3), and was the perfect Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36). We believe He was buried and rose again bodily on the third day (I Cor. 15:4), conquering death (Col. 2:13-14), and having ascended He is now seated at the right hand of God (Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 10:12), having received all power, authority and dominion in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). We believe He lives as an advocate for the saints (I John 2:1) and that He will come again to set up an earthly kingdom (Luke 22:28-30; Rev. 20:1-6), followed by an eternal kingdom where He will rule and reign forever (II Pet. 1:10-11; Rev. 21-22).

C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the godhead being fully God in every way (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; I Cor. 12:11,18; II Cor. 3:18). We believe the Holy Spirit assisted in creation (Gen. 1:2), was the agent of the virgin birth (Luke 1:35), and is the divine agent of the inspired revelation of God (Zech. 7:12; II Pet. 1:20-21). We believe the Holy Spirit is active in convicting the world of sin and judgement (John 16:8), and regenerating and empowering those who are saved (Ezek. 36:27; Jn. 3:5-8; II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 5:16; Tit. 3:5). We believe the Holy Spirit enables men, through His illuminating work, to understand the written revelation of God (I Cor. 2:10-16; I Jn. 2:20; 27). We believe the Holy Spirit permanently indwells, and enables believers in the process of sanctification (I Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:13-14; Eph. 1:15-18; 3:14-21; II Thess. 2:13). We believe He is the pledge and guarantee of our future inheritance (II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

III. MAN

We believe man was created to give glory to God (Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16-18). Man was created perfect and without sin on the sixth day of creation. Man was formed by God out of the dust of the ground and God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7). We believe that man is unlike the animals created in the image of God to rule over the earth and all living creatures (Gen. 1:24-31; Eccl. 7:29; I Cor. 15:39). We believe that shortly after man was created Eve was deceived by Satan into eating the forbidden fruit (II Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:14) and Adam ate the forbidden fruit willingly (Gen. 3:17; Hos. 6:7). We believe that as a result of their sin both died spiritually (Eph. 2:1-2; Col. 2:13) and later physically because the wages of sin is death (Gen. 5:5; Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27). We believe Adam was the representative head of the human race and when he sinned the entire human race fell in him. We believe that Adam's sin is imputed to all of his descendants (Rom. 5:12-14; I Cor. 15:22), hence all men are totally corrupt being conceived in sin (Psa. 51:5), born sinners (Gen. 8:21; Psa. 58:3), and sin because they are sinners (Jer. 17:9; Mk. 7:21-23; Rom 3:10-18, 23; Eph. 2:1-3). We believe all men suppress the truth in unrighteousness and are sinners by nature and choice (Gen. 6:5; Rom. 1:18-25; Tit. 1:15). We believe the consequences of sin have made man unable to understand the things of God (I Cor. 2:14), unable to please God (Rom. 8:5-8), and unwilling to seek Him (Jn. 3:19-21; II Thess. 2:10-12).

IV. SALVATION

A. The Need of Salvation

We believe unrepentant sinners have God's wrath abiding on them and hence all men are in need of salvation from sin and its consequences (Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23-24; 6:23; Eph. 2:3). We believe that the ultimate consequence of sin is to suffer the holy wrath of God's justice for eternity in the lake of fire (Nah. 1:3; Rev. 20:14-15).

B. Predestination of the Elect to Salvation

We believe that God chose and predestined some to be saved from before the foundation of the world (Rom. 8:29-30). We believe all men are called to repent and believe in Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 17:30), but only the elect who are predestined to salvation believe and are saved (Matt. 22:14; Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:4-5).

C. Provision of Salvation

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

D. The Gospel of Salvation

We believe that 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 (Rom. 1:16; 10:14-17; I Cor. 1:18-24). We believe the essence of the gospel is that Jesus Christ, out of love for us, died for our sins on the cross as our substitute, was buried, and rose again on the third day conquering death (Acts 2:22-32; Rom. 5:8; I Cor. 15:1-4; I Pet. 3:18). We believe the gospel message is a call to repentance (Mt. 3:1-2; 4:17; 11:20; Acts 2:38; 17:30; 26:19-20; Rom. 2:4; II Cor. 7:9-10). The gospel message is a call to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; 17:30-31; 20:21).

E. Appropriation of Salvation

We believe salvation is not a result of works but an undeserved, unearned gift, received by God's grace and mercy, through the faith which God supplies to the elect (Gal. 5:4; Eph. 2:8-9; II Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5). We believe saving faith is not only an intellectual assent to the facts of the gospel (Jam. 2:19) but a volitional heart commitment to trust in the gospel (Luke 9:23; Luke 14:26) and a willingness to submit and obey the Lord of the gospel who is Jesus Christ (John 3:36; I Jn. 2:3-5). We believe salvation is only appropriated through the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby God draws the elect to His Son (Jn. 3:5-8; 6:44). We believe that men, apart from the grace of God, do not seek Him (Rom. 3:10; Jn. 3:19). We believe that God seeks men (Lk. 5:31-32; 19:10) and that men respond to the irresistible grace of God which draws them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Mt. 11:27; 13:11; Jn. 6:37; Acts 13:48; Phil. 1:29; II Tim. 2:25; I Cor. 1:18). We believe repentance is to have a change of mind, to acknowledge one's sins, turn from them and to pursue righteousness and faith in Jesus Christ as God incarnate, Savior, and Lord (Isa. 55:6-9; Joel 2:12-13; Jn. 1:12; 8:24; Rom. 14:8-9; II Cor. 4:5).

F. The Call to Salvation

We believe that God calls all men everywhere to repent and believe in the gospel (Acts 17:30-31). We also believe that God is not willing for any to perish (I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9) and that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23; 33:11). We believe men are without excuse because creation, conscience, and the law of God written in men's hearts is enough to show them that God exists, yet all men suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18-20, 25; 2:14-16). Because all men suppress the natural revelation of God, we believe the only way a person can be saved is by hearing and believing in special revelation, which is the Word of God, the gospel (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:8-17; I Cor. 1:18).

G. Atonement of Sins

We teach Christ's sacrificial atonement is sufficient for all mankind but applied only to the elect who place their faith in the message of the gospel (Rom. 5:6, 8; I John 2:2). We believe that the Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Christ (Isa. 53:6). We believe Jesus shed His blood to redeem those who would be saved (Lev. 17:11, 14; Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:18-19). He came to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), died for the world of men (John 3:16-17; I Jn. 4:14), is the Savior of all men (I Tim. 4:10; Tit. 2:11), tasted death for everyone (Heb. 2:9), and is the sacrifice that satisfies the wrath of God (propitiation) not only for our sins but the sins of the whole world (I John 2:1-2).

H. Results of Salvation

We believe salvation includes total forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13-14), adoption into the family of God (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5-6), reconciliation to God (Rom. 5:10-11; 11:15), declared righteousness through justification by God (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16); propitiation before God (I John 2:2; Heb 2:17-18); eternal life with God (Jn. 3:16, 36; 10:27-28); redemption from the curse of the law and slavery to sin and Satan (Gal. 3:13; Eph. 2:1-9; Titus 2:14); sanctification (I Cor. 6:11; I Pet. 1:14-16; I John 3:2-3); deliverance from the lake of fire (Jn. 5:24; Rom. 5:9), and glorification (Rom. 8:29-30).

I. The Manifestation of Salvation

We believe salvation is the supernatural work of God in a person that will manifest itself in a transformed life (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24). We believe that all true believers will bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance and will be known by their fruit (Mt. 3:8-10; 7:16-23; 12:33-35; Lk. 6:43-45). We believe the kinds of fruit which salvation produces in the life of every believer is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25), a hunger for God's Word (I Pet. 2:2), a pursuit of righteousness (Prov. 4:18), increased godliness and Christ likeness (Phil. 1:6; II Cor. 3:18), a desire to be with the saints (Heb. 10:24-27; I Jn. 2:19), and a desire to obey God in everything (Eph. 2:10; Tit. 2:11-14; Heb. 5:9; I Pet. 2:12).

J. Assurance of Salvation

We believe that we can know we are saved by the internal witness of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:16-17; I Jn. 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 (Jn. 17:17; Col. 1:3-6; I Thess. 2:13; I Jn. 2:3-4). We believe a person who practices sin and rebellion against God has no assurance of salvation (Jam. 2:14-26; I Jn. 2:29; 3:4-10; 5:2). We believe everyone should regularly examine themselves to see whether they be in the faith (Psa. 139:23-24; Lam. 3:40; I Cor. 11:28, 31; II Cor. 13:5).

K. The Perseverance of the Saints

We believe God saves men while they are enemies (Rom 5:8) and that once a person is saved, their salvation can never be lost or rejected (John 6:37, 39; Rom. 8:38-39). We believe that God seals all believers with the Holy Spirit who is given as a pledge of our future inheritance until the day of Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). We believe that God will enable every believer to persevere unto the end (I Thess. 5:23-24), and that God 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 what God does (John 6:44, 65; I Thess. 5:23-24; I Pet. 5:10; Jude 1).

V. THE CHURCH

A. The Purpose of the Church

We teach that the ultimate purpose of the church is to give glory to God (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). The Church can only give glory to God by submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ out of love and obeying His Word (Jn. 14:15, 23-24; I Jn. 5:3). The Church gives glory to God by worshiping Him (Jn. 4:21-24; Rom. 12:1-2), by evangelizing the lost (Mt. 28:19-20; Lk. 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; Col. 1:23), and by equipping the saints for work of

service both now and in the age to come (Mt. 24:45-47; 25:21-23; I Cor. 3:12-15; Eph. 2:10; II Tim. 3:16-17; 4:7-8; Tit. 2:11-14).

B. The Universal Church

We believe in a Universal Church comprised of all true believers everywhere, baptized by the Holy Spirit into the one body of Christ through faith upon conversion (I Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 2:11-16; 4:4-6). We believe the Universal Church age started at Pentecost and will end at the Rapture of the Church (Acts 2; I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:13-18).

C. The Local Church

We believe in the existence and autonomy of the Local Church which is comprised of all those who profess faith in Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:2; I Thess. 1:1). We believe in every Local Church there are those who profess to be believers but are not (Mt. 7:21-22; Tit. 1:15-16; Jude 1:4).

D. Church Discipline

We believe the Local Church is responsible to look after the spiritual welfare of any member and discipline those who continue in unrepentant sin according to the Scriptures (Mt. 18:15-20; Acts 5:1-11; Rom. 16:17-18; I Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; I Thess. 5:14-15; II Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1:13; 3:10-11; Rev. 2:2, 14-15, 20).

E. The Church's Head, and Leaders

We believe Jesus Christ is the Head, King, and Lord of the church (Acts 2:36; Eph. 4:15-16; 5:23; Col. 1:18) and that we are the members of His spiritual body (I Cor. 12:12-13). We believe Jesus guides the body through the Bible and under-shepherds who submit to the Bible. We believe God's under-shepherds are the elders, pastors, bishops, or overseers who must possess certain spiritual qualifications (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; I Pet. 5:1-3). We believe leaders must be examples to the flock as those who will give an account (II Tim. 2:24; Heb. 13:17), showing others how to live as humble servants of the King (I Pet. 5:3). We teach the church is to appoint faithful men who meet the qualification of deacon (I Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13). Deacons are appointed to help meet the physical needs of the church and assist the elders so the elders can focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4; I Tim. 4:6, 10-13, 15-16).

F. The Ordinances of the Church

We believe the church has two ordinances: water baptism (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 8:38) and communion, or the Lord's supper (I Cor. 11:20-26; Matt. 26:26-29). We believe that both water baptism and communion should be observed today in the local church by believers.

1. Water Baptism

Water baptism is for believers who have placed their faith in Christ. It is not a means of salvation or grace but is an act of obedience whereby a believer makes a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38, 41). Baptism symbolizes the inward reality of being united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-6). We believe baptism is to be by immersion (Mark 1:10; Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:39).

2. Lord's Supper or Communion

We believe 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; I Cor. 11:24). Communion is not a means of salvation or grace. We believe communion is only for believers who are not living in unrepentant sin (I Cor. 11:17-34).

VI. ANGELS

We believe that angels are created spirit beings (Ex. 20:11; Job 38:4-7; Col. 1:16). Angels were created to worship God and minister to believers (Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:11-12). We believe that all angels at one time were holy but when Satan rebelled a third of the angels fell with him (Rev. 12:3-4). These fallen angels are called demons or evil spirits and will be judged and thrown into the lake of fire (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

VII. DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

A. The Promises to Israel

We believe Israel has a distinct and special future in God's redemptive plan and that the unconditional promises God made to the nation of Israel have not been nullified nor have they been transferred solely to the church. We believe the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New covenants will be fulfilled as promised (Gen. 15:1-21; 17:4-8, 13, 19; 22:18; I Chron. 17:1-15; Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 11).

B. The Kingdom

We believe the Scriptures teach that there has always existed a universal kingdom of God, (Psa. 29:10; 74:12; 145:13), that there will be a literal, earthly, kingdom of Christ (Isa. 2:2-4; 24:23; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 14:9), and that believers are kingdom saints who serve Christ, their King, now as aliens, strangers, and ambassadors on this earth (II Cor. 5:17-21; 5:20; I Pet. 1:1; 2:11).

C. The Church Age

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

D. The Rapture

We teach the rapture will occur unexpectedly, immediately preceding the seven year tribulation (pretribulation rapture). We believe the rapture of the Church will occur at the end of the church age and all the saints, both dead and alive, will be caught up in the air to be forever with the Lord (I Thess 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-52). We believe Christ's coming to take His Church away at the rapture is imminent and will come like a thief in the night (II Thess. 5:2; Tit. 2:13).

E. The Tribulation

We believe that before Christ comes to earth there will be a seven year period of tribulation (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24; Rev. 6-19) when God will primarily focus His attention on the ethnic nation of Israel, bringing many to faith in their previously rejected Messiah (Rom. 11:25-27; Hos. 3:5). The tribulation period will close when Christ literally returns to earth (Zech. 14:4, 9; Acts 1:11), separating the Sheep from the Goats (Matt. 25:31-34), binding Satan (Rev. 20:1-2), and setting up His literal earthly kingdom.

F. The Second Coming

We believe in a premillennial view of the kingdom which teaches that Jesus Christ will come back bodily to earth to set up a literal thousand year kingdom on earth where He will rule from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 14:3-4; Acts 1:9-12; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-7).

G. The Thousand Year Reign of Christ

We believe that during the millennial reign of Christ, the saints will rule and reign with Him (II Tim. 2:12), the curse will be partially lifted (Isa. 11), and men will live extended lives as before the flood (Isa. 65:20). At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed (Rev. 20:3), deceiving the nations, bringing God's final white throne judgment (Rev. 20:7-9).

H. Heaven and Hell

We believe all mankind will end up in one of two eternal destinies – heaven or the lake of fire (Dan. 12:2; Mt. 25:31-46; Jn. 5:28-29). We believe it is appointed for all men to die once and be judged (Heb. 9:27). All unbelievers will appear before the Great White Throne to be judged according to their deeds (Rev. 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 (Mt. 24:45-47; 25:21-23; I Cor. 3:12-15; Rom. 8:18; I Cor. 2:9; 3:Rev. 22:5). We believe those who reject Christ and who will not submit to Him as both Lord and Savior will suffer conscious torment away from the presence of Christ in the lake of fire forever (Mt. 13:42; Mk. 9:47-48; Lk. 16:24; 12:5; II Thess. 2:8-10; Rev. 14:11; 20:10, 15).

