

# OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

## What we believe

### I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Bible, consisting of sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament, was given by divine inspiration, and is the very Word of God. We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration...that every word and the whole Bible was completely inspired by God. We believe that God used Holy men of old to portray, out of their own vocabulary, the exact thoughts and words He ordained, and that it was in such a way that it is wholly and completely without error. We believe in the canon of the Scriptures, that God limited it to its present completeness. We believe that it constitutes the only perfect rule and final authority in all matters pertaining to the Christian faith and practice. (II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:19-21; Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:20; Romans 2:1-3).

### II. OF THE GODHEAD

#### A. God the Father

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite, sovereign Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Exodus 20:2,3; I Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11).

#### B. God the Son

We believe in the absolute deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He was divine as no other man can be, being very God of very God, existing from all eternity co-equal with the Father and the Spirit; that His humiliation did not consist in laying aside His deity; that as man He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. (John 1:1,2; I John 5:20; Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26-38; Philippians 2:5-8).

#### C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the new birth; that He indwells, seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. We also believe that the Bible disavows the authenticity of the sign gifts to individuals such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, miracles and healing for today, and repudiates the experience-oriented practice of the charismatic movement. (Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:4-13, 28-30; 13:8-12; Ephesians 4:11-13; I Peter 4:10,11; John 14:16,17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Genesis 1:1-3; John 16:7-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5,6; Ephesians 1:13,14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Romans 8:14,16,17,26; 15:19; Hebrews 2:4).

### III. OF THE DEVIL OR SATAN

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, and the author of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. (Matthew 4:1-3; Mark 1:13; II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 20:10).

### IV. OF CREATION

We believe the Genesis account of creation as being neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man, spirit, soul and body was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. (Genesis 1 and 2; Colossians 1:16,17; John 1:3).

### V. OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners not only by constraint, but of choice, and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. (Genesis 3:1-6, 24; Romans 5:12,19; 3:10-19; Ephesians 2:1,3; Romans 1:18,32; Galatians 3:22).

## VI. OF SALVATION, REGENERATION AND JUSTIFICATION

We believe that:

- A. SALVATION is wholly of grace, but conditioned solely upon repentance toward God and acceptance of Christ by faith, and that no works, however good, make that salvation more secure. (Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; Acts 4:12; 16:31; II Corinthians 7:10; Romans 10:9-13).
- B. REGENERATION means that the sinner has been made a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17); by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Word, the regenerated sinner is given a disposition or new nature to obey God (John 1:12,13; 3:3-5; I Peter 1:23). This experience is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- C. JUSTIFICATION is the judicial act of God, in view of Christ's shed blood, in which the punishment is absolved (having been suffered in Christ) and the sinner is restored to divine favor. (Romans 5:1-9; 4:4,5; Acts 13:39).

## VII. OF SANCTIFICATION OF THE BELIEVER

We believe that sanctification is presented in the Scriptures with a three-fold aspect:

- A. POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION which is true of every believer (I Corinthians 1:2), the result of the sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 10:10) is perfect in its extent and character (Hebrews 10:14), and is accomplished through exercise of faith (Acts 26:18).
- B. PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION begins with salvation until it is brought to completion in the glorified body. It is a result of "growth in grace" (II Peter 3:18). Every believer is sanctified by the reading of the Word of God, by the Father, the Son and the Spirit (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:25,26; II Corinthians 3:18).
- C. ULTIMATE SANCTIFICATION is attained when the spirit, soul, and body are freed completely from sin when the believer is brought into the presence of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; I John 3:2 - "...we shall be like Him...").

## VIII. OF THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

We believe that a person once truly born from above by the Holy Spirit is saved forever. We believe salvation is an act of God whereby man cannot undo it. (Romans 8:30; John 3:3-5; Ephesians 1:3).

Such a believer can never be lost for the birth is of incorruptible seed (I Peter 1:23). The believer is given everlasting life (John 5:24; 10:27-29), is sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30), and his or her life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). The knowledge and assurance of eternal life becomes a present possession (I John 5:11-13), and the fact of the guarantee of no condemnation nor separation from God is a present reality (Romans 8:1,35-39; Philippians 1:6).

## IX. OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17,18; I John 5:19; Romans 6:23; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 24:34-41; John 8:21; Luke 9:21; Matthew 7:13,14; Romans 7:6).

## X. OF THE CHURCH

A. INVISIBLE CHURCH

We believe that the invisible church is a New Testament institution unknown to the Old Testament prophets; established by Jesus Christ, Who is its sole Head; revealed through the holy Apostles; empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit; His "body" for service and His "bride" for glory. It began with the New Testament saints and will be consummated at the coming of Christ in the rapture (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:8, 2:1-13,41-47; 15:14; Romans 16:25-27; I Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 1:22,23; 3:21; 5:23-33; I Thessalonians 4:13-18) and that it is separate and distinct from Israel, composed of both Jew and Gentile.

B. LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that the invisible church is manifest through the local church which is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in it by His Word; that its officers are bishops (elders or pastors) and deacons; that it has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit and it is answerable only to Christ, and that in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline and benevolence the will of the local church is final (Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 1:2; 6:4,5; 7:17; 11:16; I Timothy 3:1-16).

XI. OF THE ORDINANCES

We believe that there are two church ordinances: BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER. Baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water and is properly called "believer's baptism." It sets forth in a beautiful and solemn way our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with the effects of that faith in our lives as it produces death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership. The lord's supper is the commemoration of our Lord's death, burial and resurrection until He comes again and our continual fellowship with Him should be preceded by baptism and always by careful self-examination (Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-32).

XII. OF SEPARATION

A. PERSONAL SEPARATION

We believe in being separate from all worldly lusts and all personal habits which war against the soul (Titus 2:12-14; I Peter 2:11).

B. ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate entirely from worldliness to God. This includes separation from churches or other groups which adhere to unbiblical doctrine (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; I Timothy 6:3-5; Romans 16:17; II John 9-11).

XIII. OF GOVERNMENTS

A. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming King of Kings. No organic union of church and state should be tolerated, but entire separation maintained; the church should neither ask for, nor accept support from civil authority, since to do so would imply the right of civil dictation and control. The support of spiritual services belongs to those who profess it (Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:20; 4:19,20; Matthew 22:21; I Timothy 2:1-3; I Peter 2:13-17).

B. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

We believe that the government of this local church is vested in the body of believers of which it is composed. Under the headship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of its pastor (or pastors) and deacons the church body shall be governed by the principles of the Word of God and shall have the right to make decisions as an autonomous body (Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 15:3,4; 15:6,7,22).

C. FAMILY ORDER

We believe marriage to be divinely instituted (Genesis 2:18-24). We believe marriage should be based on a sacrificial "agape" love (Ephesians 5:25), and that monogamy for a lifetime is God's original, divine plan (Genesis 2:21-24; Matthew 19:3-9). We believe divorce to be man made and not God ordained, and reflects man's sinful rejection of God's original plan for marriage (Mark 10:9; Matthew 19:8). We believe that marriage partners are bound to each other for life, and only upon death is one released from further obligation (Romans 7:2-3).

We believe that marriage and the family unit are basic to the social order of the human race. We furthermore accept the biblical prohibitions of sexual union and cohabitation outside of marriage, and the biblical directives concerning husband and wife and family as fully applicable to believers in our time. We further believe that children are a heritage from the Lord and are to respect and obey their parents as unto the Lord (Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 6:24-33; Matthew 19:4-10; 5:27,28; Hebrews 13:4; I Peter 3:1-8; Ephesians 6:1).

#### XIV. OF LAST THINGS

##### A. THE RAPTURE

We believe in the imminent, premillennial return of Christ for His church, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seventieth week of Daniel (I Thessalonians 4:13-28; I Corinthians 15:42-44; 51-54; Philippians 3:20,21; Revelation 3:10).

##### B. THE TRIBULATION

We believe that the rapture of the church saints will be followed by a seven-year period called the tribulation or Daniel's seventieth week. The church will be in heaven during these years, during which time believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The last three and a half years of the tribulation is called the great tribulation or Jacob's trouble, a time of severe judgments upon the whole earth. (Daniel 9:27; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:15-21; Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 16:1-21).

##### C. THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

We believe the tribulation will be terminated by Christ's coming in judgment to establish the millennial kingdom, during which time He will fulfill the promises to Israel concerning their earthly kingdom.

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the land of Palestine as promised in the Abrahamic covenant and, after the completion of the church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Genesis 13:14-17; Romans 11:1-32; Ezekiel 37; Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 20:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

##### D. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

We believe the millennial kingdom will terminate with the release of Satan from the bottomless pit, who will lead an insurrection against the Son of God and will be eternally defeated by God. This will be followed by the great white throne judgment, where all unbelievers will be judged and sentenced eternally to the lake of fire. There they will not be annihilated, but will be in conscious torment forever (II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Mark 9:42-48; Revelation 20:2,3,7-10).

##### E. THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

We believe in the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and which will be the abiding place of the redeemed for all eternity, where Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16; 21:1-27; 22:3).