

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Table of Contents

The Holy Scripture	1
God	2
God the Father.....	2
God the Son	3
God the Holy Spirit	4
Man.....	5
Salvation	6
Regeneration	6
Election.....	6
Justification.....	7
Sanctification	7
Security.....	8
Separation	8
The Church	9
Christian Freedom.....	11
Its Nature.....	11
Its Scope.....	11
Angels.....	12
Holy Angels	12
Fallen Angels.....	12
Last Things	13
Death.....	13
The Rapture of the Church	13
The Great Day of the Lord.....	14
The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign.....	14
Judgment of the Lost.....	15
Eternity.....	15

The Holy Scripture

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

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, pro- positional revelation (1 Ths 2:13, 1 Cor 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen 1:31; Ex 31:17).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Mat 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 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 (2 Pet 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Mat 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16).

We teach that there is only one meaning of Scripture, the meaning which the author, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, intended his audience to hear. We also teach that it is the responsibility of every believer to ascertain carefully the true meaning and intent of Scripture. That meaning can be understood today as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical, historical/cultural method of interpretation (hermeneutic) under the enlightenment of the same Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). Note: Nothing in this hermeneutic determines the meaning of the text; that meaning was determined when the author spoke or penned the words. This hermeneutic serves only to inform our understanding.

We teach that Scripture is God's Word for all generations. Only from the correct understanding of the intended meaning can we: 1) discover the commands which God gives us to obey; or 2) discern the timeless principles which endure as relevant to, authoritative over, and applicable for our lives today. The truth of Scripture forever 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 (Deu 6:4; Is 45:5-7; 1 Cor 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 (Mat 28:19; 2 Cor 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 (Ps 145:8-9; 1 Cor 8:6). He is the creator of all things (Gen 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps 103:19; Rom 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; 2 Cor 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1

Chron 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Hab1:13; Jn 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Pet 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph 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; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Heb 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, consubstantial, and coeternal 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; Col 1:15-17; Heb 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 (Phil 2:5-8; Col 2:9).

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

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Mat 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 (Ps 2:7-9; Is 9:6; John 1:29; Phil 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Pet 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, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil 2:5-8).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and

sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Rom 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24).

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; 2 Cor 5:14-15; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18).

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; 1 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; 1 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; 1 Ths 4:13-18; Rev 20).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23):

Believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Mat 25:31-46)

Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11-15)

As the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the head of His body the church (Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Is 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 (Mat 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

God the Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Cor 2:10-13), emotions (Eph 4:30), will (1 Cor 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Is 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Mat 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-27; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; and Jer 31:31-34 with Heb 10:15-17).

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 (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We teach that a unique 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; Acts 1:5; 2:4) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church (1 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 16:7-11; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 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; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 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 ostentatious 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; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 2 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 as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

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, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Is 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

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. 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; 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Tim2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9-18,23; 5:10-12).

Salvation

We teach that salvation is wholly of God's grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12, Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:18-19). Salvation, therefore, is totally of God, who, before the foundation of the world, foreordained some men to eternal life, leaving the rest in their sin, to their just condemnation (Acts 13:48; Eph 1:4-5; 2:1-7; 2 Tim 1:9).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

Election

We teach that election is the 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; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:18-19,36; 5:40; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11; 2 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; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part 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; 1 Peter 1:2).

We teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but 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; 2 Timothy 1:9).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares man righteous. 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; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 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

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. Positional sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2,30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10,14; 13:12; 1 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 the believer positionally enjoys 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; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, 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; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

Security

We teach that all the redeemed, once, saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13,25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

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 (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because 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 and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from any association with apostasy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a beatitude attitude (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:1-10).

The Church

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; 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 church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32).

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; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders, also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11); and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7,17).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).

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 pastors and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the

measure and method of its cooperation (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

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

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Cor 15:58; Ephesians 4:12, Revelation 22:12).

We teach the need of the church to cooperate with 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; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation, 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. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians 13:13-14; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8).

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 (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

We teach that two ordinances have been committed 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, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a 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 be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 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, fellow- shipping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Christian Freedom

Its Nature

We believe that Jesus Christ has purchased freedom for believers (Galatians 2:4; 5:1). Jesus referred to this freedom at various points in His teaching (Luke 4:18; John 8:32-36). The nature of this freedom consists in believers being set free from certain things to pursue new things. Those things from which believers have been set free include the guilt and penalty of sin (Romans 6:23; 8:1; Colossians 2:13-14), bondage to sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:1-13), bondage to Satan (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13), the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57), the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9) and the curse of the moral law of God (Romans 6:14; 7:1-7; Galatians 3:13). Those things believers have been freed to pursue include an intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ, having been enabled in at least two key ways. First, being reconciled to God through our faith in Jesus Christ we have been enabled to enjoy free access to Him (Romans 5:1-2). In addition, we have been granted ability to yield all obedience to Him; to voluntarily love, serve and obey Him with a child-like love and a willing mind, not out of a slavish fear (Romans 6:11-13; 8:14-15).

Its Scope

We believe this freedom which Christ has purchased for believers has the following implications:

We believe our justification before God is on the basis of God's grace and mercy alone through faith in Christ and is apart from any keeping of the Law (Romans 3:24-31; Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:5-8). Although believers are still obligated to keep the moral law of God, it plays no part in their justification.

We believe that all true believers have become the Lord's bond slaves. As His servants, we will do what He commands and be separate from (avoid or abstain) what He forbids. Our lives will be given over to Him in complete obedience (John 14:21; Romans 6:16-23; 1John 2:3-6).

We believe that the Word of God (the Holy Bible) alone is to be our guide and standard for knowing what the Lord commands and what He forbids. The Word of God will be our only rule of faith and practice (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 19; Psalm 119).

We believe that the rules, traditions and standards of men, which are either apart from or contrary to the Word of God, shall not be used as our standard of obedience or spirituality (Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 2:20, 22-23).

We believe that with respect to those things or activities where the Word of God neither commands nor forbids, believers have the freedom to judiciously and moderately use and enjoy them in accordance with the design for which our Creator God has given them (1Tim 4:4-5; James 1:17). Our use of these things is to be further regulated by the following biblical guidelines:

1. We will use them only when our conscience permits us, for it is neither right nor good to act against conscience (Acts 24:16; Romans 14:5,22-23). 2. We will use them only after considering whether it will cause my brother to stumble. We will not knowingly use those things that would cause my brother to stumble (Matthew 18:6-10; Romans 14:13, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13). 3. We will use them only after carefully examining this particular thing or activity with the light of God's Word and after searching our own hearts. We want to make sure we are not using our liberty as an occasion to sinfully indulge our flesh (Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16).

We believe God has established and granted power to human authorities for the purpose of maintaining order and providing protection to individuals within a society. Those believers who, in the name of Christian freedom, either disobey or do not submit to these human authorities go against God. Only when those human authorities command what God forbids or forbid what God commands can Christians lawfully go against such authorities. God has authority over all. (Psalm 103:19; Daniel 3:16-18; Acts 4:19-20; 5:28-29, Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; 6:1-9; Hebrews 13:17)

We believe where different convictions exist with those things or activities where Christians have liberty, we are not to wrongfully judge one another. Rather, we are to accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, constantly upholding one another in prayer, while acknowledging there will be differences of conviction in many areas the Word of God does not specifically address. In these areas it is best to challenge everyone to lead holy lives, judging ourselves while always leaving the judgment of others in the hands of God (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 14:1-12).

Angels

Holy Angels

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7,14; 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; Rev 12:9-10), 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 (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Last Things

Death

We teach that at physical death there is a separation of one's soul from one's body (Philippians 1:21-24), that 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; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23) and that, for the redeemed, such separation of body and soul will continue until the bodily resurrection of the dead in Christ.

We teach that the bodily resurrection of the dead in Christ will occur immediately prior to the Rapture of the living church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Matthew 24:30-31)-which is a part of the first resurrection unto spiritual life (Revelation 20:4-6)-when our soul and resurrection body will be united, to be glorified forever with our Lord (1 Cor 15:35-44, 50-54; Phil 3:21). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:6-9).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved, at death, are kept under punishment until the second resurrection unto spiritual death (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:6, 13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15) and shall be cast into the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The Rapture of the Church

We teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:30-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13), for the purposes of judgment of the unrighteous world (the day of the Lord - 2 Peter 3:3-13), will be immediately preceded, on the same day (Luke 17:26-30), by the rapture (or the "gathering together in the sky") of Christ's church from this earth (Matthew 24:30-31; John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Ths 4:15-5:11). However, the Rapture will not occur until after Christ

"cuts short" the great tribulation by Antichrist (Matthew 24:15, 21-22, 29-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8), an event which therefore must occur sometime during the second half of Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:24-27). In between the rapture of the church during the second half of the seventieth week of Daniel, and Christ's glorious return with His saints on the first day of the Millennium (Revelation 21:1-2), Christ will reward believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 11:18).

The Great Day of the Lord

We teach that immediately following the Rapture-the removal of the living church from the earth (Matthew 24:30-31; John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)-the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 4:12-19; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 16:12-17). Scripture calls this time of God's wrath, the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 13:9; Zephaniah 1:14-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 6:17).

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We teach that after God's great wrath is poured out upon the earth, Christ will come to rule over the kingdom of God on earth (Daniel 7:27; Zechariah 14:9), establishing His Messianic kingdom for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over all the nations of the (Revelation 2:26; 3:21). His reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, 45 days earlier (Daniel 12:11-12), and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:10-11; Revelation 19:19-20; 20:1-3).

We teach that the first day of the Millennium, Satan will first be bound for a thousand years (Revelation 20:2-3), followed by the Sheep and Goat judgment of the day-of-the-Lord survivors (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:4), the restoration of the heavens and earth (Acts 3:21) destroyed during the day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:10-13) in preparation of the millennial rule of Christ (Isaiah 65:17-20; 66:22-24), and finally, the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven to earth, containing the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2) who will then be forever united with her husband, their Lord Jesus Christ, who is to rule over earth, forever and ever (Revelation 21:3-5 with Daniel 2:44; 7:27 and Zechariah 14:9).

We teach that the Millennial Kingdom 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 11:1-24) 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) after completion of the seventieth week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24; 12:11-12; Hosea 6:1-3; Romans 11:25-26).

We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11:1-9; 65:17-25; Revelation 21:9-22:5).

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 (Revelation 20:11-15).

We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:11-15).

Eternity

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release and ultimate defeat of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (Revelation 20:7-15), the millennial saints will enter the eternal state of glory with the Father, the Holy Spirit, and with Christ and His bride. Our Lord Jesus Christ having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).