

Doctrinal
Statement

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Bibliology

(A) Revelation

Truth comes from the mind of God. The imparting of truth was accomplished by God through revelation. He revealed knowledge which mankind could not possibly have known otherwise through general and special revelation.

(B) General Revelation

General revelation is that conveying of truth through nature wherein we see the existence of God, His Eternal Power and Glory. General Revelation is addressed to man and is “discoverable” by man in his natural capacities. General Revelation is sufficient to render the lost inexcusable for their sin. **(Job 25:3; Ps. 19:1-6; 97:6; 145:9; Is. 26:10; 40:25-26; Matt 5:45; Luke 6:35; Acts 14:17; 17:26-28; Rom. 1:18-20)**

(C) Special Revelation

Special Revelation was accomplished through many ways over the past period of time, and includes the entire canon of Scripture, The Bible. Special Revelation is direct communication from God. **(Heb. 1:1-2)**

(D) Inspiration

The Old and New Testaments in their original autographs are the complete, inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. The Scriptures are inspired verbally (each individual word) and plenary (all Scripture in total.). The Scriptures are God-breathed as the Holy Spirit moved godly men who accurately recorded the message. **(2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)**

(E) Hermeneutics

The proper interpretation of Scripture is the natural, literal sense, giving careful attention to the grammatical, historical and contextual parameters at the time of writing. Scripture is to be interpreted literally with words and texts being taken in their ordinary, normal or plain meaning unless there is some reason in the context to dictate otherwise. **(Neh. 8:8; Luke 10:26; 2 Pet. 1:20)**

(F) Finality and Eternity

The canon of Scripture is complete in its current state of 66 books. It is unbiblical for anything to be added to or taken away from the Bible we now have. Scripture is also eternal and everlasting. God has preserved His Word through the existing manuscripts and translations to the extent that they are consistent with the original documents. **(Ps. 119:89; Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19)**

(G) Authority

Scriptures are the final and only source for doctrine, spiritual maturity, and practical living. They provide all knowledge required about life and godliness. Doctrine based on the Word of God unifies the local church and is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be judged. **(Mark 7:7-8; Eph 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4)**

Theology Proper

(A) The Trinity

There is one God (**Dt. 6:4; Is. 45:5-6**), the Creator of the heavens and the earth; He eternally exists in three persons: God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit (**Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Is. 6:8; 48:16; 2 Cor. 13:14; Matt 3:16; 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 8:6**). The three persons of the Trinity exist as a unity coequal in essence, but distinct in function. The attributes of God are non-moral and moral. The several non-moral attributes are omniscience (**Ps. 139:1-4**), omnipresence (**Ps. 139:7-12**), omnipotence (**Job 42:2; Jeremiah 32:17**), and immutability (**Heb. 1:12; 13:8; James. 1:17; Mal. 3:6**). Additionally, God possesses numerous moral attributes including the following: Holiness (**Ps. 30:4; 47:8; 60:6; 89:35; 1 Pt. 1:16**); Righteousness and Justice (**Ps. 89:14; Rom. 3:26**); Love (**1 Jn. 4:8, 16**); mercy and loving-kindness (**1 Pet. 1:3**); and Faithfulness (**1 Thess. 5:24; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Tim 2:13**).

(B) God, The Father

God is supreme in His person, eternal in His being, absolute in His attributes, and glorious in His perfection. He is the Father of all mankind in the sense that He is the Creator (**Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:29; Rev. 4:11**), but the Spiritual Father of those who personally receive Christ as their Savior (**John 1:12; Gal. 3:26; Romans 8:14-17**). The Father is the administrative head of the Trinity and as such the Son and the Holy Spirit (although equal in essence) have a subordinate role to the Father (**John 3:16; 5:30; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Cor. 11:1-3 Philippians 2:5-8**).

Christology

(C) God, The Son

Jesus Christ is the second person in the Trinity. He possesses all the same attributes as the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He is entirely God and entirely man being God manifest in the flesh. He lived a sinless life and in His death made a full and vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He arose from the dead on the third day, and subsequently ascended bodily into heaven. The current work of Christ is one of mediation between God and man, and headship of the universal church. He is coming again to rapture the Church age saints and this rapture is imminent, pre-tribulational, and premillennial. He will after the Tribulation Period return to this earth to set up his millennial kingdom.

Eternality and Deity: Is. 9:6; Mic. 5:2; John 1:1; John 8:58; John 10:30

Angel of the Lord: Gen. 22:11; Ex. 3

Virgin Birth: Is. 7:14; 9:6; Matt. 1:18-23; Lk. 1:28-35

Became Flesh: John 1:14

Impeccability: Is 53:9; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22, James 1:13

Vicarious sacrifice: 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb 2:9, 14; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:2

Resurrection: Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4

Ascension: Acts 1:9-11; 7:56

High Priest: Heb. 4:14-16,

Mediation: 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24

Intercession: Heb. 7:25

Headship of Church: Eph. 1:22; 5:23

Rapture: 1 Cor. 15:51- 52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18

**Second Coming: Zech. 14:4; Rev. 19:11-16
Davidic King: Rev. 20; Ps. 110; Mt. 22:44-45**

Pneumatology

(D) God, The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine person possessing all divine attributes of personality and deity (**Acts 5:3-4; 20:28; 2 Cor. 3:17; 2 Cor. 13:14**). He is equal with the Father and the Son and is of the same essence (**Mt. 28:18-20**). His relation to the unbelieving world is that He convicts lost men of sin, the reality of Christ's righteousness, and certainty of judgment (**Jn. 16:7-11**). His work among Church Age believers is that He indwells, baptizes, seals, fills, gifts, guides and teaches them the ways of righteousness. There is a distinction between the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the OT and His ministry in the NT. The work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was selective, sovereign and temporary. There is a new and unique work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Body of Christ, that is, the baptism of the Holy Spirit endows believers with the service gifts upon conversion. The Bible does not support the authenticity of the sign gifts of prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpretations of tongues, miracles and healing for today (**1 Cor. 13:8-12**). The Bible repudiates experience-oriented theology and the ecumenically oriented practice of the Charismatic movement.

a. Indwelling

The unique and distinctive ministry of the Holy Spirit during the Church Age is the perpetual indwelling of each believer. The believer thus becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. (**John 14:16; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19**)

b. Baptizing

This act is simultaneous with regeneration in which the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into the Church, the Body of Christ. There is one baptism for each believer at the moment of salvation. (**1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5**)

c. Sealing

The Act of the Holy Spirit in which He seals each believer in the condition of Salvation until the day of redemption is the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit. (**2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30**)

d. Filling

The day to day, moment to moment control of the believer by the Holy Spirit whenever the believer is yielded into His hands. Although there is one baptism of the Holy Spirit, there will be many fillings of the Holy Spirit. (**Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16**)

e. Illumination

Illumination is the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the believer's life and aids him in the application thereof. (**1 Cor. 2:9-14; 1 John 2:20, 27**)

f. Convicts

The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment (**John 16:8-11**).

g. Teaches

The Holy Spirit teaches and brings things to remembrance of the believer (John 14:26; **1 Cor. 2:9-14**)

h. Gifts

The Holy Spirit gives each believer gifts to use in service (**1 Cor. 12:8-13**)

i. Regenerates

The act of the Holy Spirit whereby He imparts life to the believing person. (**Titus 3:5**)

j. Sanctifies

He sets the believer apart for holiness and God. (**1 Pt. 1:2**)

k. Intercedes

He interprets the prayer of the believer (**Rm. 8:26**)

l. Calls

He calls the believer into service. (**Acts 13:4**)

Angelology

(A) Angels

Angels were created by God for the blessing of God's work and glory (**Ps. 148:2, 5**). Included in that creative work was Satan (Lucifer **Ez. 28; Is. 14**); the holy angels (those now confirmed in holiness **Ps. 103:20, 21; 1 Tim. 5:21**) and the fallen angels (demons **Rev. 12:4**).

(B) Holy Angels

Holy (good) angels are spirit beings who serve God and assist believers and are now confirmed in their holiness. They stand before God and worship Him (**Ps. 148:2; Rev. 5:11**). They deliver messages on His behalf (**Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26-38**) and they minister to believers in a number of ways including physical protection (**Ps. 91:11, 12; Heb. 1:14**).

(C) Satan

Satan is a spirit being who was expelled from heaven (**Luke 10:18**) because of his pride and rebellion against God (**Is. 14:12-15; Ez. 28:11-19**). In his rebellion, Satan took 1/3 of the angels with him (**Rev. 12:4**). He tempted Christ in the wilderness (**Matt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:1-13**). He is roaming the earth seeking to devour (**1 Pt. 5:8**) and is accusing the brethren before God (**Rev. 12:10**). He is the unholy god of this age (**2 Cor. 4:4**) and the ruler of the powers of darkness (**Eph. 2:2**) and is seeking to blind the unsaved (**2 Cor. 4:2**), but he will always be subject to God who is greater than he is (**1 John 4:4**). Despite all of this, he still has to answer to God (**Job 1**). He is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the Lake of Fire (**Rev. 20:10**) which was created for him and his angels (**Mt. 25:41**).

(D) Demons

Demons are spirits who are working agents under the direction of Satan, and they are many. They (1/3 of the angels **Rev. 12:4**) were expelled from Heaven along with Lucifer at the rebellion. They are evil and destructive and are able to possess and control unsaved individuals (**Matt. 8:28; 17:15; Mark 5:9**). Their goal is to undermine God's divine purposes, and even though they cannot indwell a believer (**1 Jn. 4:4; 5:18**), they strive to disrupt the believer's spiritual walk (**Eph. 6:11-12**). They are still ultimately under God's control (**1 Kgs. 22:22; 2 Chr. 18:21**). They are condemned to the Lake of Fire for all eternity (**Mt. 25:41**).

Doctrine of Creation

(A) The Genesis Creation Account

The Genesis account of creation is neither allegory nor myth but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate, creative acts of God (**Gen. 1-2; 1:31**) including man (**Act. 17:26**). The origin of God's creation was ex nihilo (out of nothing). Creation consisted of six twenty-four hour days (**Ex. 20:11**) in which everything was created by Christ (**John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17**) for the Father (**Heb. 1:2, 3**). The seventh day was also a twenty-four hour day on which God rested from His labor. God's creation was perfect without sin or evil. Sin and evil entered the human race through the fall of Adam and Eve as accounted in **Genesis 3**. The earth is several thousand years old as opposed to billions. Theistic evolution, progressive creationism, and naturalistic evolution are perversions to the biblical account of creation.

Anthropology

(A) The Creation of Man

Mankind was created by God who created him in His own image. He created man with intellect, emotion, and will. Man's creation was direct, special and immediate. Man was created in an innocent state of unconfirmed holiness. (**Gen 1:26, 27; 2:7, 17; 1 Tim. 2:13-14**)

(B) Adam Was the First Created Man

Adam is the father of all mankind in that he was the first created man. By voluntary transgression he fell from his state of innocence, in consequence of which all men are now sinners by nature (**Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12-19**) and by choice (**Isa 53:6, Heb. 7:9-10**), utterly devoid of the holiness required by God's law (**Rom. 3:23; 10:3-12**), positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal punishment and everlasting existence separated from God without defense or excuse.

(C) The Ultimate Destiny of Man

The ultimate destiny of man is two-fold. There will be a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto judgment (**John 5:29**). The resurrection of life (this is a multi-faceted resurrection: Bema Seat (**2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15**); OT and Trib Saints (**Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4-6**) is prepared for those who have accepted by grace through faith (Old Testament saints looking towards the cross; New Testament saints looking back at the cross), Jesus Christ's payment on Calvary for their sins (**Is. 53:6**), and in return they now possess eternal and everlasting life (**John 3:16**). There will be no condemnation to believers (**Rom. 8:1**). The second resurrection is the resurrection of damnation (**Rev. 20:15**). This resurrection is reserved for those who have rejected Jesus Christ and in return they will be condemned to eternal and everlasting punishment and separation from God (**2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15**).

Hamartiology

(A) The Doctrine of Sin

Sin entered God's creation when Lucifer in his pride revolted against God (**Is. 14:12-15; Ez. 28:11-19**). Sin entered the human world through Adam disobedience (**Gen. 3:6, 14-19; Rom. 5:12**) to God's divine command (**Gen 2:17**) in the Garden of Eden. Sin is anything that is lawless or anything that departs from God's standard of holiness (**1 John 3:4; Rom 3:23**). All men are sinners (**Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:23**) and have been sinners since they were born (**Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12**), and in result deserve the judgment of God (**Ez. 18:20**). The effects of sin are present both spiritually and physically (**Rom. 6:23**). Spiritually, sin renders every person incapable of living a holy life or living a life that is separated to God (**Pro. 20:9; Rom. 7:18-19**). Physically, sin has brought a curse which produces discomfort, decay, and death. Christ brings life to a dying human race (**Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13**). After salvation, believers belong to God and the world lies in unrighteousness (**1 John 5:19**).

Soteriology

Salvation of sinners is divinely initiated (**John 3:16**), wholly of grace, and accomplished only through the mediatory work of Jesus Christ (**Acts 13:39; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 Pet. 1:18-23**), the Son of God. It is wholly apart from works of man, is given to us through the grace of God, and is accepted by faith (**Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 4:2**) in the Lord Jesus Christ. Genuine salvation is never without genuine repentance (**Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10**). We are regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit (**John 3:3-6; Tit. 3:5**) through faith in God and thus become the recipients of a new nature. Justification is that judicial act of God accompanied by the pardon of sin and the imputation of divine righteousness, not because of any works of righteousness on our part (**Eph. 2:8-10**), but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood. The believer who has exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is completely justified and in possession of a salvation which is eternally secure (**John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:35-39; Phil. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:4; Jude 24-25**). Any person claiming to be saved who willfully persists and delights in that which he knows to be sin has no Scriptural right to think of himself as genuinely saved (**John 8:31; 1 John 2:8**).

(A) Adoption

Adoption is the act of God, who has only one begotten Son, by which He accepts each believer into His family as a son or daughter. (**John 1:18; 3:16; Rom. 8:15-17, 29; Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:5**)

(B) Salvation

Salvation is the act of God by which He rescues a sinner from the penalty of sin, and gives him an eternal inheritance in heaven. The act is based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. The benefit of salvation is eternal life. Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all men and it is God's will that none should perish. Furthermore, there are people in hell for whom Christ died. (**John 1:12; 3:16; Eph. 1:4-5; 1 Tim. 2:4; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 2 Pet. 2:1; 3:9; 1Jn. 2:2**)

(C) Justification

It means to be declared righteous. Man can be declared righteous of his sin by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. This is the only way to be justified, by the blood of Christ (**Rom. 3:21-31; 4, 5, Gal. 2:16**).

(D) Regeneration

Regeneration is the act whereby God imparts life to the one who believes. It is the second birth. **(John 3:3; 5:24; Eph. 2:1; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23)**

(E) Redemption

Redemption means to purchase, by means of a ransom price, out of the slave market of sin and set free. Three words are used in Scripture to characterize redemption. *Agorazo* means to buy back on the slave market of sin. *Exagorazo* means to remove from the marketplace of sin. *Lutroo* expresses being set free by the payment of a ransom. **(Luke 24:21; 1 Cor. 6:20; Gal. 3:13; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9)**

(F) Faith

Faith is a belief in which you trust entirely. Faith involves trusting in that which is unseen but factually known. Faith in God must be exercised by all who believe in Christ. **(Jn. 3:36; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 11:1, 6)**

(G) Repentance

Repentance is the change of mind in the sinner by which he willfully turns from sin to God. Repentance involves the acknowledgment of sin, the sorrow for sin, and a turning away from sin. **(Ps. 51:1-4, 10; Acts 21:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 6:1)**

(H) Mercy

The exercise of mercy is that activity of God in which He does not award to the repentant sinner what he or she rightly deserves which is judgment, eternal separation from God. **(Num 14:18-19; Deut. 13:17; James 3:17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Tit. 3:5)**

(I) Grace

Divine grace is the unmerited favor whereby the repentant sinner is freely given eternal life which he or she does not deserve. Scripture is very clear that salvation is a free gift, and that it cannot be earned. **(Acts 18:27; Rom 3:24; 4:4, 6; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 2:11)**

(J) Propitiation

Propitiation means satisfaction. Christ's death appeased or satisfied the just demands of the Holy God for all men and not just the elect. **(Rom. 3:25; 1 Jn. 2:1-2, 4:10)**

(K) Imputation

To impute is to place something on someone else's account. God imputes Christ's righteousness on the account of those who believe in Him. This righteousness is unmerited by human effort; however, it is a credit given by God to those who believe on His Son **(Rom. 4:11, 22-24; 5:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23)**. There are three types of imputation: 1. Adam's sin to man **(Rom. 5:12)**; 2. Man's sin to Christ **(Is. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:21)**; 3. Christ's righteousness to man **(2 Cor. 5:21)**.

(L) Forgiveness

Forgiveness means the saved person has been pardoned or had an obligation canceled. God has graciously canceled the debt of sin and the punishment deserved for sin through the gift of eternal life in Christ. **(Ps. 130:4; Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14; 1 Jn. 1:9)**

(M) Sanctification

Sanctification means to set apart for a holy purpose. The Scriptures address sanctification in a three dimensional perspective. Positional sanctification occurs at the moment of salvation when the believer is set apart in Christ and positioned with Christ in the heavens. The second aspect of sanctification is progressive sanctification whereby the believer is brought closer to the image of Christ. This occurs through his obedience to the Word of God and allowing the Holy Spirit to fill the believer's life daily and make him/her more like Christ in character and behavior. The third aspect of sanctification is permanent sanctification. This is the final transformation of the believer into the image of Jesus Christ upon receiving the glorified body. **(Jn. 17:17; Rom. 6:12-13; 8:28-29; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Eph. 5:26-27; Heb. 10:10, 14; 1 John 3:2)**

(N) Eternal Security

Eternal Security means that those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior will continue in their state of being born-again for time and eternity. They are now sons or daughters of God and will so remain being forever secured by the keeping power of God. **(John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:38-39; Eph. 4:30; 1 Jn. 5:13; Jude 24-25)**

(O) Glorification

Glorification, in regards to the believer, is a future event with a two-fold implication. The believer will be spiritually perfected in to the image of Christ upon his entry into Heaven and subsequently at the resurrection; he will receive a glorified body in which to dwell throughout eternity future. The two aspects of glorification are simultaneous at the Rapture. **(Rom. 8:17, 30; 1 Cor. 15:52; Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 John 3:2)**

Eternal Destiny

(A) Unbelievers

The last resurrection will include all unregenerate dead from all history. They are sent to Hell for their unbelief **(Heb. 3:18; 4:6)**. They will be raise at the end of the millennial kingdom to stand trial before God at the Great White Throne Judgment where they will be sentenced to eternity in the Lake of Fire. **(Mt. 25:41; John 5:28-29; 2 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 20:11-14)**

(B) Church Age Believers

There will be a bodily resurrection of all Church Age believers at the rapture of the Church. This group will be caught up to Heaven and will be judged at the Bema (judgment) Seat of Christ. The Bema seat does not determine the gain or loss of eternal life, but rather the gain or loss of spiritual rewards. They will reign with Christ during the Millennial Kingdom. Believers will spend eternity future in the presence of God. **(Rom. 8:17; 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 1:6; 21:3-7)**

(C) Old Testament Believers

Dead Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints will be resurrected at the second coming and be given glorified bodies in which they will enter into the Millennial Kingdom and they will reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom while maintaining their national identity through eternity future. (**Dan. 12:2, 13; Job 19:25-27; Ps. 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; Is. 26:19; Heb. 11:39-40; 12:23; Rev. 20:4**)

(D) Infants and Special Needs Persons

Infants who die before birth or infants and/or special needs persons who die before they come to the age of accountability (the age when a person can distinguish right from wrong and choose one over the other) will be eternally in heaven. (**2 Sam. 12:23; Is. 7:15-16; 8:4; Jer. 19:4; Ez. 16:21; Jonah 4:11; Rev. 5:9; 7:9**)

Heaven and Hell

(A) Heaven

Heaven is God's eternal abiding place (**Dt. 26:15; 1 Ki.8:30, 39; Ps. 103:19; 113:5; Is.66:1; Zec.2:13**). There will be no sin present in Heaven because God is holy and cannot tolerate sin in His presence. The New heaven is the eternal home for the children of God where the effects of sin such as sorrow, pain and death will not be present (**Rev. 21:1-7**). The New heaven is where Christ will reign forever as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (**Luke. 1:33**).

(B) Hell and the Lake of Fire

Hell is a temporary but literal place of fire and torment where the dead lost persons abide (**Lk. 16:22-24**). The Lake of Fire, in contrast, is the permanent and final place of judgment for all those whose name is not found written in the Book of Life. It was created for Satan and his angels (**Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10**). This judgment is administered at the Great White Throne (**Rev. 20:11-15**). The torment of this judgment is eternal in which both the body and the soul of the unregenerate burn without being consumed and without annihilation (**Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 13**).

Ecclesiology

(A) The New Testament Church

Christ was the one that introduced the Church in **Matthew 16:18**. The Scriptures teach that the Church of Jesus Christ is distinct from Israel. We see that it was a mystery (something not revealed in the OT **Col. 1:26-27**). It was inaugurated at Pentecost (**Acts 2; Acts 11:15**) and will be completed at the Rapture (**1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:11-18**). The church must be considered in two aspects; the Body of Christ (all saints from Pentecost to the Rapture) (**1 Cor. 12:13; Eph 4:12**) and the Local Church (**Rom. 1:7; 1Cor. 1:2**)

(B) The Body of Christ

This group is made up of all individuals who have been born again from the day of Pentecost to the moment of the Rapture of the Church and have been placed by the Holy Spirit (through means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit) into the universal church (**1 Cor. 12:12-13**) It is operating with pastors (**1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9**) and deacons (**1 Tim. 3:8-16**) and is seeking to edify believers and carry out the Great

Commission. Christ is the head of the body therefore Christ is the only supreme authority of the church (**Eph. 1:22-23, 3:10; 5:23 Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:23**).

(C) The Local Church

The local New Testament church is an organized body of believers, baptized by immersion upon a credible testimony of their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It operates under pastor(s) (**1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9**) and deacons. The church is congregational in government (**Acts 13:3; 1 Cor. 5:4, 2 Cor. 2:6**), and is set aside for God's work (**Eph. 3:10**), worship (**1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 10:31**), and edification (**1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:2, 3:16**), observance of the ordinances (baptism-**Acts 2:41-47** and Lord's Supper-**Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11**) and the fulfillment of the great commission by propagating the Gospel throughout the world (**Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8**). The unifying purpose of the local church is to glorify God (**Eph. 3:21**).

(D) Biblical Authority

The Word of God is the final Authority for Doctrine. (**Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19**)

(E) Autonomy of the Local Church

Each local assembly is self-governing with the government to be exercised by the congregation. Churches of like faith and practice may choose to jointly participate in fellowship or outreach ministries for the sake of the cause of Christ. However, nowhere in Scripture does one find a denomination, convention, or church hierarchy. And no one church or association of churches has a governing role over any local assembly in the New Testament. (**Acts 6:1-6; 13:1-5, 15; Col. 4:13**)

(F) Priesthood of the Believer

Each believer has the right to function as a priest and enter the presence of God on his or her own behalf. (**Heb. 10:18-22; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10**). They are also a Royal Priesthood (**1 Pt. 2:9**).

(G) Two Church Offices

Pastor (Bishop or Elder) and Deacon are the two biblical church offices. Bishop, elder, and shepherd are biblical terms all referring to the same office of Pastor. The qualifications are in **1 Tim. 3:1-7** and **Tit. 1:5-9**. The Deacons are the servant/helpers to the pastors and the congregation. Their qualifications are given in **1 Tim. 3:8-13**. (Deacons-**Acts 6:1-6**; Bishop-**Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3**; Both-**Phil. 1:1**)

(H) Individual Soul Liberty

Soul liberty refers to the right of the individual Christian to regulate his or her life with regard to things which are morally indifferent. (**Ez. 18:4; Rom. 14:1-12; 1 Cor. 8; 10:23-33**)

(I) Saved, Regenerate Church Membership

Local Churches are made up of persons who are born again and able to give credible testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ and have been baptized by immersion. The local church bears the responsibility to approve individuals who are candidates for believer's baptism. A member of a local church should be dismissed by death, a letter of transfer or church discipline. Dismissals two and three are to be taken by the church congregation. (**Matt. 18:15-18; Acts 2:41-42; 8:12; 2 Cor. 2:5-7**)

(J) Two Church Ordinances

The two ordinances of the local church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism (**Matt. 3:16; 28:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-47; 8:26-39; Col. 2:12**) is the first step in obedience to our Lord, and should be done by immersion to represent the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (**Rom. 6:1-4**). It is a testimony of the new believer's identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper (**1 Cor. 11:23-30**) should be observed by baptized believers who are in right standing with God and the brethren and in the corporate worship time of believers. Neither of these two ordinances bear any salvific merit.

(K) Separation of Church and State

The state or government should not appoint one church to be the official church of the state nor interfere in the work of a New Testament Local Church. Nor should the church establish a state. In essence, the church does not govern the state and the state does not govern the church. (**Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19; 5:29**)

Separation

(A) Personal Separation

The believer should be separated from all worldly practices that would dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ. (**1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; 1 Pet. 1:13-16**)

(B) Ecclesiastical Separation

The local church should separate from any persons and ecumenical movements which seek to compromise clear biblical statements in favor of unity over truth. However, a church may cooperate and associate with any ministry, movement, mission, organization or individual, whose doctrine, policy and practice are not contrary. (**Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; James 4:4**)

Discipline of a Member

It is vital to the testimony of this local church and the glory of our Lord that church purity be preserved and its peace protected. In the event of differences between members, they will be settled personally in accordance with **Matt. 18**.

"And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.'" **Hebrews 12:5-6**

(A) Definitions

1) The Church

The church is a holy community created by God and intended to reflect His character and glory in the midst of a fallen world. God loves the church and His ultimate purpose for His church is to make it a gift to His Son; thus He calls it the Bride of Christ. For this reason the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are constantly at work to purify the church and bring her to maturity (**Eph 4:7-16; 5:25-27**).

2) *Life in the Church*

The Bible provides standards from God for the faith and life of all who are a part of the church. Elders/Pastors are commissioned by God to instruct, govern and preserve local churches within these bounds of doctrine and practice. In addition, they call individual church members to both apply the Word to themselves and also to encourage and admonish one another in it. (**Gal. 6:1; Heb. 3:13**)

3) *Church Discipline*

Church discipline is the corrective process which God has given to the church when a member persists in sin. We see it at work in **1 Cor. 5**.

4) *Such persistent sins may be:*

- *Personal* – sins which wrong or injure particular individuals; e.g. slander, anger, bitterness, theft (**Matt 18:15-20; 2 Cor. 12:20-13:2**)

- *General* – sins which are not directed at a particular individual; e.g. heresy, divisiveness, immorality, drunkenness (**Rom 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5; Gal 1:8-9; 1 Tim. 1:19, 20; 2 Tim.2:16-18**)

- *Private* – sins known only to a few (**Prov. 25:9; Matt 18:15**)

- *Public* – sins which are conspicuous and widely known (**1 Cor. 5:13; 2 Cor. 12:20-13:2; Titus 3:10, 11**)

5) Pastors are also subject to church discipline as is any other member. (**1 Tim. 5:19-21**)

6) Church discipline is neither intended to humiliate someone nor to seek revenge. It is an expression of God's fatherly love (**Prov. 3:11-12; Heb 12:5-11**). Those involved in bringing this correction are to be motivated by sincere love and their words and actions are to combine both grace and truth.

(B) Purpose-The purpose of this gift from God is threefold:

1) The glory of God (**Eph 3:20-21**)

2) The unity and purity of the church (**1 Cor. 1:10; Eph 5:25-27**)

3) The restoration of the straying church member (**Matt 18:15-17; 2 Cor. 2:5-11**)

(C) Practice

1) *Self-discipline*. God calls every believer to be conformed into the image of His Son. This involves hearing and obeying God's Word and results in each believer disciplining themselves so as to conform to his Savior. We recognize that most "church discipline" situations start and end here, with the believer diligently applying God's Word to his life (**1 Tim 4:7, 16**).

- 2) *Minor offenses.* Though in Christ every believer has been declared righteous, the Christian life is a process of gradual change, of becoming in character what God has declared us in standing. This means that every Christian will exhibit flaws and imperfections and every relationship will include some measure of tension and disharmony. Minor offenses are those which do not endanger the safety or well-being of a believer, a relationship or a church. In light of the gospel, these are best overlooked, in the manner in which God forbears and overlooks many such traits in us (**Prov. 19:11; Rom 15:1; 1 Pet 4:8**).
- 3) *Process for addressing sin in a fellow believer.* Where self-discipline fails and where a believer sins in a manner that should not be overlooked, God provides direction for what to do. Ordinarily the process moves through stages, as described by Jesus himself in **Matthew 18:15-17**. With the Glory of God and purity of the Church as the foundation, the goal at each stage, if possible, is to secure the repentance and restoration of the sinning brother or sister. The process ceases whenever the straying member evidences biblical repentance and is restored to the Lord and others.
- 3.1. *Private inquiry.* When a Christian sees another church member that appears to be engaged in sin that is repeated or serious, normally he should approach that person privately and in a spirit of meekness to inquire and, if necessary, to confront. If repentance is required and takes place, the process ends. If there is disagreement over the need for repentance or if there is refusal to repent, he should involve one or two others (**Matt 18:15; Luke 17:3; Gal 6:1**).
- 3.2. *Establishing the matter with witnesses.* The concerned Christian should now involve one or two other church members, perhaps including a care-group leader or pastor, and return to the brother or sister caught in sin. If this group confirms that the brother or sister is in fact sinning, is unrepentant and is unwilling to change, then the pastors of the church should be informed so that they can confirm the facts and appeal for change (**Deut 19:15; Matt 18:16; 1 Tim. 5:19**).
- 3.3. *Telling the church.* If the straying brother or sister remains unwilling to change, failing to heed various appeals from members and/or pastors, the pastors normally will inform the church of the member and the sin. Church members will be urged to pursue the erring member and appeal for repentance (**Matt 18:17; 1Tim 5:20**).
- 3.4. *Excluding from church membership.* Then the elders/pastors will inform the church again, this time acting to remove that person from church membership and instruct the church to treat the excluded member as an unbeliever. This means the church will no longer treat the person as a Christian, in that sense having no 'fellowship' with him or her, and instead will seek to preach the gospel to him/her calling him to repentance and faith in Christ (**Matt 18:17; 1Cor 5:5; 2Thess. 3:14-15; 1Tim 1:20**).
- 3.5. *Appeal.* If at any point a church member believes he is being treated unjustly or inappropriately in the disciplinary process, he is welcome to appeal to the pastors and deacons of the church.

- 4) *Public sins*. After the sin has been addressed with the individual, the elders/pastors may decide to abbreviate or eliminate the above process if the sin is especially conspicuous or serious, or if the member proves to be divisive, disruptive or is seen as a threat to lead others into sin (**Rom 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:13; Titus 3:10-11**).
- 5) *Disciplinary actions*. As the disciplinary process progresses through the above stages, the actions that may be taken include, but are not limited to, private and public admonition, withdrawal of fellowship and removal from membership (**1 Cor. 5:4-5, 13; 11:17-34**).
- 6) *Restoration*. The restoration of the straying believer stands as a hoped for part of the practice of church discipline. Throughout the disciplinary process the elders/pastors will seek to define a biblically informed pathway of repentance for the sinning member. If a member is removed from membership, the elders/pastors will urge the church members to continue to seek opportunities to call the person to repentance and faith in Christ. When the church has been made aware of an individual's sin, they will also publically be made aware of an individual's repentance in a way that is appropriate to the situation and the good of the church, ensuring that as many people as possible may rejoice (**Luke 15:7; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Gal 6:1**).
- 7) *If a member leaves the church to avoid or cut short the disciplinary process*. At times a member may withdraw from the church to avoid or cut short church discipline and its consequences. The elders/pastors and members of our church recognize our obligation and opportunity to attempt to restore the wandering member to the Lord and to His church. While the church cannot force a withdrawing member to remain in this congregation, the church has the right and responsibility to attempt to restore, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. If the elders/pastors learn that a member who left under church discipline is now attending another church, the elders/pastors may inform that church of the situation, seeking to encourage the brother or sister to repent and be restored to the Lord and to any people he or she have offended. The elders/pastors may also warn the other church to be on guard against harm that the accused might do to their members (**Eph. 4:1-6**).
- 8) *Receiving excluded members*. People who attend our church, but have been excluded from another church on biblical grounds, will not be allowed to become members or participate in the fellowship of the church until they have repented of their sins, made a reasonable effort to be reconciled, and satisfied any biblically legitimate requirements of their former church.

Eschatology

(A) Hermeneutics

It is important to avoid the tendency to adopt a changing or complimentary hermeneutic when scripture addresses prophetic issues. The proper interpretation of Scripture is arrived at by taking the text in its natural or literal sense with careful attention given to grammatical, historical and contextual

parameters. Scripture is to be interpreted literally with words and texts being taken in their ordinary, normal, or plain meaning unless there is some reason in the context to dictate otherwise.

(B) The Three Sine Qua Non's of Literal Interpretation

Sine qua non is a Latin term meaning "that without not," or those things which are necessary. The Three sine qua non's of literal interpretation are 1) Keep Israel and the Church distinct, 2) Words and texts in Scripture must be taken in their ordinary, normal, plain meaning in contrast to spiritualizing or allegorizing them and 3) the overall purpose of God in the world is God-centered in contrast to man-centered. The purpose is to bring glory to God and the salvation of mankind is one method of accomplishing the purpose.

(C) Biblical Dispensationalism and Progressive Revelation

Literal interpretation demonstrates that God has progressively revealed doctrines from the simple to the complete (i.e. redemption of mankind from the simple statement of **Genesis 3:15** to the complete revelation of the Gospels). Furthermore, literal interpretation demonstrates that God has dealt with mankind in different ways in different eras of human history. The separation of biblical data and human history into component parts as indicated by literal interpretation is called Dispensationalism. A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God; man fails the test, and the judgment of God is incurred because of the failure. At this point God gives further revelation to man and subsequently a new test. In the initial dispensation, Adam and Eve are created and placed in the Garden of Eden with instructions not to eat of the fruit off the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They listened to the temptation of the serpent, ate of the fruit, fell into the condition of sin, and were removed from the Garden.

(E) The seven dispensations are:

Dispensation of Innocence	Genesis 1:3-3:6
Dispensation of Conscience	Genesis 3:7-8:14
Dispensation of Human Government	Genesis 8:15-11:9
Dispensation of Promise	Genesis 11:10-Exodus 18:27
Dispensation of the Law	Exodus 19:1-Acts 1:26
Dispensation of Grace	Acts 2:1-Revelation 19:21
Dispensation of the Kingdom	Revelation 20:1-15

(John 1:17; 1 Cor. 9:17; 10:32; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24, 25; Heb. 7:19; Rev. 20:2-6)

(D) The Rapture of the Church

The "blessed hope" is the imminent, personal, pretribulational return of our Lord Jesus Christ referred to doctrinally as the Rapture of the Church. Christ will bodily return in the clouds of the air to catch away the believers in Christ (members of His Body, the Church). **(John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4:11-18; Tit. 2:13)**

(E) The Tribulation Period

After the rapture of the church a seven year tribulation period will unfold on the earth during which God will punish rebellious, unbelieving mankind, and re-gather Israel physically and spiritually to prepare the

nation to welcome her Messiah. **(Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; Matt. 24:15-21; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 6:1-18:24)**

(F) The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema Seat)

The Church-Age saints appear before the Bema Seat of Christ in Heaven for assessment of their works done during their lifetime from the point of salvation and prior to their entry into heaven. **(1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Jn. 4:17)**

(G) The Second Coming of Christ

At the end of the seven year Tribulation Period the Lord Jesus will bodily return to earth in power and glory to establish the Millennial Kingdom. At this time, the first resurrection will be completed. Also the judgment of the nations will occur. **(Zech. 14:2-4, 9; Mat. 25; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 19)**

(H) Millennial Reign of Christ

The Millennial Kingdom of Christ is a literal 1000 year period which is in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. Christ (who presently sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven) will sit on the Throne of David and rule Israel from Jerusalem. During the reign peace and righteousness will cover the earth, Satan will be bound and Israel shall be established in her own land. At the end of the millennium Satan will rebel against Christ, but shall be defeated and forever banished to the Lake of Fire. **(Ps. 2; Jer. 31:31-34; Ez. 11:17-20; 34:23-24; 36:26-28; 37:24-28; Matt. 5-7; Rev. 20:4-15)**

(I) The Great White Throne Judgment and Eternity Future

Following the millennium the wicked dead shall be judged at the Great White Throne and shall be condemned to everlasting conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire. The righteous in Christ shall be in eternal conscious blessedness in the presence of the Lord in the New Heaven and the New Earth. **(Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:1-27; 22:1-20)**

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