

What We Teach

The Doctrinal Statement of Cornerstone Bible Church

Adopted September 2024

The Holy Scriptures

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, constitute the Word of God. That is, we teach the plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture, that every word is equally breathed out by God in all its parts (1 Corinthians 2:7–14; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), infallible (John 10:35), and absolutely inerrant in the original documents, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit (Psalms 12:6; 119:160; Proverbs 30:5).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice and is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12–13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15–17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 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 Peter 1:20–21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We teach the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently and consistently applies this interpretive method with the aid of the illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12–15; 1 Corinthians 2:7–15; 1 John 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

We teach that literal, grammatical, historical interpretation yields the affirmation that God created the world in six literal twenty-four-hour days (Genesis 1:1–2:3; Exodus 20:11; 31:17), that He specially created man and woman (Genesis 1:26–28; 2:5–25), and that He defined marriage as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; cf. Malachi 2:14). Scripture elsewhere dictates that any sexual activity outside of marriage is an abomination before the Lord (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:1–30; Matthew 5:27–32; 19:1–9; 1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 6:9–10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–7).

God

38 We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5–7; 1
39 Corinthians 8:4), an eternal (Revelation 1:8), infinite (Job 11:7–10), absolute Spirit (John
40 4:24), without parts (Exodus 3:14; 1 John 1:5; 4:8), perfect in all His attributes, including
41 incomprehensibility (Romans 11:33), omniscience (1 John 3:20), omnipotence (Genesis
42 18:14), omnipresence (Psalms 139:7–10), immutability (Malachi 3:6), and aseity (Exodus
43 3:14; John 5:26).

44 We teach that this God is one in essence (having one mind, one will, and one power),
45 eternally existing in three coequal and consubstantial Persons—Father, Son, and Holy
46 Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each uncreated and distinct, and each
47 equally deserving worship and obedience. Therefore, we teach that the Father is of
48 none, neither begotten nor proceeding (John 5:26); the Son is eternally begotten of the
49 Father (John 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 5:26; cf. Psalms 2:7); and the Holy Spirit eternally
50 proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26).

51 **God the Father**

52 We teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all
53 things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalms 145:8–9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He
54 is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1–31; Ephesians 3:9). He is sovereign in creation,
55 providence, and redemption (Psalms 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves
56 both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator, He
57 is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers
58 (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18).

59 He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He
60 continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11).
61 In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38–
62 47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17).
63 He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would save to be His own
64 people (Ephesians 1:4–6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through faith in
65 Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him and thereby becomes
66 Father to them (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5–9).

67 **God the Son**

68 We teach that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, is eternal God, coequal,
69 consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father, possessing all the divine perfections
70 (John 1:1; 10:30; 14:9).

71 We teach that all creation came into being through the eternal Son (John 1:3; 1
72 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2) and is presently sustained by Him
73 (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).

74 We teach that in the incarnation the eternal Son, the second Person of the Trinity,
75 without altering His divine nature or surrendering any of the divine attributes, made
76 Himself of no reputation by taking on a full human nature consubstantial with our own,
77 yet without sin (Philippians 2:5–8; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26).

78 We teach that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary (Luke
79 1:35) and thus born of a woman (Galatians 4:4–5), so that two whole, perfect, and
80 distinct natures, the divine and the human, were joined together in one person, without
81 confusion, change, division, or separation. He is therefore very God and very man, yet
82 one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

83 We teach that in His incarnation, Christ fully possessed His divine nature, attributes,
84 and prerogatives (Colossians 2:9; cf. Luke 5:18–26; John 16:30; 20:28). However, in the
85 state of His humiliation, He did not always fully express the glories of His majesty,
86 concealing them behind the veil of His genuine humanity (Matthew 17:2; Mark
87 13:32; Philippians 2:5–8). According to His human nature, He acts in submission to the
88 Father (John 4:34; 5:19, 30; 6:38) by the power of Holy Spirit (Isaiah 42:1; Matthew
89 12:28; Luke 4:1, 14), while, according to His divine nature, He acts by His authority and
90 power as the eternal Son (John 1:14; cf. 2:11; 10:37–38; 14:10–11).

91 We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the redemption of His people
92 through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross. We teach that His
93 death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (Isaiah
94 53:3–6; John 10:15, 18; Romans 3:24–25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

95 We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
96 believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the
97 very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted
98 into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8–9; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

99 We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the
100 dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He intercedes
101 as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38–39; Acts 2:30–31; Romans
102 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:12–23; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

103 We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the
104 deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the
105 cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all
106 believers (John 5:26–29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5–10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

107 We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto
108 Himself at the rapture, and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His
109 millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9–11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Revelation 20).

110 We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all
111 mankind (John 5:22–23): believers (1 Corinthians 3:10–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10); living
112 inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31–46); and the unbelieving
113 dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11–15).

114 As the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the Head of His Body the
115 church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King, who
116 will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31–33), He is the final Judge of all
117 who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14–46; Acts 17:30–
118 31).

119 **God the Holy Spirit**

120 We teach that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, is eternal God, coequal,
121 consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3–
122 4; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; 2 Corinthians 13:14), possessing all the divine perfections,
123 including eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalms 139:7–10), omniscience
124 (Isaiah 40:13–14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truth (John 16:13).

125 We teach that the Holy Spirit is not merely a force or a power but a distinct divine
126 person who thinks (1 Corinthians 2:10–13), wills (1 Corinthians 12:11), speaks (Acts
127 28:25–26), and can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30).

128 We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all
129 mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation
130 (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20–21), and the work of salvation (John
131 3:5–7).

132 We teach that work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:4),
133 when He was sent by the Father and the Son as promised by Christ (John 14:16–
134 17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 2:22),
135 which is the church (Ephesians 1:21–22). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and
136 righteousness and judgment (John 16:8–11), glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ (John
137 16:14), and transforms believers into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians
138 3:18).

139 We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration
140 (Titus 3:5), baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy
141 Spirit also indwells them (Romans 8:9), sanctifies them (2 Corinthians 3:18), instructs
142 them (1 John 2:20, 27), empowers them for service (1 Corinthians 12:4, 9), and seals
143 them unto the day of redemption (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

144 We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and
145 prophets into all truth as they wrote God's special revelation, the Bible (John
146 14:26; 16:13; cf. 2 Peter 1:19–21). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of
147 the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation (Romans 8:9), and it is the duty of all those
148 born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

149 We teach that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to the church unto its edification (Acts
150 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; 1 Corinthians 14:26). The Holy Spirit glorifies neither
151 Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays (1 Corinthians 14:33), but He does glorify
152 Christ (John 16:13–14) by applying His work of redemption to His people in
153 regeneration and sanctification (2 Corinthians 3:18; Titus 3:5).

154 We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all
155 His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today (1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Ephesians 4:7–
156 12), and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning
157 days of the church have now ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8–10; Ephesians 2:20), having
158 fulfilled their purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of

159 divine truth (2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:1–4). The miraculous gifts were never
160 intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (e.g., 1 Timothy 5:23).

161 **Man**

162 We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God (Genesis 2:7) in His
163 image and likeness (Genesis 1:26–28; 5:1; James 3:9), free of sin (Genesis 1:31) and
164 endowed with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, and moral responsibility to God
165 (Genesis 2:15–25).

166 We teach that mankind was created by God as either male or female, distinct sexes that
167 are biologically defined and divinely imparted to each individual at conception (Genesis
168 1:27; 2:5–23; Job 3:3; Psalms 139:13–14; 1 Corinthians 11:3–15). Attempting to confuse
169 the two sexes is an abomination to God (Leviticus 18:22; Deuteronomy 22:5; Romans
170 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10).

171 We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God,
172 enjoy God's fellowship, live his life according to the will of God, and by this accomplish
173 God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians
174 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

175 We teach that, in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man
176 lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject
177 to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or
178 doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative
179 powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is
180 thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ
181 (Genesis 2:16–17; 3:1–19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians
182 2:14; Ephesians 2:1–3; 1 Timothy 2:13–14; 1 John 1:8).

183 We teach that because all men were in Adam—united with him as the representative of
184 humanity—the guilt of sin was imputed and a corrupt nature was transmitted to all men
185 of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception (Romans 5:12, 18–19; 8:3; 1
186 Corinthians 15:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21). All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice,
187 and by divine declaration (Psalms 14:1–3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9–18, 23; 5:10–12).

188 **Salvation**

189 We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of
190 Jesus Christ—the merits both of His life of perfect righteousness and His atoning
191 blood—and not on the basis of human merits or works (John 1:12; Romans 5:18–
192 19; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8–10; 1 Peter 1:18–19).

193 **Election**

194 We teach that election is the sovereign act of God by which, before the foundation of
195 the world, He unconditionally chose in Christ all those whom He would ever graciously
196 regenerate, save, and sanctify (Romans 8:28–30; 9:11–16; Ephesians 1:4–11; 2
197 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1–2).

198 We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man
199 to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18–
200 19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:19–23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10–12; Revelation 22:17).
201 Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of
202 salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines.
203 All whom the Father has elected He will effectually call to Himself. All whom the Father
204 effectually calls to Himself will come in faith. And all who come in faith the Father will
205 receive (John 6:37–40, 44; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:30).

206 We teach that God's election of totally depraved sinners is unconditional, grounded only
207 in the sovereign freedom of God's own will. Election is an expression of God's
208 unmerited favor and is not related to any initiative of the sinner's own part. It is not
209 grounded in God's anticipation of what sinners might do by their own will, nor even in
210 response to their foreseen faith. Rather, election is solely of His sovereign grace and
211 mercy (Romans 9:11, 16; Ephesians 1:4–7; Titus 3:4–7; 1 Peter 1:2).

212 We teach that election should not be looked upon as merely an abstract sovereignty.
213 God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other
214 attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love
215 (Romans 9:11–16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally
216 consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew
217 11:25–28; 2 Timothy 1:9).

218 **Atonement**

219 We teach that the Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which
220 He offered up to God through the eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14; 10:14), has fully satisfied
221 the justice of God (Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 4:10), propitiated the wrath of God (Romans
222 3:25–26; cf. 1:18), procured reconciliation (Romans 5:10), and purchased an everlasting
223 inheritance in the kingdom of heaven (Hebrews 9:15), for all those the Father has given
224 to Him (John 6:39; 10:14–15, 28–29; 17:2, 9, 24).

225 **Regeneration**

226 We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which a renewed
227 nature and spiritual life are given (John 3:3–7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:5). It is
228 instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the
229 instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23). As a result of
230 this divine illumination (2 Corinthians 4:6), the repentant sinner, so enabled by the Holy
231 Spirit, responds in faith in Christ (1 John 5:1).

232 **Justification**

233 We teach that justification before God is the act of God (Romans 8:33) in which He
234 declares righteous those who, by His irresistible grace, repent of their sins (Luke
235 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; cf. Isaiah 55:6–7), turn to
236 Christ in faith (Acts 16:31; 20:21; Romans 1:16; 3:22, 26; Galatians 3:22), and confess
237 Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9–10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians
238 4:5; Philippians 2:11).

239 We teach that the righteousness of justification is not infused into the believer, nor is it
240 attained by any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:4–6), but that it is the legal
241 declaration of right standing with God (Deuteronomy 25:1; Romans 8:1, 33–34). We
242 teach that justification consists in the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1
243 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2
244 Corinthians 5:21; cf. Romans 5:18–19), through faith alone apart from works (Romans
245 3:28; 4:4–5; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 3:11, 24). In this way, God is “just and the justifier of
246 the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26).

247 **Sanctification**

248 We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God at conversion, declared
249 to be holy, and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and
250 instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This
251 sanctification has to do with the believer’s standing, not his present walk or condition
252 (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews
253 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).

254 We teach that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification
255 by which the state of the believer is brought into greater conformity with the standing the
256 believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God
257 and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing
258 holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus
259 Christ (John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1–22; 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3–
260 4; 5:23).

261 In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new
262 creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for
263 victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays
264 with the believer all through this earthly life and is not completely ended until he sees
265 Christ face to face. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural.
266 Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin
267 (Galatians 5:16–25; Ephesians 4:22–24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9–10; 1 Peter
268 1:14–16; 1 John 3:2–9).

269 **Security**

270 We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God’s power and are thus
271 secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37–40; 10:27–30; Romans 5:9–10; 8:1, 31–39; 1
272 Corinthians 1:4–8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24). Those
273 who once professed faith and subsequently deny the Lord demonstrate by their going
274 out from us that they were never truly saved in the first place (1 John 2:19).

275 We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation
276 through the testimony of God’s Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of
277 Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15–22; 13:13–
278 14; Galatians 5:13, 25–26; Titus 2:11–14).

279 Genuine salvation is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in
280 righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of
281 regeneration (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Ephesians 2:10) and will be experienced to the
282 extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful
283 obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17–21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians
284 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4–10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed
285 to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is
286 climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1
287 John 3:2–3).

288 **Separation**

289 We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New
290 Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and
291 worldliness will increase (2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1–5).

292 We teach that, out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and
293 because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should
294 live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God, bringing no reproach
295 upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy and
296 worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1–2, 1 Corinthians
297 5:9–13; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; 1 John 2:15–17; 2 John 9–11).

298 We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2
299 Thessalonians 1:11–12; Hebrews 12:1–2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of
300 obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2–12)
301 and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews
302 12:14; Titus 2:11–14; 1 John 3:1–10).

303 **The Church**

304 We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the
305 Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12–13), the bride
306 of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23–32; Revelation 19:7–8), of which Christ is
307 the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

308 We teach that the formation of the church, the Body of Christ, began on the Day of
309 Pentecost (Acts 2:1–21, 38–47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His
310 own at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51–52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

311 We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made
312 up of all regenerate persons (i.e., believers) in this present age (Ephesians 2:11–3:6).
313 The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this
314 age (Ephesians 3:1–6; 5:32).

315 We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and
316 defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians
317 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and that the members of

318 the one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies
319 (1 Corinthians 11:18–20; Hebrews 10:25).

320 We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians
321 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order,
322 discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the
323 Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the
324 assembly are elders (also called overseers and pastors, Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11)
325 and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus
326 1:5–9; 1 Peter 5:1–5).

327 We teach that the eldership of a local congregation consists of spiritually qualified men
328 who lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 2:11–12; 5:17–22) and have His
329 authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership
330 (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

331 We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19–20; 2 Timothy 2:2), the mutual
332 accountability of all believers (Matthew 18:5–14), as well as the need for discipline of
333 sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew
334 18:15–22; Acts 5:1–11; 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–15; 1 Timothy 1:19–
335 20; Titus 1:10–16).

336 We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control,
337 with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of
338 individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5).

339 We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the
340 presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders
341 and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the
342 measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine all other matters
343 of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government (Acts 15:19–
344 31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4–7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1–4).

345 We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building
346 itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13–16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy
347 2:2, 15; 3:16–17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances
348 (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38–42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the
349 entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

350 We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians
351 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

352 We teach the need of the church to fulfill her God-given mission as God accomplishes
353 His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. He gives men
354 chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians
355 4:7–12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the
356 Body of Christ (Romans 12:5–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–31; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

357 We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given to the early church: miraculous gifts of
358 divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of

359 confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3–4; 2 Corinthians
360 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the
361 New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the
362 authenticity of a man's message. Thus, confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no
363 longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8–12). Miraculous
364 gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians
365 13:13–14:12; Revelation 13:13–14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-
366 revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6–8).

367 We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and
368 answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the
369 sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1–6; John 5:7–9; 2 Corinthians 12:6–10; James
370 5:13–16; 1 John 5:14–15).

371 We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and
372 the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38–42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36–39) is the
373 solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified,
374 buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a
375 new life (Romans 6:1–11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible
376 Body of Christ (Acts 2:41–42).

377 We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death
378 until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1
379 Corinthians 11:28–32). We also teach that, whereas the elements of communion are
380 only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, participation in the Lord's Supper is
381 nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ, who indwells every believer,
382 and so is present, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

383 **Angels**

384 **Holy Angels**

385 We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped.
386 Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God
387 and to worship Him (Luke 2:9–14; Hebrews 1:6–7, 14; 2:6–7; Revelation 5:11–
388 14; 19:10; 22:9).

389 **Fallen Angels**

390 We teach that Satan is a created angel who was the efficient cause of the first sin. He
391 incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel
392 28:11–19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation
393 12:1–14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Adam and
394 Eve (Genesis 3:1–15).

395 We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13–
396 14; Matthew 4:1–11; Revelation 12:9–10); that he is the prince of this world, who has
397 been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20); and

398 that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel 28:11–
399 19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

400 **Last Things**

401 **Death**

402 We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness
403 (Revelation 6:9–11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the
404 presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a
405 separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21–24), and that, for those in Christ, such
406 separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13–17), which initiates the
407 first resurrection (Revelation 20:4–6) when our soul and body will be reunited to be
408 glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35–44, 50–54). Until
409 that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with Him in the
410 intermediate heaven (2 Corinthians 5:8).

411 We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John
412 6:39; Romans 8:10–11, 19–23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and
413 everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13–15).

414 We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment in the
415 intermediate hell until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19–26; Revelation 20:13–15),
416 when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28–29). They shall then
417 appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11–15) and shall be cast
418 into eternal hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41–46; Revelation 20:15), cut off from the
419 life of God and enduring His wrath forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41–46; 2
420 Thessalonians 1:7–9).

421 **The Rapture of the Church**

422 We teach the personal, bodily appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year
423 tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate His church from this earth
424 (John 14:1–3; 1 Corinthians 15:51–53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–5:11). We teach that,
425 between the rapture and His glorious return to the earth with His saints, He will reward
426 believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11–15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

427 **The Tribulation Period**

428 We teach that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (John
429 14:1–3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out
430 upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7–12;
431 Revelation 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory
432 to the earth (Matthew 24:27–31; 25:31–46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7–12). At that time, the
433 saints of the Old Testament and the tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be
434 judged (Daniel 12:2–3; Revelation 20:4–6). This period includes the seventieth week of
435 Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24–27; Matthew 24:15–31; 25:31–46).

436 **The Second Coming and Millennial Reign**

437 We teach that, after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne
438 of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31–33; Acts 1:10–11; 2:29–30; cf. Revelation 3:21)
439 and establish His messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Revelation
440 20:1–7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the
441 nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21–28; Daniel 7:17–22; Revelation 19:11–16). This
442 reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by
443 the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17–27; Revelation 20:1–7).

444 We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah
445 65:17–25; Ezekiel 37:21–28; Zechariah 8:1–17) to restore them to the land which they
446 forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15–68). The result of their
447 disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1–
448 26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing
449 (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:22–32; Romans 11:25–29).

450 We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice,
451 peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17–25; Ezekiel 36:33–38; Zechariah
452 8:4), and that it will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

453 **The Judgment of the Lost**

454 We teach that, following the release of Satan after the thousand-year reign of Christ
455 (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle
456 against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be
457 devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into
458 the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10), whereupon Christ,
459 who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge all unbelievers at the
460 Great White Throne Judgment.

461 We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical,
462 bodily resurrection (John 5:28–29) in which they will be committed to eternal conscious
463 punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11–15).

464 **Eternity**

465 We teach that, after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and
466 the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7–15), the saved will
467 enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be
468 dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness
469 dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; 21–22). Following this, the heavenly city will
470 come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints,
471 where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3;
472 Revelation 21–22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will
473 then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24–28) that in all
474 spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).