
*“Displaying the glory of God
by delighting in Him
and declaring His truth”*



Christ Our Hope Bible Church

What We Teach...

- ❖ *Doctrinal Statement*
- ❖ *What We Teach Statement*
- ❖ *Implications and Issues*

Doctrinal Statement

At Christ our Hope Bible Church we encourage a level of doctrinal tolerance and openness. However, there are fundamental truths which a person will need to affirm if they desire to be comfortable in our fellowship and minister within our Body:

1. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.
3. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling every Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
4. We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word of God.
5. We believe that all men are lost sinners and must turn to Christ in saving faith and repentance through regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; the saved to eternal life with Christ and the lost to eternal punishment in hell.

What We Teach Statement

Introduction

The following document outlines the position of Christ Our Hope Bible Church on biblical doctrines. It is recognized that there will be those who choose to fellowship with us who do not agree in all points with our doctrinal teaching position. We welcome these to participate freely with us, yet this document outlines what will be taught in the various ministries of Christ Our Hope Bible Church.

This document is in an annotated outline format so that it will be useful as a tool that people can use for doctrinal questions. It is our prayer that this document will encourage our body to greater study of the Word and a more accurate understanding of God and application of His truth.

I. God

A. Existence of God

1. There is one living and true God (Deut 6:4; Is. 45:5-7).
2. Scripture assumes the existence of God (Deut. 6:4; Is. 45:5-7).
3. God is personal, spirit, infinite and perfect (John 4:24, 1 Tim. 1:17, Acts 17:28).

B. Attributes of God

1. Creator (Gen 1; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).
2. Self Existent (John 5:26, Rom. 11:36).
3. Sovereign (Ps. 115:3, Isa. 45:5, Jer. 32:17, Matt. 19:26, Rom. 11:36).
4. Unchanging (Mal. 3:16; James 1:17).
5. Perfect (Matt. 5:48; Ps. 18:30; Heb. 1:13).
6. Eternal (Ps. 90:2; Is. 46:10; 2 Peter 3:8).
7. Unlimited by Space (1 Kings 8:27; Ps. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:24).
8. Holy (Job 34:10; Is. 6:1-3; Matt. 5:48).
9. Truthful (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:13).
10. Gracious (Matt. 5:45; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2&8-9).
11. Loving (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
12. Merciful (Rom. 11:32; Titus 3:5).
13. Righteous (Ps. 119:137; 145:17; Hab. 1:13).
14. Just (Rom. 2:6-8; Rom. 1:18).

C. Trinity

1. Unity

- God is one in essence, eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Is. 48:16; Gen. 1:1-2, Mat. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14).

2. Diversity

a. God the Father is:

- 1) The first person of the Trinity.
- 2) The Father over all creation (Acts 17:29; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 12:9; James 1:17).
- 3) The Father of Christ (John 2:17; Acts 13:33; 17:5, 24; Col. 1:15).
- 4) The Father of believers (Matt 6:8-9; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6)

b. Christ is:

- 1) The second person of the Trinity
- 2) Deity-i.e. fully God (John 1; 10:30, Heb. 1:3).
- 3) God incarnate yet fully man (Phil. 2:5-11, Col. 2:9).
- 4) Virgin Born (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:25, Luke 1:26-35).
- 5) Sinless (Luke 1:35; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).
- 6) The one who voluntarily gave up His life as a substitute to redeem mankind (Rom. 3:25; 5:8, 1 Peter 2:24).
- 7) The Resurrection-He was literally and physically resurrected, ascended to the right hand of the Father, the believer's Advocate & High Priest (Matt. 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Heb 7:25; 9:24).
- 8) The Head of the Church (Eph 1:22; 5:23, Col. 1:18).

c. The Holy Spirit is:

- 1) The third person of the Trinity.
- 2) A person, not merely a force (John 14:26, 16:13).
- 3) Deity-The Holy Spirit is fully God (Acts 5:3,4; Heb 9:14; Cor 2:10; Romans 5:13; Psalm 139:7-10).
- 4) Involved in Salvation-At salvation, the Holy Spirit regenerates, baptizes, indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers, and seals (1 Cor. 12:13; John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13).
- 5) Inspiration- The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16).
- 6) Illumination-The Holy Spirit causes believers to understand God's Word (1 John 2:20, 27).
7. The Indwelling God- Christ in Us (Romans 8:9,13, 1 Cor. 3:16, Eph 3:16).

II. Christ

A. Old Testament Appearances of Christ

1. The Angel of the Lord

- a. The angel of the Lord in the Old Testament refers to Himself as God and does the works of God (Gen. 22:1-12, Ex. 3:2-6, Judges 13:18-22)
- b. The Father and the Spirit never take bodily form (John 1:18).
- c. The Angel of the Lord no longer appeared after the Incarnation.

2. As a Man

- There are several instances in the Old Testament where Christ takes on the physical form of a man (Gen. 18:1-2, Gen. 32:24, Josh. 5:13).

B. Old Testament Prophecies of Christ

- There are numerous Old Testament prophecies that were specifically fulfilled in Christ's first coming (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2, Psalm 118:22; Psalm 22; Isaiah 52-53)

C. The Incarnation

1. The condescension and humiliation of Christ, where He voluntarily waived the rights and privileges of deity, and took on the limitations of humanity (Phil. 2:5-9; John 1:14; John 6:51; John 17:5; II Cor. 8:9).
2. This included Christ's voluntary giving up of the full expression of His divine rights and attributes (Kenosis).
3. This also involved the unique combination of full deity and true humanity in the person of Christ (Hypostatic Union).

D. Deity

1. Christ Explicitly Claimed to be God (John 1:1, 14; John 10:30-33; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:3).
2. Christ was called by Divine Names (Matt. 1:23; Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13)
3. Christ has Divine Attributes
 - a. Eternal (Micah 5:2; John 8:58; Rev. 22:13)
 - b. All Powerful (Matt. 28:18)
 - c. All Knowing (John 16:30)
 - d. Unchanging (Heb. 13:8)
4. Christ did Divine Works
 - a. Creation (John 1:3; Col 1:16)
 - b. Forgave Sins (Matt. 9:2)
 - c. Raised the Dead (John 11:25)
5. Christ willingly Received Worship (John 5:23; John 20:28; Phil. 2:9-11)

E. Humanity (Sinless)

1. Christ had to be man to fully represent fallen humanity (I Cor. 15:21-22; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:17)
2. He had a Human Birth [virgin] (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Gal. 4:4; Matt. 1:2-15).
3. He had Human Growth (Luke 2:52; Phil. 2:5-8)
4. He had Human Functions & Emotions (John 11:35; John 19:28; Luke 24:39)
5. He had Perfect Humanity (Luke 1:35; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15)
6. He has Eternal Humanity (Luke 24:39; I Tim. 2:5; Acts 17:31)

F. The Temptation of Christ

- Christ was incapable of sinning, because his deity was not dependent on the weakness of humanity.

1. The Reality of Christ's Temptation

- a. Temptation does not demand the ability to sin (Luke 4:1-13; Heb. 4:15)

- b. The purpose of temptation wasn't to see if Christ could sin, but to show that He could not sin
- c. The Holy Spirit initiated Christ to enter the wilderness to be tempted. If Jesus could have sinned, then the Holy Spirit solicited Him to sin (Matt 4:1).

2. The Absence of Potential to Sin

- a. Christ only does what the Father does. Therefore to say Christ could sin would demand that God the Father could sin as well (John 5:19).
- b. Christ could not sin in eternity past nor eternity future, and thus not during His temptation on earth. If it was possible for Christ to sin while on earth then He could still sin now (Heb. 13:8).
- c. Christ perfectly knew all the ramifications of sin. Sin depends on ignorance so that people are deceived (John 16:30).
- d. If Jesus were only a man like Adam, He would have had the potential to sin. But because He was 100% God and 100% man and both natures make up One Person, He couldn't have sinned.
- e. The Perfect Human Nature of Christ. Temptation works in humans because it calls on the inner sin nature to respond to the outward temptation. Yet Jesus didn't possess a sin nature, and so there was nothing within Him to respond to temptation.

G. The Resurrection

1. Significance-

- Our entire salvation is dependent on the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 4:25; Rom. 10:10; I Cor. 15:17; I Peter 1:3)

2. Evidence

- a. The missing body (Matt. 28:6; John 20:6-8)
- b. The testimony of the guards (Matt. 28:11-12)
- c. The eye witnesses (Luke 24:39; Acts 3:15; I Cor. 15:6)
- d. The Transformation of the disciples (John 19; Acts 2)

3. The Work of the Trinity

- All Three members of the Trinity were involved in the resurrection (John 10:18; Gal. 1:1; Rom. 8:11)

H. Christ's Glorification

- Christ was restored to His former state of full and unrestricted deity (John 17:5; Heb. 1:3; Phil 2:9).

I. The Present Ministry of Christ

1. Christ intercedes for believers (Rom. 8:34)
2. Christ helps the believer when tempted (Heb. 2:18)
3. Christ is the believer's mediator (Heb. 10:19; I Tim. 2:5)
4. Christ is preparing a place for His children (John 14:2)

III. The Bible

- The inspired Scriptures contain the 66 books of the Old and New Testament and were finished with the completion of the New Testament (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3, Heb. 1:1-2; 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Rev. 22:18,19).

A. Revelation

- Revelation is God's disclosure of Himself to mankind.

1. General Revelation

- God's foundational revelation based on creation and demonstrated in history, nature and the conscience (Rom. 1:18-20, Ps. 19:1-6, Romans 2:14-15; Matt 5:45; Acts 17:24-27).
 - a. It is general in that it is truth that is set before all humanity (Rom. 1:17-18 ; 2:14-15). This aspect of "general" does not mean that it refers to all truth. There are things which are true which are not general revelation.
 - b. It is so clear and irrefutable that it is known intuitively by all human beings (Rom. 1:19 ;Ps. 19:1-6) It is misleading to assign the category of "revelation" to humanly deduced or discovered facts or theories.
 - c. It is authoritative truth that condemns rejecters for all eternity (Rom. 1:20)

2. Special

- God's special revelation is found in Christ and the Bible (John 1:1, 14-18; Heb. 1:1-2; Rom. 1:16).

3. Progressive Revelation

- Throughout human history God revealed more and more of His person, character and will. Though in history God did modify how he dealt with specific people in line with His sovereign plan, no previous revelation was ever contradicted (Heb. 1:1-2).

B. Inspiration

- The Holy Spirit worked through the individual personalities and different styles of the human authors so that, they composed and recorded God's Word to man. Inspiration extends to the very selection of the words of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Tim 3:16-17).

C. Inerrancy

- The Scriptures are absolutely without error in any part in the original (Is. 30:8; Matt. 5:18, John 10:35, 2 Tim 3:16).

D. Interpretation

1. Each passage of Scripture has one intended meaning which is found by applying the grammatical-historical-literal method of interpretation. Our goal is to find that meaning and its life application.

2. The Holy Spirit helps the believer to understand the Scriptures (John 7:17; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20).

E. Authority

- Scripture is the only infallible rule of faith and practice for individual believers and for the church (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12).

F. Completion of the Canon of Scripture

The inspired Scripture (the Canon) contains the 66 books of the Old and New Testament. No church council or group of men *made* certain books canonical. Rather, these 66 books were *recognized* as clearly inspired by God.

1. The primary issue for inclusion into the canon was authorship. During the two primary times when God gave written revelation (OT & NT), the main issue was whether or not the author was a spokesman for God: an Old Testament prophet, or a New Testament apostle? (2 Peter 1:20-21; Heb. 2:3-4; Eph. 2:20)
2. The writers of Scripture recognized the divine inspiration of their writings (Jer. 1:4; Ez. 3:10-11; Amos 7:15-17; 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Peter 3:15-16).
3. The New Testament writers recognized the Old Testament as Scripture (Luke 24:44; John 10:35; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 3:8; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
4. Since the completion of the New Testament, God has given no further written revelation.
 - All things necessary for the Christian faith were revealed in the Old Testament & New Testament (Jude 3; 2 Tim 3:16, 17).
 - God's special revelation was at two times only-the Old Testament and the New Testament (Heb. 1:1-2).
 - There are serious consequences for those who add to or subtract from God's Word (Rev. 22:18-19; Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6).

III. Man

A. Created

1. Man was created in the image of God with an intellect, emotion and will (Gen. 1).
2. Man was created totally free of sin (Gen 2).
3. Mankind's primary reason for being is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever (Is. 43:7; Col. 1:16).

B. Fallen

1. When tempted by Satan, Adam rebelled against God and disobeyed (Gen. 3:12, Ps. 14:1-3, 51:5).
2. Adam's sin resulted in spiritual and physical death (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19).
3. Man became inherently corrupt and incapable of pleasing God (Is. 64:6; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim 2:13-14).

C. Total Depravity

1. Unregenerate man is fundamentally evil to the core of his being. There is no part of us that is left untouched by sin. Our minds, wills, and bodies are affected by evil. (Ecc. 7:20; Jer. 17:9; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19; Rom. 7:14; 7:23)
2. The Scriptures reject the false idea that all people struggle with sin yet are inherently good. From the point of conception all mankind is sinful in every aspect of his being. (Romans 3:23; Ps. 51:5)
3. Total depravity is not utter depravity. We are not as wicked as we possibly could be (Is. 64:6).
4. Only by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit may we be brought out of this state of spiritual death. It is God who makes us alive as we become His workmanship (Jer. 13:23; Romans 8:11; Eph. 2:1-10, Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:8-10).

D. Free Will

1. Man has a free will in that God has given him the capacity to choose that which he desires (Deut. 30:19-20; Matt. 11:28; Rom. 10:21; John 7:37).
2. No unregenerate human being desires God. Because we can only choose according to our desires, we always choose to sin (Ps. 14:1-3; Mark 7:21-23; John 8:34; Rom 8:5-8).
3. Fallen human beings have free will but lack true liberty. The royal liberty of which the Bible speaks is the freedom or power to choose Christ as our own. Until our heart is changed by the Holy Spirit, we have no desire for Christ (John 6:44; 65, James 1:13-15).
4. For us to choose Christ, God must change our heart. He gives us a desire for Himself that we otherwise would not have. The unregenerate are never forced against their will. Rather, a person's will is changed without his/her permission when God transforms the disposition of the heart and plants a desire for Himself within (Pr. 5:22; John 6:44; 65;15:16; Rom. 6:20; Eph. 2:4-10; 2 Thess 2:13-14; 2 Tim 2:25, 26; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3)

D. Redeemable

- Unlike the rest of God's created beings (angels and animals) mankind is redeemable from his sin through the death of Christ (Rom. 5:8-10, 18; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

IV. Salvation

- Salvation is that gracious act of God, where, through the atoning blood (death) of Christ He redeems and reconciles certain individuals to himself. Salvation is not on the basis of merit, or works (John 1:12, 3:3; Rom. 3:24; 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2 Peter 1:4).

A. Regeneration

1. Regeneration is that instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit through the truth of the Word of God, which enables persons to believe the Gospel and imparts new life to them (John 1:13; 3:3-8; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:29).
2. Regeneration will result in good works and a transformed life (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10).

B. Election

1. That eternal act of God whereby on the basis of His sovereign will, He chose certain persons, who had no merit, to be the recipients of His special grace and eternal salvation (Mark 13:27; Romans 8:28-33; Eph. 1:4-11, 2 Thess. 2:13).
2. God's sovereign election is consistent with mankind's accountability to respond (Deut. 30:19; Matt. 11:28; John 6:37, 44; Acts 13:48; Rom. 10:21).

C. Saving Faith

- Saving faith is that gift of God which brings a person into intimate relationship with Christ (Rom. 10:9-10). It is based on God's grace rather than a person's works and when genuine has several main aspects (Acts 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9, Phil. 1:29, 2 Peter 1:1). These are not "steps" a person must work through, but are elements that will be present as a total package when there is true saving faith.
 - Knowledge of the Facts*--Faith must be based on the facts of the Gospel found in the Word of God (Rom. 10:17, 1 Cor. 15:3-5, 2 Tim. 3:15).
 - Assent to this Knowledge*--A person must agree that the facts of the Scriptures are true (Heb. 11:6).
 - Repentance*--Saving faith includes a turning from sin and turning towards God (Acts 2:38, Acts 20:21, Acts 26:20, 1 Thess. 1:9).
 - Submission to Christ*--True saving faith implicitly involves a subjection to the person and will of Christ with a desire and willingness to know, love and obey Him (Rom. 10:9, Luke 6:46, John 3:36; 17:3; 20:28, Acts 2:36, Phil. 2:9-11, Rev. 19:16, James 2).
- See *Doctrinal Issues*- "Understanding Salvation."

D. Justification

1. The act of God whereby He declares righteous those who believe in Christ (Rom. 3:20; 5:1; 8:33, Philippians 3:9).
2. It is apart from any virtue or work (Col. 2:14; 1 Peter 3:18).
3. The believer's sin is imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer (Col. 2:14; 1 Peter 3:18; Rom. 4:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

E. Sanctification

1. *Position*- The act of God, whereby the believer is made *positionally* holy and perfect through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30 6:11; Heb 2:11).
2. *Process*-The Holy Spirit's ministry of progressively bringing the believer into conformity with the character of Christ (John 17:17,19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:26, Rom. 8:29).
3. *Perfection*-That act of God which occurs when a believer gets to heaven whereby their practice is conformed to their position—perfect and blameless without spot or blemish (Rom. 8:23 ; 1 Cor. 15:5; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

F. Security

- All of the redeemed are kept eternally secure in Christ by the power of God (John 5:24; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; Eph 4:30).

G. Assurance of Salvation

- The subjective realization by a person that he/she is a child of God is a ministry of the Spirit to every obedient believer (Rom. 6:15-22; 8:16; 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:3, 9-10, 15-23; 3:9, 17, 24; 4:7, 13, 20; 5:1, 10).

V. The Church

A. Defined

1. The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 4:14-16).
2. It consists of born again believers of the Church age (Eph. 2:11-3:6).
3. It is distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32).
 - a. The Church and Israel have different promises--heavenly vs. earthly (Ez. 36:24; Eph. 1:3).
 - b. The Church and Israel have different births--Pentecost vs. Sinai (Ex. 19-20; Acts 2).
 - c. The Church and Israel have different nationalities--Heavenly vs. Jewish (Jer. 31:31; Phil. 3:20).

B. Organization

1. Christ is the Head/ultimate authority in the Church (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph 1:22).
2. Local assemblies are the New Testament pattern (Acts 14:23,27; 20:17, 28; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1, 2; 2 Thess. 1:1).
3. Leadership
 - a. *Elders*-These are a team of biblically qualified men who shepherd, oversee and lead a local body of believers (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). They make decisions for the church based on the biblical principle of unanimity.
 - 1) An elder is the same as a pastor, shepherd and overseer (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2; 1 Tim. 5:17).
 - 2) Some elders are financially supported by the church while others are self supporting (1 Timothy 5:17-18, 1 Cor. 9:9-14).
 - 3) Elders are to be the primary examples of leading through serving (Matt. 20:26, John 13:14,15; 1 Peter 5:3)
 - b. *Equippers*- Gifted teachers who devote themselves (under the Eldership) to establishing and setting in order, a church. Specifically, they give themselves to training leaders, being sent or training to send others to establish new churches (1 Timothy 4:1-16, 2 Timothy 2:2-6, 4:1-4, Titus 1:5 ff., 1 Timothy 3:1 ff.).
 - c. *Deacons* -These are men and women who minister in the church in special areas of service (Acts 6; 1 Tim. 3:8-10).
 - 1) Deacons must meet the biblical qualifications and be tested before being entrusted with deacon responsibilities (1 Tim. 3:10).
 - 2) Although deacon work is under the oversight of the elders, deacons are given appropriate authority and responsibility so

that they can free up the elders to focus on specific ministry areas (Acts 6).

4. The Congregation-All believers are commanded to be part of a local assembly of Christians (Heb. 10:24-25).
 - a. *Serve*-All believers are called to serve one another in the local body through encouragement, exhortation and exercise of their spiritual gifts (John 15:13; Gal. 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16).
 - c. *Submit*-Believers are commanded by God to submit to the oversight of the elders of their local church (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 16:15-16; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

C. Priorities of the Church

1. *Exalting God*-Everything the church does should be an act of worship to God. This should be seen both in the lives of individual believers as well as in the corporate body (1 Peter 2:5).
2. *Edifying the Saints*- Equipping is one of the primary ways to make people like Jesus Christ. This is accomplished as the people in the church invest their lives in one another (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Thess. 5:14-15; Titus 2:3-5).
3. *Evangelizing the lost* - At the heart of Christ's commission to the church is the command to go to the unreached of the world, to win them to Christ and to establish churches (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20).

D. Gifts

1. *Permanent, edifying gifts*-Each believer has been given spiritual gifts in order to edify and build up the body (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
2. *Temporary, confirming/sign gifts* (Tongues, miracles)-Gradually ceased as the New Testament was completed (1 Cor. 12; 13:8-10; 14).

E. Ordinances

1. *Baptism*-By immersion for anyone who confesses faith in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:36-39; Rom. 6:1-11).
2. *Lord's Supper*-A remembrance and proclamation of Christ's death until He comes again (Matt. 26:26-30; Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 10:16 & 17; 11:17-34).

F. Church Discipline

1. *The Plan* - God the Father disciplines His children and expects churches and individuals to participate with Him (Heb. 12:5-11, Prov. 3:11-12, Rev. 3:19).
2. *The Purpose* - The ultimate goal of church discipline is restoration of the sinning individual. It also purifies the church and prevents others from sinning (Gal. 6:1, Matt. 18:15, 1 Cor. 5:7, 1 Tim. 5:20).
3. *The Procedure* - Church discipline is the process of confronting sin to achieve repentance and restoration. It can be carried out privately between two Christians (Matt. 18:15), with two to three witnesses, by the Elders, or before the congregation, depending on the severity, kind, and length of sin.

•See *Doctrinal Issues*: “Church Discipline”

G. Giving

1. Christians are stewards of all their possessions and should contribute financially to the work of the local church (1 Cor. 4:1-2; Luke 16:11).
2. Giving Principles
 - a. Give to God (Matt. 6:1).
 - b. Give sacrificially (Luke 21:1-4).
 - c. Give thoughtfully (1 Cor. 16:2).
 - d. Give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7).
 - e. Give proportionally (1 Cor. 16:2).
 - f. Give regularly (1 Cor. 16:2).

VI. Angels

A. Holy Angels

1. Angels were created by God to serve and worship Him (Heb. 1:6-7, 14, Isa. 6:3, Ps. 103:20-21, Ps. 148:2).
2. Angels are spirit beings (Heb. 1:14, Luke 24:39, Matt. 22:30).
3. Angels are rational, moral, and immortal beings (Matt. 24:36, 1 Pet. 1:12, 2 Pet. 2:4, Luke 20:34-36).
4. Angels were created to an estate higher than mankind, yet, humans will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3; 2 Pet. 2:10-11, Heb. 2:6-7).
5. Angels serve mankind (Heb. 1:14).
6. Angels have a role in the Second Coming (Mark 13:27, 2 Thess. 1:7b).

B. Fallen Angels(Demons)

1. Satan rebelled against his Creator, and led numerous angels in his fall (Job. 1:6-7; Ez. 28:11-19; Rev. 12:3-4).
2. Angels were created holy, but some sinned (2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6).
3. Satan was defeated by Christ at the cross, yet continues as the “God of this world” until his final judgment and condemnation (Rom. 16:20; Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:1-10).
4. Satan will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).
5. Satan and Demons are active in the world (Matt. 8:16; Eph. 6:12).

VII. The Future

A. Death

1. Believers

- a. *Physical*-There is a separation of the physical and immaterial, and the spirit of the believer immediately passes into the presence of the Lord (Luke 23:43; Phil.1:21-24).
- b. *Resurrection*- At the first resurrection, the believer's spirit and body are reunited to be glorified forever (Phil 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

2. Unbelievers

- a. *Physical*-At death, the spirits of the unsaved descend immediately into Hades (Job 3:11-19; Luke 16:19-26; Rev. 20:1-15).
- b. *Spiritual*-At the second resurrection they will be united with their body, judged, and cast into the lake of fire to be separated from God forever (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15. Dan. 12:2).

B. The Rapture

- Christ will gather up Christians from the earth and take them with Him (1 Thess 4:16; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 15:50-51).

C. The Judgment Seat of Christ

- After the rapture, believer's will be rewarded according to their works (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

D. Tribulation

- God will judge the world through various plagues (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 16:1-21).

E. The Second Coming

- Christ will return to the earth at the end of the Tribulation (Second Coming-Matt. 25:31) at which time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised, and the living will be judged (Dan. 12:2-3; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 6:9-11; 20:4-6).

F. Millennium

1. The Antichrist and the false prophet will be overthrown and Satan will be removed from the world (Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 20:1-7).
2. There will be a literal, thousand year Kingdom on earth, where the saints will help Christ rule and reign(Is. 42:6; Jer. 31:31; 33:15; Ez. 36:24; 37:21-28; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-7).

G. Final Judgment

1. Satan will be released following the Millennium (Rev. 20:7).
2. He will lead a final rebellion and will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone forever (Rev. 20:7-10).
3. Great White Throne judgment-The unsaved dead will be resurrected, and will be committed to eternal, conscious punishment in Hell (Rom. 14:10-13 Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15).

H. Eternity

1. Believers will be with the Lord forever (John 17:3; 1 Thess. 4:17).
2. A new heaven and a new earth will be created (Rev. 21:1).

WHAT WE TEACH IMPLICATIONS AND ISSUES

Introduction

Within any society and era, there are a number of critical issues which must be biblically addressed by the church. The following information outlines what the elders of Christ Our Hope Bible Church believe is a biblical approach to some of the key societal/moral issues of our day. Our goal is to help our people apply the scriptures to contemporary issues.

Abortion

- The Scriptures imply that life begins at conception.

Ps. 139:13-16 Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in the book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.

Jer. 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.

- The Scriptures indicate that all children are a gift from the Lord (Not just those that are “wanted” or physically perfect).

Ps. 127:3 Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward.

- In light of the above statements a biblical conclusion is that abortion is murder.

Ex. 21:22-25 And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined.... But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty, life for life.

The Hebrew word translated “miscarriage” in this verse usually refers in the Old Testament to a live birth. Thus, there was a fine for a premature *live* birth, but the death penalty was invoked for “further injury” or death of the baby.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

“Church Discipline” is a term that has been used to describe the corporate body’s loving involvement in the personal lives of believers who are struggling with sin. This always should be done with an attitude of deep humility and gentleness with a goal that the person would repent and be restored to fellowship. Though church discipline is often on a private level between two believers, the elders in a local church have the responsibility and authority to ensure that the biblical guidelines are followed. Prayer and the person and work of the Holy Spirit are crucial in the church discipline process. It is only through

His working that anyone will turn from their sin, which is always the goal of church discipline.

Offenses worthy of church discipline

1. Matters of personal conduct & lifestyle
 - Lying to and testing the Holy spirit, hypocrisy (Acts 5:1-11).
 - Sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, slander, drunkenness, swindling (1 Cor. 5:1-13).
 - Idleness, busybodies (1 Thess. 5:14, 2 Thess. 3:6, 11-13).
2. Unresolved interpersonal issues (Matt. 18:17).
3. Matters of church conduct
 - Divisiveness, upsetting the faith of some (Romans 16:17-18, Titus 3:9-11).
 - Hypocrisy, leading others astray (Galatians 2:11-14).
 - False teaching (Titus 1:10-16, Rev. 2:14-16; 2 John 9-11).
 - Insubordination (Titus 1:10-11, 16).
 - Blasphemy (1 Timothy 1:20).
4. Matters of belief, doctrine (James 5:19-20, Rev. 2:2, 20).
5. Sin in general: disobedience to Scripture (Galatians 6:1-2; 2 Thess. 3:6, 11-15, James 5:19-20).

Practices for church discipline and restoration

- The primary goal in any church discipline is to “turn him back” (James 5:19-20) and bring the person to repentance so that he/she can be restored to the body
- *Principle:* The kind, length and severity of the discipline depends on the nature and circumstances of the sin

Level 1

Sin: A momentary, uncharacteristic lapse into sin where there is genuine grief and repentance

Response: Gentle restoration at the point of repentance.

Gal. 6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you to be tempted.

Level 2

Sin: More blatant sin (willful disobedience) or over a longer duration, or unclear repentance

Response: Warning, rebuke, correction

1. Reprove in private... if no repentance proceed with step two (Matt.18:15).
2. Bring along a witness... if no repentance proceed with step three (Matt. 18:16).
3. Tell it to the church... if no repentance proceed with step four (Matt. 18:17).
4. Ostracize the person from the fellowship of the body (Matt. 18:17).

Level 3

Sin: Severe sin on a long-term basis, and no repentance

Response:

1. Judgment (1 Cor. 5:3).
2. Corporate grief (1 Cor. 5:1-2).

3. Expulsion, excommunication from fellowship (Matt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17, 1 Cor. 5:2, 11-13, 2 Thess. 3:6, 11-15, Titus 3:10-11, 2 John 9-11).
4. In some instances, delivering to Satan to do what he wants in their life (1 Cor. 5:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:20).
5. Forgiveness, comfort, love when repentance is demonstrated (2 Cor. 2:6-8).
6. Restoration to appropriate ministry after a significant pattern of obedience has been established (Luke 16:10).

Discipline of an Elder

- The whole church must be made aware of an elder's blatant sin because he has been disqualified from being an overseer.

1 Tim. 5:19-20 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all.

Creation

God the Creator

- The universe came into existence because God created it.

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Col. 1:17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

- It continues to exist by the Word of His power.

Heb 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The Genesis Account

- The early chapters of Genesis are the factual, complete and accurate description of creation.
- The word "day" (*yom*) as used in the Genesis account means a literal twenty-four hour period of time.

Gen. 1:5 And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Demons

Demon Possession

Definition

- Demon possession occurs when one or more evil spirits completely control a person. The demon speaks, acts and *dominates* the person's body.

Of Non-Christians

- The Scriptures clearly indicate that God sovereignly allows non-believers to be dominated and controlled by demons.

2 Chron. 18:22 Now therefore, the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of these your prophets; for the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.

Matt. 8:28 Two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by...

Of Christians

- It is not possible for a true Christian to be completely controlled (possessed) by a demon. The Christian's new master is Christ through the indwelling Spirit. There is *no* instance in the entire Bible of anyone casting demons out of a believer.

Matt. 6:24 No one can serve two masters...

Eph. 2:1 In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air...

1 Cor. 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 John 4:4 ...greater is He who is in you that he who is in the world.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities...should be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-These last verses emphasize the inward presence of the Spirit in contrast to the external reality of Satan & his forces.

Demon Oppression

Definition

- Influence in a wide variety of ways by evil spirits which is short of actual possession and total control.

Of Christians

• Satan is an enemy of Christians and to the degree that God sovereignly allows can oppress believers.

2 Cor. 12:7 There was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-to keep me from exalting myself.

Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat.

1 Peter 5:8 Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Protection

• Believers are called to resist Satan, which is done primarily through living a holy life in submission to God. Nowhere in the scriptures are believers instructed to talk to, confront or “exorcise” demons. Rather, the emphasis is on dealing with sin and living holy lives.

Eph. 4:27 And do not give the devil an opportunity.

Eph. 6:11-20 Put on the full armor of God that you may stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

2 Peter 2:10 And especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties.

Jude 8 Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

When Christ and the apostles cast out demons, they were authenticating messianic and apostolic credentials, not establishing a normative *pattern* for us to follow (see *Doctrinal Issues: Sign Gifts*).

Gender Roles

The Man’s Role

In the Home

• He is to provide headship and leadership for the family.

Eph.5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

• He must love his wife by sensitively communicating with her, protecting her purity and encouraging her spiritual growth.

Eph. 6:28-29 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.

1 Peter 3:7 You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

• He should provide for the tangible needs of his household.

1 Tim. 5:8 But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

• He should train his children to be faithful followers of Christ.

Deut. 6:5-6 And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

Eph. 6:4 And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

In the Church

• Men are to be the leaders and teachers in the local church.

1 Tim. 3:1 It is a trustworthy statement; if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife...

• Men are to be noted for prayer in the church.

1 Tim. 2:8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

• Older men are to be wise and dignified examples to the younger men and the rest of the congregation.

Titus 2:2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

• Younger men are to be wise examples of good deeds, with purity in doctrine and speech.

Titus 2:6-8 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

The Woman's Role

Identity: Equality

- The Scriptures teach that women are equally created in God's image.

Gen. 1:27 ...in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.

- In relation to salvation and standing in Christ, women are equal with men.

Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Role: Submission

- Although equal with men as far as *identity* and *person*, women have a distinct and different *role*.

In the Home

- Scripture indicates that the primary responsibility for women is within the family (It is recognized that God has sovereignly allowed singles and women without children to have a unique freedom for other ministry I Cor. 7:33 & 34).

1 Tim. 5:14 Therefore I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house...

- The fundamental reason that the woman was created was to be a helper for her husband.

Gen. 2:20-23 ...a helper suitable for him...

- Within the marriage the woman is called to lovingly submit to her husband. This is not “doormat devotion” but rather loving service and mutual submission.

Eph. 5:22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

- Raising children is the primary means by which women can have an influence for the kingdom of God.

1 Tim. 2:15 But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Titus 2:4 & 5 That they may encourage the younger women... to love their children.... to be workers at home.

In the Church

- Christian women have spiritual gifts and are expected to utilize them in ministering to the Body.

1 Cor. 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

- One of the primary avenues of ministry is for older women in the church to teach younger women.

Titus 2:3-5 Older women...teaching what is good, that they may encourage the younger women...

- It is also appropriate for certain women who have proven their faithful service to serve as deaconesses.

1 Tim. 3:11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips...

Rom. 16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant (Deacon) of the church which is at Cenchrea.

- The Scriptures teach that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men in the church.

1 Tim. 2:12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.

1 Cor. 14:34 Let the women keep silent in the churches...

Government

Source of Government

- God is the author of government and sovereignly controls those who are in power.

Rom. 13:1 For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Responsibilities of Government

- Governments are called by God to curb evil and to punish the guilty.

Rom. 13:4 It is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

- Governments are also to reward those who do good.

Rom. 13:3 Do what is good and you will have praise for the same.

Responsibilities of Believers

- Believers are required to submit to and honor their governmental authorities.

1 Peter 2:13-17 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution... honor the King.

- Christians are commanded to pray for their government.

1 Tim. 2:1-2 I urge that entreaties and prayers... for kings and all who are in authority...

- As part of submitting to government, in obedience to God, believers are to pay taxes.

Rom. 13:6-7 For because of this you also pay taxes.

- The only time believers must disobey the government (civil disobedience) is when they are personally required to do something that violates a clear command of Scripture. At this point they must be prepared to suffer the consequences of that disobedience.

Acts 4:19-20 But Peter and John answered and said to them "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.

Homosexuality

God's Original Design

- God's original design was a man to be married to a woman, for life.

Gen. 1:27 Male and female He created them.

Gen. 2:24 For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife...

God's Condemnation

- The Scriptures condemn homosexual behavior. This is not cultural, but expresses God's attitude towards behavior that mocks His original design.

Lev. 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

Rom. 1:26-27 God gave them over to degrading passions... men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

1 Cor. 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals... shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

God's Cure

- Ultimately Christ and the spiritual resources He provides (the Holy Spirit, prayer, the Word, fellow believers) are the only answer for this sin. Just as with any other sinner saved by grace, Christ's cleansing is sufficient to enable a person to begin a new life.

1 Cor. 5:9-11 Do not be deceived; neither fornicators...nor homosexuals... shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God.

1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

Lawsuits

General Principles

- Believers should be hesitant before suing.

Prov. 25:8-10 Do not go out hastily to argue your case

Rom. 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men

- If at all possible, believers should seek to settle out of court.

Matt. 5:25 Make friends with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way...

- Believers should pursue a selfless attitude as much as possible.

Matt. 5:40 If anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

"Christian" Lawsuits

- Christians must not sue or go to court against a fellow believer.
- Believers will judge the world and angels, and should judge affairs of this life.
- Unbeliever's judging between Christians brings shame.
- It is better to be wronged and defrauded than to sin by going to court against a believer.

1 Cor. 6:1, 7 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints.? Actually then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

The Lordship of Christ

1. The Scriptures indicate that Christ is Lord and true believers will acknowledge Him as such.

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Acts 2:36 God has made Him both Lord and Christ.

Rom. 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Phil. 2:9-11 that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...

Rev. 19:16 "King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

2. The term "Lord" (*Kurios*) was a normal term in the Greek language used for "master" or someone that was to be obeyed and to whom one must submit.

Matt. 6:24 No one can serve two masters (lord-kurios) for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.

Matt. 24:45 Blessed is that slave whom his master (lord-kurios) finds so doing when he comes.

Col. 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your master (lord-kurios) on earth...

3. The Scriptures consistently link saving faith with a life of obedience and submission to Christ.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life...

Acts 5:32 And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.

Rom. 6:17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.

4. The Scriptures indicate that there is a kind of faith that does not save.

James 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ...You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons believe, and shudder.

5. It is unscriptural for persons to say that they want to receive Christ's free offer of salvation yet at the same time deny that He has any ownership over their lives. It is impossible to separate the person and work of Christ.

6. Acknowledging Christ as Lord is not a work. Rather it is a desire of the heart that the Holy Spirit enables through His regenerating ministry.

7. Submitting to the Lordship of Christ is not something added to belief, but is part of true saving faith.

Marriage

Prerequisites of Marriage

- The foundational requirement for Christian marriage is that a believer should not marry an unbeliever.

2 Cor. 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness?

- A couple must have a pure relationship if they desire to know God's will about marriage.

1 Thess. 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.

- Those preparing for marriage should also be mature and responsible so that they can meet the appropriate biblical expectations of the partners in marriage.

Eph. 5:22-33 wives, be subject... Husbands, love your wives...

1 Tim. 5:8 But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

Divorce

Grounds for divorce

- Although God hates divorce, He allowed for it to protect the "innocent party" (In the Old Testament the law called for adulterers to be *stoned*). The only reason in the Bible that allows for, but does not require divorce is adultery.

Matt. 5:32 Every one who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Matt. 19:9 Whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery.

Separation

Between Two Believers

- The Scriptures do acknowledge a situation where two believers are separated.

1 Cor. 7: 10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband 11 (but if she does leave, she must

remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

- When there is sin that results in the separation between two believing partners the church must confront the guilty party(s).
- There is no freedom to remarry for either partner even if a legal divorce has occurred, because there is not biblical grounds for divorce(adultery).
- In this situation, the biblically required action is for both persons to forgive and be reconciled.

Between a Believer and an Unbeliever

1 Cor. 7: 15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

- There is no freedom to remarry for the believer even if a legal divorce has occurred, because there is not biblical grounds for divorce(adultery).
- The believer is “not under bondage” to pursue the marriage.
- If the unbeliever commits adultery(by an unbiblical remarriage or sexual relations outside of marriage), then the situation is changed and there are biblical grounds for divorce for the believer.

Remarriage

- The Scriptures indicate that death frees a spouse to remarry.

Rom. 7:2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.

1 Cor. 7:39 A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

- The Scriptures also indicate that where a biblically permissible divorce has occurred (see above), the possibility of remarriage is assumed.

Sign gifts

Temporary Nature of Some Gifts

- God works differently throughout history (Rom. 11:25-26; Eph. 2:11-16; Heb. 1:1
- Certain spiritual gifts had a unique purpose in the first century church. These are often referred to as the “Sign gifts” (Miracles, tongues, etc.).
- The apostles had a foundational role in the writing of the New Testament and the primary purpose of the sign gifts was to verify their authority.
- Although others had these sign gifts, the apostles were the only ones who had the authority to pass on the capacity to do these signs and wonders to another.

Matt. 10:1 And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Cor. 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

Eph. 2:20 Having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets...

Heb. 2:4 ...God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His will

Acts 19:11 And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul.

Absence of Sign Gifts

- There are only three time periods where miracles had a major emphasis in history—Moses, Elijah and Elisha and the New Testament church.

John 10:41 John performed no sign...

1 Tim. 5:23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and frequent ailments.

2 Tim. 4:20 Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.

Tongues

- Tongues were for a sign to unbelieving Jews.
- They were a real language not understood by the speaker yet known by some present.
- There is no record of the gift of tongues in later epistles.

1 Cor. 13:8 ...if there are tongues they will cease...

1 Cor. 14:21-22 “By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people...” So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers.

Healing

- The gift of healing primarily verified the authority of the apostles[see above].
- Just because someone may appear to perform miracles does not indicate that it is from God.

- Satan appears as an angel of light and is able to perform miracles.

Matt. 7:21-23 Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and in your name perform miracles?

Truth and Tolerance

Issue

John 17:21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

- Shouldn't Christians do whatever necessary to maintain unity with other professing believers?

The Priority of Biblical Unity

1 Cor. 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Cor. 12:25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

Eph. 4:3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Philip. 2:1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Col. 3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

- The Scriptures clearly indicate that God would have Christians be unified with one another.
- The first century Christians had a tremendous impact on the world around them because they were "of one heart and mind."
- One of the primary ways that the watching world saw the reality of the early Christian's faith was their "love for one another."

The Reality of Truth

John 8:32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

John 17: 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Gal. 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

- Contrary to 21st century society, the Scriptures clearly teach that there is absolute truth that must be submitted to.
- It is illegitimate for anyone to pervert the biblical text to mean what he wants it to mean. The meaning and proper interpretation of any given passage of Scripture is directly connected to the original author's intent.
- God's truth as found in the Scriptures is the absolute, final standard in all matters of life.

The Unifying Power of Truth

Eph. 4: 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

- True biblical unity comes from a "one mindedness" on the Scriptures. Burying doctrinal differences for the sake of unity is neither practically advisable nor biblically appropriate.
- As God's people are properly equipped in the Word of God, they will have a more accurate understanding of it and thus be more unified with one another.
- The ultimate goal is for every Christian to be more and more unified with Christ: "speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ..." The more believers are in line with Christ's person, will and truth, the more they will have true biblical oneness with one another.
- The Scriptures indicate that the more we mature in Christ the more we will be at one with one another. To pursue unity at the expense of Christ's truth is a sign of immaturity in any church, individual or organization.

The Divisiveness of Heresy

Rom. 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

1 Cor. 11:18 For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.

2 John 1:10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting;

- The Scriptures indicate that dissension and disunity come from those who compromise the truth.
- The Scriptures command God's people to disassociate themselves from those who compromise the truth.
- Dissensions and divisions can provide opportunity to make evident those who are rejecting the truth.

Practical Guidelines

- God's people must never use the desire for "unity" as an excuse to compromise truth.
- The degree of biblical and doctrinal unity will have a direct bearing on the degree to which we can fellowship and minister with someone else (Amos 3:3).
- Although our biblical convictions will prevent us from "uniting" with other Christians in some situations, we are not mandated to correct their theology or approach to unity.
- Although we may experience degrees of separation from those that are not faithful to the truth, it is important that we maintain biblical attitudes of humility and love towards them.