

# STATEMENT OF FAITH.

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Rockwall TX, 75087

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# ONE Scripture

## **Revelation**

We believe in a general revelation in which God has revealed Himself through what has been made (Romans 1:18–20, Psalm 19:1–6, Job 12:7–9). The human conscience itself bears witness of the Law of God (Romans 2:14–15). Scripture, however, contains a special revelation different from the general revelation we see in creation. Even in Eden, general revelation was inadequate because man needed continual words from God to know His will. General revelation lacks redemptive content. The revelation in the Scriptures, testify of Christ in the written form. We must search the Scriptures to find Christ. Through John 14:26 and 16:13, we see that the whole subsequently written revelation of the N.T. canon is written under the authority of the Holy Spirit. We must depend on the Scriptures for an understanding of the special revelation of Jesus Christ in whom lies our redemption.

## **Inspiration**

We believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures as stated in II Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." The word for "inspired", *theopneustos*, meaning, "God breathed", shows that God is the author of Scripture. The Scriptures are not the product of God and man, nor of God in a man. They are the result of God speaking through man. Therefore, we believe the Bible in its entirety is without error in the original manuscripts.

## **Illumination**

We believe the effects of the fall make it necessary that we be delivered from our inability to understand the Scriptures. We must rely upon the operation of the Holy Spirit to make known to us as unregenerate individuals the spiritual content and truth of the inspired, written Word. I Corinthians 2:6–12 explains that the wisdom of God is hidden from those who do not believe (vs. 6–8), revealed to those who believe by the Spirit (vs. 9–11), and it is ultimately the Spirit of God which provides the foundation for the Christian's belief (vs. 12).

## **Authority**

We believe that the triune God has both the right and power to command compliance in thought and deed on the part of His rational creatures. He exercises this authority through the Scriptures. Jesus demonstrates this many times as He quotes Old Testament passages as a basis of His authority (i.e., Matt 4:4,7,10,; 9:13; Luke 16:31; Mark 12:24; John 6:31,45; 10:34,35).

## TWO<sub>God</sub>

### Attributes

We believe that God's character can best be defined by His attributes. These can be broken down into two categories:

**Communicable Attributes (those characteristics in His nature that He shares in a relative or limited degree with mankind):** Knowledge, Wisdom, Truthfulness (John 14:6), Holiness (I Peter 1:16), Righteousness (Deut. 32:4), Goodness (Ps. 145:17), Love (John 3:16), Mercy (Ps. 145:9) and Patience (II Peter 3:9).

**Incommunicable Attributes (those characteristics He doesn't share with mankind):** Self-Existence (John 5:26), Immutability (unchangeableness in His being, purposes and promises; He is never inconsistent or growing or developing.) (Mal. 3:6), Eternality (God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in His own being, yet He sees events in time and acts in time. He possesses the whole of His existence in one indivisible present.) (Is. 46:10), Omniscience (all-knowing) (Ps. 147:5) (Ps. 139:16), Omnipresence (present everywhere with His whole being at all times, and is not limited by space; He does not have spatial dimensions) (Ps. 139:7–11), Immensity (I Kings 8:27), (Ps. 139:7–10), Unity (God's whole being is indivisible; the Persons of the Trinity are one divine essence) (Deut. 6:4), Omnipotence (all-powerful, and He is able to do anything consistent with His own nature) (Gen. 1,2), Providence (God's ongoing relationship to His creation; He preserves and governs everything in the universe, yet creation is distinct from Him) (Prov. 16:33) and Sovereignty (God is supreme and in complete control of all things) (Eph. 1:11), (Ps. 135:6).

### The Trinity

We believe that there is one God (Deut. 6:4), but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal persons, the same in essence and nature (John 10:33) but distinct as to their Persons (II Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19; I Peter 1:2; Eph. 4:6).

### Works

We believe that the attributes of God are visibly exercised in His works of creation, providence, and redemption. He is completely free from condition, limitation or restraint; therefore, the capabilities of His works are endless.

### Creation

We believe that our God is the absolute and sole Creator of the universe. Creation was by divine fiat, taking place over a period of six literal 24 hour days, not through evolutionary process (Gen. 1,2). All things were created by God. "All things came into being by Him and apart from Him, nothing came into being that came into being." (John 1:3)

**Providence**

We believe that God orchestrates all that comes to pass in this universe. Nothing takes place outside of His willing it to occur. “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord” (Prov. 16:33; Eph. 1:11; Ps. 33:10–11; Pr. 21:1)

**Satan, Angels, and Demons**

We believe that angels are unique finite beings created directly by God, possessing great powers (Ps. 148:5). They were originally created in a state of righteousness (Mark 8:38). Their general ministry is to praise God (Ps. 148:2), worship God (Ps. 29:1,2) rejoice in the work of God (Job 38:4–7), and serve God with perfect obedience (Ps. 103:20). Satan is a real personality, a fallen angel and not a personification of evil (Job 1:6ff). Due to pride (Isa. 14:12–14), he rebelled against his creator and incurred the judgment of God and was cast from God’s presence (Ez. 28) along with a third of all the angels who joined him – now called demons (Rev. 12). As the author of sin, he introduced sin into the human race (Gen. 3).

## THREE Humanity

### **The Makeup of Human Nature**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). Man's creation includes that which is material (in that man was created from dust – Gen. 2:7a) and that which is immaterial (as God breathed into him the breath of life – Gen. 2:7b). Adam was created with a positive holiness, which enabled him to have face-to-face communication with God. Adam's holiness was not the same as God's, for it was limited by virtue of Adam being a creature. His holiness was unconfirmed until he should successfully pass the test placed before him. Adam failed this test put before him by giving in to the temptation of Satan (Gen. 3). This resulted in his sin and fall. This also resulted in the corrupted nature and fall of mankind (Rom. 5:12). Because of this sin and fall, all of mankind is "lost," all of mankind is eternally separated from God. Man's nature is evil and bent towards sin and rebellion towards God (Rom. 3). Only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and regeneration be obtained. This occurs through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

### **The Purpose or Destiny of Humanity**

We believe that man was created for God's purpose. Man was created to worship God, and all men will ultimately worship Him. "That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:10–11)

Man was created for God's purpose. Man was created to worship God, and all men will ultimately cause His purpose to be fulfilled (Romans 9:15–24). As the verses indicate, God has different purposes for each individual, yet they all work toward the same common result, which is, that God would be glorified. While some will receive their just punishment in Hell, others will be recipients of God's mercy resulting in glorification (Matt. 25:46).

# FOUR<sub>Sin</sub>

## **The Nature of Sin**

We believe that sin is any aspect of unconformity to the character of God, whether it is an act, disposition or state. Sin is that which is contrary to eternal holiness of God. Though sin may be directed toward other human beings, it is still considered rebellion against God Himself. Sin relates to some particular command in Scripture. In fact, it is Scripture, which allows the individual to recognize sin. “I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.” (Romans 7:7b)

## **The Effects of Sin**

Because God is a holy God, He must punish sin. “He does not leave the guilty unpunished.” (Exodus 34:7) His punishment for sin is a relational separation from Him and eternal separation from Him (Rev. 20:13–15). Because God is a holy God, He can not look upon anything unholy. “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; You can not tolerate wrong” (Hab. 1:13). Therefore, no one in his sinful nature can stand before God (Ex. 33:20).

## **The Nature and Extent of Original Sin**

Due to all men being in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam’s sin has been transmitted (inherited) to all men of all ages (called Original Sin). All men are sinners by nature and by choice (Ps. 14:1–3). Though this nature, for the believer, was crucified with Christ on the cross (Rom. 6:10), the sinful flesh remains a constant battle in every Christian’s life. Man is corruptive and depraved in his will (Rom. 1:28), his conscience (I Tim. 4:2), and his intellect (II Cor. 4:4). It is also Original Sin that causes man’s heart and understanding to be blinded (Eph. 4:18).

## **FIVE** The Person and Work of Christ

### **The Humanity of Jesus Christ**

We believe that in the flesh, Jesus was both God and man. “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). He was born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life. His humanity can be seen in His weariness (John 4:6), hunger (Matt. 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), agony (Luke 22:44), and other human characteristics found throughout the gospels.

### **The Deity of Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal second Person of the Trinity – The Son of God. Scripture clearly presents Jesus as God Himself. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1). His Deity can also be seen in His incommunicable attributes: eternity (Rev. 22:13), omnipresence (Matt. 18:20), omniscience (John 21:17), omnipotence (Phil. 3:21), immutability (Heb. 1:10–12), and self-existence (John 5:26).

### **The Atonement**

We believe that Jesus Christ was crucified and died as a penalty for our sins. We believe that in His death, by His shed blood, the Lord Jesus Christ made a perfect atonement for sin. He redeemed man from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. Men are saved and justified (declared righteous) on the simple and single death of Christ on the cross. “For Christ died for sins once and for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.” (I Peter 3:18)

## **SIX** The Holy Spirit

### **The Person**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person in the same sense that God the Father is a Person and the Lord Jesus Christ is a Person. The Holy Spirit is seen in Scripture to have the three attributes of personality: intellect (I Cor. 2:13; Rom. 8:27; I Cor. 2:10–11), emotion (Eph. 4:30; Rom. 15:30), and will (I Cor. 12:11; Acts 16:6–11). He is presented in Scripture as having the same essential deity as the Father and the Son and is to be worshipped, loved, and obeyed in the same way as God. His deity is seen both through explicit claims (II Cor. 3:17–18) and His incommunicable attributes: self-existence (Rom. 8:2), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7), omniscience (I Cor. 2:11–13), eternity (Heb. 9:14) and omnipotence (Luke 1:35, 37). To regard the Holy Spirit in any other way than deity is blasphemy.

### **The Work**

We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in all believers, baptizes and seals them at the moment of their salvation (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13–14). He teaches (John 14:26; I Cor. 2:13), testifies (John 15:26), commands and speaks (Acts 8:29; 13:2), performs miracles (Acts 8:39), and He intercedes for the saints. We believe that the Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of the world (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation of Christ (Luke 1:35), and the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 8:11). It is the Holy Spirit who providentially sustains all of creation (Psalm 104:30), distributes spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:11), and sovereignly directs the ministry (Acts 16:6–7).

## SEVEN Salvation

We believe that salvation is an act of God from beginning to end, from conversion to glorification. “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” (Rom. 8:9–30). There is nothing more that we need to do other than respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

### **Conversion**

We believe that conversion is a decision of the heart which takes place when an individual recognizes His sin and need for forgiveness (Rom. 3:10–12, 23; 6:23), acknowledges Christ’s sacrifice on His behalf (Rom. 5:8; I Peter 3:18), believes the gospel message and confesses it (Rom. 10:9–10), and as a result of his decision there is the fruit of obedience (I John 2:4–6).

### **Regeneration**

We believe that regeneration is the origination of the eternal life, which comes into the believer in Christ at the moment of conversion, passing him from a state of spiritual death to a state of spiritual life. Because all men are in a state of being “dead in sins” (Eph 2:5), there is a need for regeneration which gives the believer a new life by being “born again” (John 3). It is the Holy Spirit who is the actual agent of regeneration (John 3:3–7; Titus 3:5) although, Scripture hints that the Father is related to regeneration (James 1:17–18), and Jesus has His involvement as well (John 5:21; II Cor. 5:18; I John 5:12).

### **Justification**

We believe that justification is the act by which believers are declared “not guilty” due to the imputation of Christ’s righteousness in exchange for man’s sinfulness, which was nailed to the cross through Christ. It is because of this declaration of a believer no longer being guilty in the sight of God that he can obtain peace with God, escaping His condemnation. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our instruction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exalt in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:1–2)

### **Sanctification**

We believe every true believer is in the process of sanctification (known as spiritual growth) whereby he is becoming more and more conformed to the image of Christ. It is an ongoing process in which, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the believer puts to death the sins, which are according to the flesh. “For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit, you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13). The believer’s sanctification is the will of God (I Thess. 4:3) and all three Persons of the Trinity are involved in the process: the Father (I

Thess. 5:23), the Son (Eph. 5:26; Heb. 2:11; 9:12,14; 13:12), and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16; II Thess. 2:13). The believer is in continual process of sanctification, which ultimately culminates in his glorification.

### **Glorification**

We believe that glorification is the ultimate and absolute physical, mental, emotional and spiritual perfection of the believer. It will take place at the believer's death or at the coming of Christ. It is at that time that the believer will receive a new body. "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is (I John 3:2). The result of glorification will be a body like Christ's body (Phil. 3:21), a body suited to a spiritual realm (I Cor. 15:44), an eternal body (II Cor. 5:1), and a glorious body (I Cor. 15:43).

## **EIGHT** The Church

### **Nature and Function**

We believe that the church consists of all those who, since Pentecost (Acts 2), truly believe in Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual organism into which all believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit. It is the body of Christ of which Christ is head (I Cor. 12:12–13). It is also the bride of Christ, which Christ loves and for which He sacrificed Himself (Eph. 5:23–32). The members of the spiritual body are to associate themselves in local assemblies where the authority of Christ as head is carried out by His servants and designated by Scripture. The purpose of the church is basically to glorify God (Eph. 3:21), which is accomplished primarily through the edification (up building and encouraging) of the saints. Through this edification, the saints are equipped to do the work of the ministry, which is especially the evangelization of the world (Eph. 4:11–16, Matt. 28:19–20). This purpose is effected through gifted men who have been given to the church to build up the saints for service (Eph. 4:11–12), also through believers who have been given spiritual gifts sovereignly by the Spirit (Rom. 12, I Cor. 12).

### **Officers**

We believe that ultimately authority for the church is Christ (I Cor. 11:3; Col. 1:18), and that church leadership is appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor teachers; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (I Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; I Peter 5:1–5). These leaders are to rule as servants of Christ (I Tim. 5:17–22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Heb. 13:7,17). While it is the responsibility of these officers to govern the church, it is the calling of the saints to do the work of service (I Cor. 15:58).

### **Ordinances**

We believe that there are two ordinances, which have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38–42). Baptism through immersion (Acts 8:36–39) is a public confession of a believer showing his allegiance with Christ. It is a picture of a believer, joining with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection to a new life (Rom. 6:1–11). It is also a sign of identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41–42). Baptism does not save an individual; it is a public confession of one's salvation.

The Lord's Supper is the ordinance, which was instituted and commanded by Christ by which the believer's remember and proclaim Christ's death until He comes (I Cor. 11:26). The elements are merely representatives of the flesh and blood of Christ, however, they must be taken in a worthy manner. An individual should examine himself thoroughly before partaking in the ordinance (I Cor. 11:28–32). All believers should take the Lord's Supper on a regular basis in order that the focus of the church would not be forgotten.

## **NINE** The Last Things

### **Death**

We believe that at death, there is a separation of soul and body (Phil. 1:21–24).

### **Intermediate State**

We believe that there is an intermediate state alluded by Scripture. This state is that which lies between an individual's death and the second resurrection. The soul of the believer is ushered into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43), and the soul of the unbeliever is kept in punishment (Luke 16:19–26).

### **Resurrection**

We believe that following death and the intermediate state, there is a bodily resurrection where the soul and the resurrected body will be united (John 5:28–29). It will be at the time of the rapture (I Thess. 4:13–17) that the soul and body of the believer will be reunited to be glorified with God forever (Phil. 3:21, I Cor. 15:50–54). For the unbeliever, this body resurrection is followed by their final judgment (Rev. 20:11–15), sending them into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41–46) where they are cut off from God forever (II Thess. 1:7–9).

### **Tribulation**

We believe in a time when God will judge the earth in a series of devastating judgments. These are the bowls of wrath mentioned in Rev. 16. This is the seventieth week mentioned in Daniel 9 and is more commonly known as the "Tribulation."

### **Second Coming**

We believe that the tribulation judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in His glory to the earth (Matt. 24:27–31).

### **Millennium**

We believe that at His coming, Christ will occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Luke 1:31–33; Acts 1:10–11; 2:29–30) and establish His messianic kingdom of a literal 1,000 years (Rev. 20). This is the same kingdom promised to the nation Israel in the Old Testament (Zech. 8, II Sam. 7:16). This will be a time characterized by peace, prosperity, and especially righteousness (Isa. 11:1–6). This period will end, however, with a final judgment upon Satan. He will be released to deceive the nations, and then to be thrown into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41, Rev. 20:11–15). The saved, however, will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth will be destroyed (II Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth where only righteousness dwells (Eph. 5:5, Rev. 20:15). Then the new heaven will be revealed (Rev. 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy fellowship with God and each other forever (John 17:3, Rev. 21,22).