

Our Beliefs

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, God's infallible, written Word, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that it was uniquely, verbally, and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that it was written without error (inerrant) in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks. It is the final Word from God to man and there is no new revelation being given to men which supersedes, contradicts, adds to, or detracts from the recognized canon. We accept those areas of doctrinal teaching on which, historically, there has been general agreement among all true Christians.

Divergent Views

After each section, we identify those views we see as divergent. While agreement with WPBC on these doctrinal matters is not a requirement for membership or a test of fellowship, they do represent the present understanding of our church leadership. As such, we ask all who participate in the various teaching ministries of the church to refrain from teaching or promoting divergent positions both publicly (Sunday School, Discipleship course, church-sponsored Bible study) and in private conversations with those they lead in those teaching ministries.

We explicitly affirm our belief in the basic Bible teachings as follows:

1. **God**

There is one true God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality (Deut. 6:4; Num. 6:24-26; Isa. 48:16; Matt. 3:16, 17; 28:18-20; John 14:16, 17, 23, 26; 15:26). God is spirit. He is self-existent. He is infinite and eternal in His being, the creator and sustainer of all of creation, and is the redeemer of all who receive His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior, and He is judge of all mankind. He is sovereign. He is complete and perfect in all His attributes (Gen. 1:1-2:25; Psalm 90:2; Ex. 3:14; Deu. 33:27; Psalm 135:6; John 4:24). God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, participation in ordinances, edification through the Scriptures, mutual encouragement, and for being equipped for service (Heb. 10:25; Eph. 4:11-16). We do not affirm that all religions lead to God or that the God of Islam or other religions is the same God as Jehovah. We disagree with syncretistic views of God that validate other approaches to the Father except through Christ.

2. **Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is God, the Living Word, Who became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. Hence, He is perfect Deity and true humanity united in one person forever (John 1:1,

14; Matt. 1:18-21 {Isa. 7:14}; Luke 1:26-33, 35). He lived a sinless life and voluntarily atoned for the sins of men by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone (John 1:11, 12; 6:37; 8:28, 29, 36, 46; Luke 9:51; 10:17; Eph. 1:4; Heb. 1:1-3).

He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died (Luke 24:36-42; John 10:17, 18; 20:19, 20; 1 Cor 15:1-34). He ascended bodily into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own (Acts 1:9-11; Col. 3:1; Heb. 7:25; 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1, 2). Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His body, which is composed of all those, living and dead, who—starting at Pentecost—have been joined to Him through saving faith (John 1:11, 12; Acts 2:1-4; Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Divergent Views: We believe that being fully God, it was impossible for Jesus' humanity to be unsupported by His deity. As such, Jesus did not sin, but also, He could not have sinned.

3. Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Triune God. He is one in nature and essence with God the Father and Jesus Christ (Isa. 48:16; Matt. 28:19; John 14:16, 17, 23; 15:26).

The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to men. He convicts and draws sinners to Christ, imparts new life to them, continually indwells them from the moment of spiritual birth, and seals them until the day of redemption. His fullness, power, and control are appropriated in the believer's life by faith (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 4:30).

Divergent Views: We believe there is only one "baptism" in the Holy Spirit, accomplished at salvation, whereby the believer is identified with Christ and is permanently and completely indwelt by His Spirit. There is no second act of grace or special anointing for releasing gifts or revelation. He fills and controls believers who daily are surrendered to Him (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; Luke 3:16; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:18). We view the spiritual gift of tongues as an evangelistic gift, aimed at unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22). We are not "cessationists" and do not teach that this or other miraculous gifts ceased to operate in the first century.

4. The Bible

The Bible—the Old and New Testaments—is the Word of God, and, as such, is verbally inspired, inerrant in the original autographs, authoritative,

infallible, and wholly reliable. The Scriptures are the only guide and rule of faith and conduct for the believer (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35; 17:17; Psalm 119:89; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Our responsibility is to learn them, obey them, and conform to their requirements in all of life. The Bible is God's final revelation to man. It is not to be added to, taken away from, or altered in any way (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 2:21; Deu. 4:2; Prov. 30:5, 6; Rev. 22:18, 19).

Divergent Views: In Matt. 23:35 Jesus spoke of the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah... whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar." In saying this, Jesus affirmed the Old Testament we have today, but did not affirm the Apocrypha. Abel was the first righteous death recorded in the Old Testament (Gen. 4:4) and Zechariah, the last (2 Chron. 24:22 – 2 Chronicles being the last book of the Old Testament as the books were ordered in Jesus' day – if you only include the 39 books of our present OT. If, however, one includes the Apocrypha, Zechariah would not be the last chronologically).

5. Man

Man was originally created in the image of God. He sinned by disobeying God; thus, he was alienated from his Creator. The historic fall of Adam brought all mankind under divine condemnation (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 16, 17; 3:6, 16-19, 23, 24; Rom. 5:12, 17-19; 1 Cor. 15:22). Man's nature is utterly corrupted, and he is thus totally unable to please God. Every man is in need of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Man has no possible means of salvation within himself through good works (Gen. 6:12; Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 1 Cor. 2:14; 1 John 5:19; Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5; Gal. 2:16).

6. Salvation

The salvation of man is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the result, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness or of religious ceremony. Salvation is received only through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as a man will repent and believe the gospel. God imputes His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justifies them in His sight (John 1:11, 12; 14:6; Mark 1:15; Eph. 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5-7; Rom. 3:20-28; 4:16-25; Gal. 2:16; 3:24). It is the privilege of all who are born again of the Spirit to be assured of their salvation from the very moment in which they trust Christ as their Savior. This assurance is not based upon any kind of human merit, but is produced by the witness of the Holy Spirit, who confirms in the believer the testimony of God in His written Word (John 1:11, 12; 3:14-18, 36; 14:16; 5:24; Rom. 8:16-18; Titus 3:5-7; Heb. 13:5, 6; 1 John 5:11-13; Rev. 6:9-11).

Divergent Views: We believe that God has endowed humankind with will.

While no one comes to the Father unless the Father draws them (John 6:44), God's exercise of sovereignty does not negate human choice or responsibility. We believe Christ's death was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2), but it is only by grace through faith that one can be saved (Eph. 2:8-9). We do not believe that it is possible for a Christian to lose their salvation. Since salvation is the work of spiritual birth leading to eternal life, in order to lose our salvation, it is Christ, not the believer, who must fail. We do not embrace any view of salvation that rejects the idea of being born from above. We believe this promotes a man-centered view of salvation.

7. The Christian Life

Every believer is called to so live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that he will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, but will bear fruit to the glory of God (John 15:16; Rom 12:1, 2; Gal. 5:16-23). It is the will of our Lord that believers publicly affirm their commitment to Him and their identity with His people through obedience to His command to be baptized by immersion in water. This ordinance has no bearing upon salvation, but—as an act of obedience—is a logical consequence of salvation (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 8:36-39; Eph. 2:8, 9; 1 Peter 3:21). The Lord Jesus Christ commanded all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world and to disciple men of every nation. Fulfilling of the Great Commission requires that all worldly and personal ambitions be subordinated to a total commitment to “Him Who loved us gave Himself for us...” (Rev. 1:5; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 1:10, 11; 1 Thess. 2:12; Phil. 2:3, 4).

Divergent Views: We do not affirm “deliverance” ministry – the practice of casting demons out of Christians. We understand demonic habitation of a believer as incompatible with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, the idea of a needed intermediary to cast out such a demon, whether internal or cling to the outside of a believer, is not substantiated in Scripture. We also view as divergent, the health/wealth/prosperity gospel – the view that God's will is always our physical healing, and walking with Him leads to financial blessing – a focus on the gifts instead of the giver.

8. The Church

The church was founded at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit, and consists of all who have truly repented of their sins and have received the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. The church is manifested as believers gather together for worship and service. The only members of the true church are those who are in Christ (Matt. 16:18; John 14:16; Acts 2:1-5; Heb. 10:25; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Jesus Christ is the head of the church, His body, and, as such, has sole authority over its functioning. He is to be obeyed in everything, since He is Lord of all (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18; 1 John 4:2, 3; Rom. 10:9, 10, 13; Acts 10:36; Phil. 2:11).

Divergent Views: We do not affirm “Christian Reconstructionism” or “Dominion Theology” – the idea that it is the church’s task and responsibility to usher in the Kingdom of God through reconstructing secular society to fit Christian standards. While we do take a stand on social issues, our primary focus is the gospel.

9. Things to Come

At physical death, the believer enters immediately into the eternal, conscious presence of the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting glory and blessing (2 Cor. 5:6-8; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1-14). At physical death, the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting judgment and condemnation (Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:22-24; 2 Thess. 1:6, 8, 9; Rev. 20:11-15). Jesus Christ will return in the air before the tribulation for His church, to take His own—the living and the dead—home to be with Him forever (1 Cor. 15:51-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1-10). Jesus Christ will come again to the earth—personally, visibly and bodily—to consummate history and the eternal plan of God (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 24:30; 25:31-33, 41, 46).

Divergent Views: We do not agree with a-millennial eschatology and its spiritualized view of the promises to Israel as being fulfilled in the church. We hold to a pre-millennial view of the second coming and pre-tribulation view of the rapture, and see a scriptural distinction between Israel and the church.