

ARTICLE XII DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," by which we understand the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that "holy men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit" to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the writings – historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic – as appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that all the Scriptures center around the Lord Jesus Christ: His person and work in His First and Second Coming; and hence that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read or understood until it leads to Him. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction and are sufficient (unmixed with human wisdom in its various forms) to equip and mature believers. We believe that the Scriptures are the final authority for all faith and practice and, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit and the caring body of Christ, are entirely adequate for every spiritual or emotional problem, and are in no need of any supplement from secular psycho-therapies. We further believe that Scripture is the fresh and present voice of Christ by which He communicates through the Holy Spirit to His people. Therefore, no current revelatory, prophetic word is necessary in this age. (Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Luke 24:27,44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16; 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23; Rom. 15:4; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 10:11; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

THE TRI-UNE GODHEAD

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – and that these three are one God; having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience. The Godhead is the absolute and sole creator of the universe and their creation was by divine fiat, not through evolutionary process. (Genesis 1, 2; Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:4-6)

GOD THE FATHER

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

PERSON AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:35)

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Romans 3:24,25; 1 Peter 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

We believe that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2.24, 3.18).

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

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9,10; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1, 2)

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to receive the Church, which is His body, unto Himself at the Rapture, and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20).

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

PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the

world in a unique sense on the day of Pentecost according to the divine promise, and now dwells in every believer in Christ. By His baptism, the Holy Spirit unites all believers to Christ in one body, and He, as the Indwelling One, is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. We believe that He never takes His departure from the church, nor from the feeblest of the saints, but is ever present to testify of Christ, seeking to occupy believers with Him and not with themselves nor with their experiences. We believe that His abode in the world in this special way will cease when Christ comes to receive His own at the completion of the church. (John 14:1-17; 16:7-15; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; 2 Thess. 2:7)

We believe that, in this age, certain well-defined ministries are committed to the Holy Spirit, and that it is the duty of every Christian to understand them and to be adjusted to them in his own life and experience. These ministries are: the restraining of evil in the world to the measure of the divine will; the convicting of the world respecting sin, righteousness, and judgment; the regenerating of all believers upon faith in Christ; the indwelling and anointing of all who are saved, thereby sealing them unto the day of redemption; the baptizing into the one body of Christ of all who are saved; and the continued enablement for power, teaching, and service of all those among the saved who are yielded to and dependant on Jesus Christ and who are subject to His will. (John 3:6; 16:7-11; Rom. 6:11-13; 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 John 2:20-27)

We believe that some gifts given to the church during the ministry of the Apostles were directly related to the founding of the church and the completion of the New Testament, and are thus no longer given – such as, the gift of an apostle, the gift of prophesy, the gift of tongues, the gift of knowledge, the gift of healing, etc. We believe that speaking of tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism nor of the filling of the Spirit, and that the complete deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the future resurrection of the body. We believe, however, that God continues to work supernaturally among His people according to His will. (Acts 4:8,31; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 13:8)

THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

We believe that man was originally and directly created in the image of God, and that he fell through sin. We believe that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11). As a consequence of his sin, Adam lost his spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and he became subject to the power of the devil. We also believe that his spiritual death and or total depravity of human nature has been transmitted to the entire human race of man, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted. Hence, every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature, which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably bad apart from divine grace. Thus, man is a sinner by imputation, nature, choice, and is guilty before God; and possess within himself no means of recovery. Man has both dignity (He is created in the image of God.) and depravity (He is corrupted in every part of his nature through the Fall.) (Gen. 1:26; 2:17; 6:5; Psalm 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer.17:9; John 3:6; 5:40; 6:53; Romans 3:10-19; 8:6-7; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 John 3:8)

SALVATION FROM SIN'S PENALTY

We believe that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We believe that when an unregenerate person exercises personal faith in Christ alone he passes immediately out of spiritual death to spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new. We believe in justification by God's grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, and for the glory of God alone. Each believer in Christ is now justified from all things, accepted as Christ His Son is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his place and portion as linked to Him as one with Him forever. Though the saved one may have occasion to grow in the realization of his blessings and to know a fuller measure of divine power through study of God's Word and the yielding of his life more fully to God, he is, however, in no way required by God to seek a so-called "second blessing, " or a "second work of grace." He is positionally complete in Christ (John 5:24, 17:23; Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24-25, 28, 5:1; Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:10; 1 John 4:17, 5:11-12)

We reject the many contemporary phrases that are often stated as necessary responses or conditions to the Gospel for someone to be saved. Statements such as: "make a commitment to Christ," "turn over the controls of your life to Christ," "believe plus be baptized," "believe and keep the Ten Commandments," "submit to Christ's mastery /lordship in your life," "repented of or confess your sins," "pray the sinner's prayer," "coming forward," "ask Jesus into your heart," etc. We believe the only right response to the Gospel is faith alone in Christ alone based on His finished work alone. (Acts 16:30-31; John 3:16-18, 5:24, 6:32-40, 8:24; Romans 3:28, 4:5).

ASSURANCE

We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ alone as revealed in the Scriptures, to be absolutely assured of their salvation from the very day they trust Him to be their Saviour. This assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word and the finished work of Jesus Christ, exciting within His children filial love, gratitude, and obedience. (Luke 10:20; 21:32; 2 Cor. 5:1,6-8; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 10:22; 1 John 5:13)

ETERNAL SECURITY

We believe that, because of

- the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love,
- His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ,
- the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life,
- the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven,
- the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God,
- the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved;

we, and all true believers everywhere, once saved shall be kept saved forever.

We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father. Since He cannot overlook the sin of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love. Having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He, who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son. (John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16-17; 17:11; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2; 5:13; Jude 1:24)

THE TWO NATURES OF THE BELIEVER

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through his identification with Christ and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (Rom. 6:1-13, 8:12,13; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9)

SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting-apart unto God, is threefold: it is already complete for every saved person because his position toward God is the same as Christ's position. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God. We believe, however, that he retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. There is, secondly, a progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to "grow in grace," and to "be changed" by the unhindered power of the Spirit. We believe, also, that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ when he shall see his Lord and shall be "like Him." (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; Ephesians 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Heb. 10:10,14; 12:10)

SEPARATION

- A. Positional. We believe that each believer has been positionally set apart from Adam to God by virtue of being in Christ. (John 17:14,16,21-23)
- B. Experiential. We believe that separation is the human side of sanctification. Separation is always unto God from something and automatically accompanies growth in grace. (Psalm 97:10) The believer is told to separate from religious apostasy and false teaching. (2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 John 9-10; Rom. 16:17) The believer is to separate from worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; Eph. 5:11; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Pet. 4:3-4; 1 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.) God encourages separation by promising special felicity to the faithful (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). We believe that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5). We believe that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Ephians 4:1-3; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 10:31)
- C. In seeking to strike a biblical balance regarding ministry and ecclesiastical separation, it is our understanding that believers need to...

- 1) mark and avoid false teachers who would seek to infiltrate or influence our local assembly. (Romans 16:17-18; Acts 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 6:20-21)
- 2) refuse to approve of, minister with, or financially support ministries that reject or distort the truths of the Word of God. (2 John 7-11)
- 3) seek to minister to (by way of sound teaching and materials) the doctrinally confused or those in error who are open to grace teaching and where there is reason to believe that individual or congregation may be helped by such a ministry to become more New Testament in belief and practice, as long as we are not restricted in our message or asked to compromise our doctrinal position. (Titus 3:10; 2 Timothy 2:22-26; Acts 19:8-10)
- 4) resist a prolonged personal ministry to individuals or groups if there is evidence that they intend to retain their compromised spiritual state or their relations with apostate organizations. (2 Timothy 2:15-21)
- 5) seek to support, encourage and fellowship with other individuals, churches or ministries of like-precious faith around the Word of God, yet without entering into any official organizational unity. (3 John 5-8)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- A. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today. Speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the nation of Israel was disciplined, and the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. (Mark 16:20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-30; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12)
- B. We believe that God does heal and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and the afflicted. However, we deny the present existence of the spiritual gift of healing that ceased with the early church. (John 15:7; Acts 5:12-16; 1 John 5:14,15)
- C. We believe that at the moment of regeneration every believer receives enabling gifts for service, bestowed by the Holy Spirit. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is empowered by the same Spirit and each is called to his own divinely appointed service in love as the Spirit directs. These gifts are given to believers by the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation for the purpose of fulfilling God's blueprint for each believer to function in a local church for the edification of the Body. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-26; 13:1-13; 14:4, 12, 26)

THE CHURCH

- A. We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the body and bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18)

We believe that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We believe that the Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The Church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6, 5:32).

- B. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures, (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11) and that believers in Christ are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).
- C. We believe that the one, supreme authority for the Church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). We believe that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the local church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership within scriptural guidelines. (Hebrews 13:7, 17)
- D. We believe the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government under the headship of Christ (Titus 1:5). We believe that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the

presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, through congregational feedback, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine via prayer, searching the Scriptures, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4- 7,13; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

- E. We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by advancing and communicating the Gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:29; Acts 1:8; 2:42).
- F. We believe in the ordinances of believer's water baptism and the Lord's supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church age (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 2:41, 42; 18:8; 1Corinthians 11:23-26).

DISPENSATIONALISM

We believe that the dispensations are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on the earth through man under varying responsibilities. We believe that the changes in the dispensational dealings of God with man depend upon changed conditions or situations in which man is successively found with relation to God, and that these changes are the result of the failures of man and the judgments of God. We believe that different administrative responsibilities of this character are manifest in the Biblical record, that they span the entire history of mankind, and that each ends in the failure of man under the respective test and in an ensuing judgment from God. We believe that three of these dispensations or rules of life are the subject of extended revelation in the Scripture, viz.: the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, the present dispensation of Grace, and the future dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom. We believe that these are distinct and are not to be intermingled or confused, as they are chronologically successive.

We believe that the dispensations are not ways of salvation, nor different methods of administering the so-called Covenant of Grace. They are not in themselves dependent on covenant relationships but are ways of life with responsibility to God which test the submission of man to His revealed will during a particular time. We believe that, if man does trust in his own efforts to gain the favor of God or salvation under any dispensational test, because of his inherent sin, his failure to satisfy fully the just requirements of God is inevitable and his condemnation is sure.

We believe that according to the "eternal purpose" of God (Eph. 3:11) salvation in the divine reckoning is always "by grace, through faith," alone and rests upon the basis of the shed blood of Christ. We believe that God has always been gracious, regardless of the ruling dispensation, but that a believer has not at all times been under an administration, rule of life, or stewardship of grace as is true in the present dispensation. (Romans 6:14; 1 Corinthians 9:17; Eph. 3:2, 3:9, A.S.V.; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4,)

We believe that it has always been true that "without faith it is impossible to please" God (Heb. 11:6), and that the principle of faith was prevalent in the lives of all the Old Testament saints. However, we believe that it was historically improbable that they should have had as the conscious object of their faith the incarnate, crucified Son, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), and that it is evident that they did not comprehend as we do that the sacrifices depicted the person and work of Christ. We believe also that they did not understand fully the redemptive significance of the prophecies or types concerning the sufferings of Christ (1 Peter 1:10-12). However, we believe that their faith toward God was manifested in other ways as is shown by the long record in Hebrews 11:1-40. We believe further that their faith thus manifested was counted unto them for righteousness (cf. Romans 4:3 with Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:5-8; Hebrews 11:7).

We reject Covenant Theology, along with Hyper-dispensationalism and Progressive Dispensationalism, as erroneous conclusions to a normal, grammatical, historical, contextual interpretation of the rightly-divided Word of God. However, we do believe that the past biblical covenants are to be consistently interpreted with this hermeneutic, many which were made to the ethnic descendants of Israel, and are yet to be fulfilled as God has promised when Christ returns to the earth, involving a land, seed, and blessings. (Genesis 12:1-2; 13:14-17; 15:1-5, 17-21; Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Jeremiah 31:31-34) Thus, the Church is not "spiritual Israel."

MISSIONS

We believe that it is the privileged responsibility of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:14-16; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20). We churches have the central and primary role in missions. We believe in supporting prayerfully and financially the spreading of the gospel and the establishing of local churches both home and foreign missions, and that believers considered for missionary activities should reflect a godly walk and service for the Lord, be directed by the Holy Spirit, be confirmed by their local church leadership, and be sent out by their local home church. (Acts 13:1-5; 16:1-3; Philippians 4:14-18; Romans 15:24) We believe that no parachurch missionary organization should usurp the authority of the local church leadership which each missionary should be accountable to. (Acts 14:26-28; Hebrews 13:7, 17)

FAMILY

We believe that God created and blessed the family as the foundation of society. Marriage unites one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment to each other (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-6). Marriage provides for intimate companionship, pure sexual expression (Genesis 2:25; Ephesians 5:31-33), procreation, and reflects the relationship of Christ and the church (Genesis 1:28; Proverbs 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5). A husband is commanded to love and provide for his wife as Christ loved the church. A wife is commanded to respect and submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Children are a gift from God and are fully human from conception (Psalm 127:3; 139:13-16). Parents are to train their children by modeling a godly life, teaching them the Scriptures, disciplining them in love, and providing them a resource of wisdom and counsel (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 1:8-9; 13:24; 22:6). Parents are to care for the needs of their children (2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:4). Children are to obey their parents with respect and honor, caring for them in the time of their dependency and old age (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 23:22; Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20; 1 Timothy 5:8).

ANGELS

A. Holy Angels

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

B. Fallen Angels

We believe that Satan is a created angel, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he and his demons shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15). We also believe that the believer is removed from Satan's authority and dominion and that while a true believer may be an object of severe oppression and attack, he cannot be indwelt bodily by a demon. (Job 1:6,7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Revelation 20:10)

THE BLESSED HOPE

We believe that, according to the Word of God, the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself into heaven both His own who are alive and remain unto His coming, and also all who have fallen asleep in Jesus. This event called the Rapture is the blessed hope set before us in the Scripture, and for this we should be constantly looking. (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51,52; Phil.3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14)

THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

We believe that the translation or Rapture of the Church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week (Dan 9:27; Rev. 6:1-19:21) during which the Church, the Body of Christ, will be in heaven. The entire period of Israel's seventieth week will be a time of judgment on the whole earth, at the end of which the times of the Gentiles will be brought to a close. The latter half of this tribulation period will be the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), which our Lord called the great tribulation (Matt. 24:15-21). We believe that universal righteousness will not be realized previous to the Second Coming of Christ, but that the world is day by day ripening for judgment and that the age will end with a fearful apostasy (Matthew 24).

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe that the period of great tribulation in the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as He ascended, in person on the clouds of heaven, and with power and great glory to introduce the millennial age, to bind Satan and place him in the abyss, to lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, to restore Israel to her own land and to give her the realization of God's covenant promises, and to bring the whole world to the knowledge of God (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 11:9; Ezek. 37:21-28; Matt. 24:15-25:46; Acts 15:16-17; Rom. 8:19-23; 11:25-27; Rev. 20:1-3).

DEATH AND THE ETERNAL STATE

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

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

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