

Dacula First Baptist Church

Articles of Faith



Growing *First* by Faith

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of First Baptist Church of Dacula is to honor God by bringing lives into harmony with Him and with one another through God's inspired Word by Preaching, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Fellowship.

BIBLIOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING THE BIBLE

- I. We believe that the Bible is the written revelation of God, and the sixty-six books of the Bible constitute the plenary (entire) Word, inspired (God breathed) by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:7-14; II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 3:16).
- II. We believe that the Word of God is an objective (Ex. 17:14), propositional revelation (I Thess. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (II Tim. 3:16) in the original documents, inerrant (without error) in everything to which it speaks (Isa. 30:8), and infallible--teaching no error (II Tim. 3:16-17).
- III. We believe that it constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Mt. 5:18, John 10:35b, 16:13, 17:17, I Cor. 2:13, II Tim. 3:15-17, II Peter 3:15-16, Heb. 4:12).
- IV. We believe that God gave His written Word by a process of dual authorship in which the Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that through their individual personalities and writing styles they composed and recorded God's Word to man (II Peter 1:20-21).
- V. We believe that while there may be several applications to a passage there is only one true interpretation and it is to be found in the diligent application of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation.

THEOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

- I. We believe that there is one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-7; I Cor. 8:4). God is a spirit (John 4:24), infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and truth. God is one in essence and personality but eternally existing in three persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14)--each equally deserving the same worship and obedience (Acts 17:24-29; I Cor. 8:6).
- II. God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:89; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 1:11; II Tim. 1:8-9; Isa. 14:24; 46:9-10; Ps. 33:11).

As the absolute and highest ruler of the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:33). He is creator of all things (Gen. 1). His Fatherhood denotes a spiritual relationship within the Trinity and a relationship with mankind in creation and spiritually with all believers. He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass and continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (I Chron. 29:11-12; Dan. 4:34-35). This He does so as in no way to be the author and approver of sin (John 8:38-44) nor to abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (I Peter 1: 17). He has graciously chosen from all eternity those He would save as His own (Eph. 1:3-6). He saves from sin all who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ, and He relates Himself to His own as their Father (Luke 3:38; John 1:12-13; Eph. 1:3-6; Heb. 12:6-9).

CHRISTOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST

- I. We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal and coeternal with the Father (John 10:27-30; John 14:9).
- II. We believe that in the incarnation He surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, Christ's divine nature united with His human nature in an indissoluble union, and so He became the God-man (Phil. 2:5-8).
- III. We believe that Jesus Christ represents the fusion of humanity and deity into an indivisible union (Micah 5; Col. 2:9; John 14:9-10; I John 5:20; Titus 2:13; Jude 25).
- IV. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:25; Luke 1:26-35), that He was God incarnate (John 1:1, 3, 14, 18; I John 1:3), and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isa. 9:6; Heb. 7:26; I Peter 1:19, 2:22; John 1: 29).
- V. We believe that in the incarnation the second person of the Godhead laid aside the independent use of His attributes and He laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of co-existence with God to assume the place of a Son and an existence appropriate with a servant. However, He did not divest Himself of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:5-8).
- VI. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (I Peter 2:24; Rom. 3:25, 5:8).
- VII. We believe that Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead, guaranteeing the bodily resurrection of all believers (John 14:29; I Cor. 15:20, 23) and that He has now ascended to the right hand of the Father where He is now ministering as our advocate and High Priest (Mt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:38- 39; Acts 2:30-31; Hebrews 7:25, 9:24; Rom. 4:25).
- VIII. We believe that He will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture and will return with His church in glory and establish His millennial kingdom here on earth (I Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 19:11-16; Isa. 11:4ff).
- IX. We believe that Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22-23), whether believers (II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:10-15), living inhabitants at His glorious return (Mt. 25:31-46), or the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev. 21:11-15).

PNEUMATOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

- I. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine third person of the Trinity. He is eternal and coequal with the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3-4; cp. Isa. 6:8-9 with Acts 28:25-26; cp. Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17). The Holy Spirit is a person (John 16:7-8) possessing intellect (I Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph. 4:30), and will (I Cor. 12:11).
- II. We believe that the Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son (Mt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; I Cor. 12:4-6), eternal (Heb. 9:14), omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscient (Isa. 40:13-14), omnipotent (I Cor. 12:11), and the truth (John 16:13).
- III. We believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the will of the Trinity in the world. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Mt. 1:18), the writing of the Bible (II Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).
- IV. We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit began in this age at Pentecost when He came from the Father, as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17, 15:26), to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (I Cor. 12:13). The broad scope of His activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7-8); baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13, and adopting (Rom. 8:15), instructing (I Cor. 2:12), empowering (Acts 1:8-9; I Thess. 1:5), and enabling believers to produce fruit (Gal. 5:22-23).
- V. We believe that every believer possesses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation on and it is the duty of all believers to be filled (controlled) by the Spirit of God (John 16:13; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18; I John 2:20, 27).
- VI. We believe that the Holy Spirit alone sovereignly bestows spiritual gifts to the church, not to draw attention to Himself by ostentatious displays, but to glorify Jesus Christ (John 16:13-14) and implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the faith (Acts 1:8; I Cor. 12:4-11; II Cor. 3:18).
- VII. We believe that speaking in tongues (unlearned languages) and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the Bible was completed and the church was well established (I Cor. 12:4-11; II Cor. 12:12; I Cor. 13:8-12; Heb. 2:1-4).

ECCLESIOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING THE CHURCH

I. FORMATION AND MAKEUP OF THE CHURCH

We believe that all who place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church (I Cor. 12:12-13), of whom Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18) and who is His espoused bride (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8).

We believe that the formation of this body 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 (I Cor. 15:51-54; I Thess. 4:13-18).

We believe then that the church is a unique spiritual organism (Mt. 16:18) made up of all born-again believers in this present age, Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:11-22). The Church is distinct from Israel (I Cor. 10:31), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6, 5:31).

The establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament (Acts 2:40-47, 14:23, 27; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1), and the members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (churches) (I Cor. 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25). A local church is an organized body (Covenant, Constitution, Articles of Faith, and leaders) of baptized believers in Jesus Christ meeting together in a local area.

II. AUTHORITY OVER AND WITHIN THE CHURCH

We believe that the supreme authority for the Church is Christ (I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18) and that the order, discipline, and worship are appointed through His sovereignty. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ, over the local church, are elders, also called bishops, Pastors, and Pastor-teachers (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; I Tim. 3:1-7; Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5-9) and are to be assisted by deacons, chosen from the congregation. These officers must fit the biblical qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-5; Acts 6:3-4). These leaders are to lead the church (I Tim. 5:17-22) and have authority from Christ in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership and example (Heb. 13:7, 17; I Thess. 5:12-13; I Peter 5:1-4).

We believe that the discipline of sinful members of the congregation is to be in accord with the biblical requirements (Mt. 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; I Cor. 5:1-13, 6:1-7; II Cor. 2:5-11; II Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16; Romans 16:17-20).

We believe in the autonomy of the local church. It is free from any external authority or control, with the responsibility of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, following the biblical teaching and example of its leaders, is to decide on the measure and method of its cooperation, as well as all matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government (Acts 15:19-31, 16:4, 20:28; I Cor. 5:8, 13; I Peter 5:1-4).

We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (II Tim. 2:2, 15, 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:42; I John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; I Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 2:38-42), and by disciplining the nations (Mt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).

We believe that all believers are to be involved in the work of the ministry (I Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12; Rev. 22:12). To facilitate that ministry, God gave gifted men to prepare God's people for works of service (Eph. 4:7-12). God also gives special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5-8; I Cor. 12:4-13). At the moment of the new birth, each believer receives a gift or gifts (I Cor. 12:4-13). These gifts are sovereignly bestowed and should not be sought (I Cor. 12:11). Every believer should discover, develop, and use his spiritual gift or gifts for the edification of the body and the accomplishment of the work of Christ in the world (Rom. 12:3-8; I Peter 4:10-11).

We believe in God's direct creation of the universe, without the use of pre-existing material, and apart from any process of evolution whatever, according to the Genesis account. (Gen. 1:1-31; Ex. 20:11; Col. 1:16,17; Heb. 11:3). We believe that man was created in the likeness and image of God in innocence under the law of his Maker. God is the giver of life and the final authority in the cessation of life. Therefore, all human life is sacred and to be protected, including care for the pre-born, handicapped, infirm, needy and aged. Man, through the sin of Adam, by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. (Genesis 1:27; 3:1-6; Job 12:9-10; Psalm 139:13-16; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 82:3-4; Romans 5:10-19; Psalm 51:5; Romans 1:18, 32; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23).

We believe that marriage is a God-ordained and God-regulated, heterosexual covenant relationship (Genesis 2:18-25) in which each person is equal in value in the sight of God and distinct in marital roles (Genesis 1:26-27; 1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:22-33).

We believe that God has commanded that no one engage in intimate sexual activity outside of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of fornication (homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, adultery, and pornography) is sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. Any individuals taking part in lifestyles not clearly approved of by Scripture may not hold membership in this Church, but are invited to respectfully attend our services. Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:6-11; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-32; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4.

We also believe that marriage pictures Christ's relationship to His Bride, the Church, and that, in God's original plan, marriage is a permanent relationship between one man and one woman, broken only by the death of one spouse (Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39).

Those persons whose lives have been marked by divorce, remarriage, or marriage to a divorced person but now exemplify a godly walk with the Lord in accordance with His Word and these Articles of Faith shall be considered for service in the ministries of First Baptist Church, except in the positions of Pastors and Deacons.

As with all others who serve, each person's qualifications and place of service in the church will be evaluated and determined by the Pastor and Deacons on a Scriptural individual basis (1 Timothy 3:1-16; Titus 1:5-9).

We believe that the temporary sign gifts - healing, speaking in tongues (unlearned languages), interpretation of tongues, and the working of sign miracles -gradually ceased as the New Testament scriptures were completed and the new church established (I Cor. 13:8-10; 11 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4; Acts 19:11-12 with I Cor. 12:1-3).

We believe that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer prayers of faith on the part of every believer and will answer according to His perfect will for the sick, suffering and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7; II Cor. 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; I John 5:14-15).

We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-41). Christian baptism (by immersion) is the testimony by the believer showing forth in solemn and beautiful illustration our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, and our union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to new life (Rom. 6:1-11; Acts 8:36-39). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41).

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes and should always be preceded by solemn self examination (I Cor. 11:23-38). While Christ's flesh and blood are not actually present, the Lord's Supper is an actual communion with the risen Christ, who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (I Cor. 10:16-17).

ANTHROPOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING MAN

- I. We believe that man was directly and immediately created by God (Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 1:16-17). Man was created in the image of God (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24), free of sin, with a rational nature, intelligence (volition), self determination, and moral responsibility (Rom. 2:14-16; Deut. 6:6).
- II. We believe that God's purpose in the creation of man was that he should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, and live in God's will (Gen. 1:26-31; Isa. 43:7; Rev. 4:11).
- III. We believe that because of Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and word of God, he lost his innocence, became subject to the wrath of God, became inherently corrupt, and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God, apart from divine grace. Man has no recuperative powers to enable him to recover and is hopelessly lost apart from the salvation which is the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; II Tim. 2:13-14; I John 1:8).
- IV. We believe that all men were in the loins of Adam and that the consequence of that sin has been transmitted (imputed) to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the exception. All men, thus, are sinners by divine declaration, by nature, and by choice (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12-14; James 2:10).

SOTERIOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING SALVATION

I. *Salvation*

We believe that salvation is wholly by the grace of God, through the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood; and not on the basis of any human works. No works, religious or other, however good, make that salvation more secure (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7, 2:8-10; I Peter 1:18-19; Titus 3:4-7). We believe that Jesus Christ, by His sufferings, death, and resurrection made full satisfaction to the justice of God for the sin of man (I Peter 1:18-19; Romans 3:21-26, 5:18-19). Man must respond in repentance and faith to Christ's offer of salvation (John 3:16, 36; Acts 3:19, 16:31, 17:30).

II. *Regeneration*

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the new birth is imparted (John 3:3-7). The divine life is given instantaneously, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), so as to secure voluntarily by obedience to the gospel. Regeneration will be manifested by obedience, repentance, faith, and righteous living. Good works are its proper evidence and fruit (I Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10, 4:20-24) and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Eph. 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 3:16; II Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Cor. 3:18, 5:17). This conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:17; I Peter 1:23; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:2-3).

III. *Election*

We believe that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Mark 13:27; Eph. 1:4-11; II Thess. 2:13; II Tim. 2:10; I Peter 1:1-2; Rom. 8:28-33; John 15:16; Acts 13:48, 16:14). We believe that election is consistent with the responsibility of man. God knows who will be saved and the means of that salvation: hearing and believing in Christ (John 6:37, 44; Acts 13:44; I Thess. 1:4-6). In light of God's plan, it is man's responsibility to believe and accept the free gift of eternal life (Acts 16:31).

IV. *Justification*

We believe that justification is a judicial act of God whereby God declares the believing sinner righteous (Rom. 8:33). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work on man's part and is solely based on the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col. 2:14; I Peter 3:18), and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (Rom. 4:6; I Peter 3:18). By this means God is enabled to "Be just, and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:20-26, 4:3-8).

V. *Sanctification*

We believe that every believer is "set apart" (sanctified) unto God by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every believer is, therefore, declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This is sanctification due to the believer's standing in Christ given at salvation (Acts 20:32; I Cor. 1:2, 30, 6:11; II Thess. 2:13; I Peter 1:2).

We believe that every believer is progressively sanctified (set apart from sin unto God) as his state on earth becomes more like his standing in heaven. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is enabled to live a life of increasing holiness

in conformity to the will of God, becoming more like the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Rom. 6:1-22; II Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:26; I Thess. 4:3-4, 5:23). Eradication of sin is not possible in this life, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10; I John 3:4-9; Phil. 3:12). The struggle against sin remains with the believer throughout his earthly life (Rom. 7:14-25).

VI. *Security*

We believe that all the redeemed are kept by God's power forever (John 5:24, 6:37-50, 10:27, 30, 17:15, 20; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; Eph. 4:14, 4:30; Heb. 7:25, 13:5; I Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

We believe that believers have the privilege of rejoicing in the assistance of their salvation through the testimony of the Word, the Holy Spirit, and a changed life (Rom. 6:15-22, 8:16-17; I John 5:13ff, 3:9, 14). God's Word clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13, 25, 26; Titus 2:11-15).

VII. *Separation*

We believe that separation from sin is taught throughout the Bible and that the scriptures indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness will increase (II Tim. 3:1-5).

We believe that all the saved should be separated from all religious apostasy (II Cor. 6:14-7:1; I John 4:1-6; II John 7-11), and worldly sinful practices (Rom. 14:13; I John 2:15-17; I Cor. 5:9-13). Believers should be separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ (Lev. 19:2; John 15:1-5; Rom. 12:12; Gal. 5:16; I Thess. 2:10-13, Heb. 12:1-2).

ANGELOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING ANGELS

I. *Holy Angels*

We believe that angels are created beings and, therefore, are not to be worshipped, although they are a higher order of creation than man. They were created to serve and worship God (Luke 2:8-15; Heb. 1:6, 7, 15, 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11, 19:10, 22:9).

II. *Fallen Angels*

We believe that Satan is a created angel (Ezek. 28:14) and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator, involving numerous angels in his fall (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19), and introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1-13).

We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Mt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:11-12; I Peter 5:8-9) and the prince of this world who was defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20; Col. 2:15). He shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

We believe that demons exist but do not have the power to possess a believer. They have and do inhabit inanimate objects, animals, and unbelievers at certain times (I John 4:4; Eph. 1:13; Luke 11:14; Luke 9:37-42; Mt. 8:28-34).

ESCHATOLOGY

WHAT WE BELIEVE CONCERNING LAST THINGS

I. *Death*

We believe that physical death (Heb. 9:27) involves no loss of consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11; Mt. 10:28), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:6-9), that there is a separation of soul and body (II Cor. 5:8), and that this separation will continue until the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6; John 5:25-29) when soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (I Thess. 4:16-17; Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 15:35-44, 50-54). Until the resurrection, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:8).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:11-15; John 5:28-29)--the saved to eternal life (Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; II Cor. 4:14; John 5:29; I Thess. 4:13-18; Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:61) and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Rev. 20:6, 13-18).

We believe that the souls of the unsaved in death descend immediately into Hades (Luke 16:19-26) where they are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Rev. 20:5-6) when the soul and the resurrected body are reunited (John 5:28-29). Then they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14-15), cut off from the love of God forever (II Thess. 1:7-9).

II. *The Rapture of the Church*

We believe in the personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 4:16; Titus 2:11-13) to translate His Church from this earth (John 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:51-53; I Thess 4:15-5:11) and to reward them according to their works (Rom. 14:10-12; I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10). The judgment of the believers' works and the marriage supper of the Lamb occur in Heaven while the 70th week of Daniel's prophesy (the Tribulation) occurs on earth (Dan. 9:24-27; Mt. 24:15-31, 25:31-46).

III. *The Tribulation Period*

We believe that immediately following the rapture of the church, the righteous judgment of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Dan 9:27, 12:1; II Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 16:1-21). These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ from glory to earth (Mt. 24:15-31) at which time the Old Testament and Tribulation Saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Rev. 6:9-11; Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6).

IV. *The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign*

We believe that after the tribulation period Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Mt. 25:31, Luke 1:31-33) and establish His Messianic Kingdom for 1,000 years on earth (Rev. 20:1-7). During this time the resurrection saints will reign with Him over all the nations of the earth (Ezek. 37:21-28; Dan. 2:44-45). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the antichrist and the false prophet and by the removal of Satan from the world (Rev. 19:11-20:7).

We believe that the millennial reign will center in the restored (Deut. 30:1-10), believing (Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 11:24-29) Israel. Christ's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isa. 11:1-16, 65:17-29; Ezek. 36:33-38).

V. *The Judgment of the Lost*

At the end of the millennial reign, Satan will be released (Rev. 20:7) to deceive and organize the nations for the battle of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:9). Satan will be defeated and consigned to the Lake of Fire (ML 25:41; Rev. 20:10), and all unbelieving men will be resurrected and judged at the Great White Throne Judgment (John 5:22; Rev. 20:11-15) and sentenced to conscious, eternal punishment.

VI. *Eternity*

After the Great White Throne Judgment, the saved will enter the eternal state (Rev. 22:14). The elements of this earth will be destroyed (II Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth and a new heaven of righteousness (Rev. 21:21).