Heritage
Baptist Church

Our Confession

and Doctrinal Particulars

STUDY GUIDE

This document serves as a reference and reminder of the confessions and doctrinal particulars in the constitution of Heritage Baptist Church.

The Scripture references listed are provided as first steps toward a biblical understanding of each statement. We recognize that a more robust understanding will come only through careful study of each reference's context and connection to all of Scripture.

Therefore, we encourage people to use this guide alongside other biblical resources, including teachings, commentaries, and reference books so that they may better understand and rejoice in the truth of each confession and doctrinal particular.

Full constitution available at hbclynchburg.com/beliefs

Our Confession

Each article below states what we believe, followed by the Scripture references on which that belief rests.

OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

> *Proverbs 30:5-6; John 17:17; Romans 2:12; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 John 4:1*

OF THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Yahweh, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

> *Ex.15:11; Lev.11:44; Ps.83:18; Ps.147:5; Jer.10:10; Matt.10:37; Matt.28:19; Mark 12:30; John 4:24; John 5:17; John 10:30; John 14:23; John 15:26; John 17:5-10; Acts 5:3-4; Rom.1:20; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; 1 Cor.12:4-6; 2 Cor.13:14; Eph. 2:18; Phil. 2:5-6; Heb.3:4; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 1:4-5; Rev.4:6-8; Rev.4:11.*

OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

> *Gen.1:27, 31; Gen.2:16-17; Gen.3:6-24; Gen. 6:12; Ps.51:5; Ecc.7:29; Isa.53:6; Acts 17:26-29; Rom.1:18-20, 32; Rom.2:1-16; Rom.3:9-19; Rom. 5:12, 15-19; Rom.8:7; Gal.3:10, 22; Eph.2:1-3*

OF THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead He is now exalted in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

> *Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 20:28; John 1:1-14; John 3:16; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:21-26; Rom.4:25; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:3; Phil. 2:8-11; Heb. 1:3; Heb. 4:14; Heb. 7:25-26; Heb. 9:13-15; Heb. 12:24; 1 John 2:2-3; 1 John 4:10.*

OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

> *Isa. 53:11-12; Acts 10:43; Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24-26; Rom. 4:4-5, 23-25; Rom. 5:1-2, 9, 11, 16-17, 19, 21; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; I Tim. 4:8; Titus 3:5-7;*

OF THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

> *Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:20; Matt.23:37; Mark 1:15; John 3:15-21; John 5:40; Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:15-17; Rom.9:32-33; Rom. 16:25-26; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Peter 3:9; Rev. 22:17*

OF GRACE IN REGENERATION

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.

> *Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:26; Matt. 3:8-10; Matt.7:20; John 1:13; John 3:1-8; Rom. 2:28-29; Rom.5:5; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Eph. 4:20-24; James 1:16-18; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 1 John 4:7; 1 John 5:1, 4, 18; Rev. 21:27*

OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.

> *Mark 1:15, Acts 11:18, Acts 20:21, Eph. 2:8, 1 John 5:1, John 16:8-11, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 16:30-31, Luke 18:13, Luke 15:18-21, James 4:7-10, Ps.51, Rom. 10:9-11, Acts 3:17-23, Heb. 4:14, Ps. 2:6, Heb. 1:8, Heb. 7:25, 2 Tim. 1:12*

OF GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of mankind, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the

foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

> *2 Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Peter 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:16; 1 John 4:19; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Acts 15:14; Ex. 33:18-19; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom.11:28-29; James 1:17-18; 2 Tim.1:9; Rom. 11:32-36; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; Rom. 4:16; Col. 3:12; 1 Cor. 15:10; 1 Peter 5:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:10; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; 1 Thess 1:4-10; Rom. 11:29; 2 Peter 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11*

OF SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, – especially, the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

> *1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:12-16; 1 John 2:29; Rom. 8:5; Eph. 1:4; Pro. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; 2 Peter 1:5-8; John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11; Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Cor. 13:5; Luke 11:35; Luke 9:23; Matt. 26:41; Eph.6:18; Eph.4:30*

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

> *John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 1 John 3:9; 1 John 5:18; 1 John 2:19; Matt. 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9; Rom. 8:28; Jer. 32:40; Ps.121:3; Ps. 91:11-12; Jude 24-25; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:4*

OF THE HARMONY OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a

Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

> *Rom. 3:31; Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom. 3:20; Rom. 4:15; Rom. 7:12; Rom.7:7,14-22; Gal.3:21; Ps. 119; Rom.8:7-8; Rom. 8:2-4; Rom. 10:4; Heb. 8:10*

OF A GOSPEL CHURCH

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; and that its only scriptural officers are elders as pertains to governance and deacons as pertains to service.

> *1 Cor. 1:1-3; Acts 5:11; Acts 8:1; Acts 11:21-23; 1 Cor. 4:17; 3 John 9; 1 Tim. 3:5; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 2:47; 2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; 1 Cor.11:23-24; Matt. 18:15-20; 2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Cor. 4:17; Matt. 28:20; John 14:15; John 15:12; John 14:21; 2 John 6; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:22; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; 1 Corinthians 14:23; 2 Corinthians 8:5; 1 Corinthians 5:12–13; 1 Corinthians 11:2; 1 Corinthians 5:6*

OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. We believe that by the Lord's Supper believers, through the sacred use of bread and wine, commemorate together the sacrificial love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe these are the ordinances of the gathered church and are required for the obedient Christian life.

> *Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12; Acts 16:32-34; Acts 18:8; Acts 10:47-48; Gal.3:26-28; Rom.6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 3:20-21; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor.11:28; 1 Cor. 5:1-8; 1 Cor. 11:17-32.*

OF THE CHRISTIAN DAY OF WORSHIP

We believe that the first day of the week is the normative designation for the Lord's Day for corporate worship; and is to be kept sacred by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remains for the people of God.

> *Acts 20:7; Gen. 2:3; Col. 2:16-17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Ex. 20:8; Rev. 1:10;Isa. 58:13-14; Isa. 56:2-8; Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 13:44; Lev. 19:30; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2-3; Heb. 4:3-11; Psalm 118:15; Acts 11:26;Psalm 87:3*

OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

> *Rom. 13:1-7; Deut. 16:18; 2 Sam. 23:3; Jer. 30:21; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Acts 5:29; Dan. 3:15-18; Dan. 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20; Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Ps.72:11; Ps.2; Rom. 14:9-13*

OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

> *Mal. 3:18; Pro. 12:20-33; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Jer. 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 6:16; Rom. 1:17; Rom. 7:6; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:7; Rom. 6:18,22; 1 Cor. 11:32; Pro. 11:31; 1 Peter 4:17-18; 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Ps. 10:4; Isa. 55:6-7; Pro. 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Pro. 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; Luke 9:23-26; Ecc. 3:17; Matt. 7:13- 14*

OF THE WORLD TO COME

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell.

> *1 Peter 4:7; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; 1 John 2:17; Matt. 28:20; Matt. 13:39-40; 2 Peter 3:1-13; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12-58; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; John 6:40; John 11:25-26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:49; Matt. 13:37-43; Matt. 24:30- 31; Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Peter 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; John 4:36; 2 Cor. 4:18; Rom. 3:5-6; 2 Thess. 1:6-12: Heb. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev.20:11-12; 1 John 2:28; 1 John 4:17; 2 Peter 3:11-12*

Doctrinal Particulars

We recognize that at different junctures in history, particular doctrines of the Christian faith require added clarification in light of the systematic attacks on the substance, character, and application of Christian belief. These beliefs are so particular to the substance and the application of our faith, that we formally recognize them as being an inseparable entailment of our creed and confession. We hereby specify and clarify key doctrinal positions to safeguard a particular understanding of our creed and confession.

CONCERNING SCRIPTURE

We believe that God has revealed Himself to mankind both generally in creation and specially in the Holy Scriptures. All of God's created order is God's general revelation,[1] by which He communicates His existence and work as Creator.[2] Scripture is the product of God's special revelation, by which He communicates to mankind the truth about Himself that would have otherwise been eternally unknown – His nature, His character, His purpose for mankind, and His plan of redemption.[3] The Scriptures are the product of the verbal,[4] plenary inspiration of God, resulting in the original autographs being inerrant, infallible, and authoritative. The Scriptures in their entirety, down to the very words of the original autographs, were given by divine inspiration. Inspiration was that work whereby God gave us His Word by His Spirit, through human writers utilizing their distinct personalities and literary styles. The inspiration of Scripture is attested to by Scripture itself,[5] by Jesus Christ,[6] and by the character of God.[7] Since the character of God is absolutely true, trustworthy, and infallible, the Word of God is also absolutely true, trustworthy, and infallible. Those sixty-six books (thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament) have their place in the Bible on the basis of their inspiration and authority. God also works in the illumination [8] (making it understandable) and preservation (maintaining a trustworthy copy) of His Word. The Scriptures stand as our final standard and authority for human conduct, creed, and opinions.[9]

[1] Psalm 19:1-7; [2] Romans 1:18-20; [3] Romans 3:11, Ephesians 1:9, Psalm 19:1-7, Romans 1:19-23; [4] 2 Peter 1:21; [5] 2 Timothy 3:16; [6] Luke 24:44-45; [7] Hebrews 6:18; [8] John 14:26, 16:12-15, Ephesians 1:17-18, 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; [9] 2 Peter 1:3-7

CONCERNING THE TRINITY

We believe that God fundamentally exists as the divine Trinity. His divine essence is invisible[1] and immaterial as He is Spirit[2]; His divine nature is undivided and indivisible. He exists in three eternal and co-equal Persons[3] in the one divine essence, known respectively as the Father,[4] Son,[5] and Holy Spirit.[6] He is self-existent, self-sufficient, life,[7] eternal,[8] infinite, omnipresent,[9] omnipotent,[10] omniscient,[11] wise, immutable,[12] sovereign,[13] incomprehensible,[14] holy,[15] righteous,[16] just,[17] true,[18] faithful,[19] good,[20] long-suffering,[21] gracious,[22] merciful,[23] and loving.[24]

[1] Deuteronomy 6:4, Colossians 1:15, 1 Timothy 1:17, Hebrews 11:27; [2] Deuteronomy 4:15, John 4:24; [3] Exodus 3:14; [4] Romans 1:7, John 6:27; [5] John 8:58, John 10:31-38, 1 John 5:20; [6] Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 3:16; [7] Genesis 2:7, Psalm 84:2; [8] Isaiah 57:15; 9 Psalm 139:7-12; [10] Matthew 19:26; [11] Psalm 147:5; [12] Malachi 3:6; [13] Psalm 33:8-11, 2 Chronicles 20:6, Romans 11:33-36; [14] Isaiah 55:9; Job 33:12; [15] Isaiah 6:1-5; [16] Psalm 145:17; [17] Isaiah 61:8; [18] Jeremiah 10:10-11; John 17:3; [19] Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 119:90; [20] Psalm 145:9; [21] Exodus 34:6; [22] 1 Peter 5:10, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 2:10-12; [23] 2 Corinthians 1:3; Psalm 103:13-14; [24] Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:16; Romans 8:38-39

CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father and the second Person of the Trinity. He is the eternal, pre-existent Son of God.[1] He is truly God[2] and truly man[3]; equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in a perfect coexistent deity and humanity. Although pre-existent, Jesus took upon Himself full humanity while keeping His full deity[4], and became incarnate[5] by miraculous conception[6] and virgin birth.[7] He lived a sinless human life,[8] offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice by dying on the cross,[9] and shed His blood, for the purpose of redeeming sinful men.[10] He satisfied the wrath of God,[11] being the full substitution and the sufficient atonement for the sins of men.[12] He was buried and on the third day, He arose bodily[13] from the dead. He later ascended bodily into Heaven[14] where at the right hand of the Father, He now intercedes for those who believe in Him.[15]

[1] John 8:58, John 1:1-3; [2] John 5:22-23, John 8:58, Philippians 2:6-7; [3] Hebrews 2:14-18, Matthew 4:2, Matthew 8:24, Matthew 26:29; [4] John 5:22-23, John 8:58; [5] John 1:14; [6] Matthew 1:20; [7] Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah 7:14; [8] Hebrews 4:15; [9] 1 Corinthians 15:3; [10] Genesis 3:15, John 3:16-17; John 1:1-3; [11] 1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Timothy 4:10, Titus 2:11, Hebrews 2:9, 1 John 2:2; [12] John 17:9, 20, 24; Ephesians 1:4-7, 2 Timothy 1:9-10; [13] 1 Corinthians 15:4, Matthew 28:5-6; [14] Acts 1:9-11; [15] Psalm 110:1, Hebrews 1:13, Hebrews 10:12-13, Isaiah 53:10-12, Romans 5:9-10

CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity,[1] equal with God the Father and God the Son, having the same divine nature and partaking of the same divine essence.[2] The Holy Spirit actively ministered in the Old Testament[3] through creation, revelation, and in a special, selective manner with mankind. The Holy Spirit actively ministered in the New Testament[4] in all aspects of Christ's life, from His birth to His death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit now has a primary role in salvation as He calls,[5] convicts,[6] and regenerates[7] the unbeliever. He indwells,[8] baptizes,[9] convicts,[10] gifts,[11] controls,[12] teaches,[13] guides,[14] assures, and prays[15] for believers.

[1] Acts 13:2, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, Romans 15:30, John 14:26, Romans 8:26; [2] Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 12:11, Acts 13:4, John 3:3-8; [3] Genesis 1:2, Psalm 33:6, Micah 3:8, Genesis 6:3, Judges 13:25, Psalm 51:11; [4] Luke 1:35, Luke 3:21-22, Luke 4:16-21, Hebrews 9:14, Romans 8:11; [5] Acts 13:2; [6] John 16:8-11; [7] Titus 3:5; [8] John 14:16-17, Romans 8:9; [9] 1 Corinthians 12:13; [10] 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; [11] 1 Corinthians 12:4; [12] Romans 8:6-9; [13] 1 John 2:27; [14] Romans 8:14; [15] Romans 8:26-27

CONCERNING THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The church is the bride of Christ purchased with the blood of Christ. We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ needs to be understood in two senses, namely universal and local. In the universal sense,[1] the church consists of all those during this age who have been born of God's Spirit and have therefore been baptized into the body of Christ. In the local sense,[2] a church is a redeemed, living assembly of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith, organized by New Testament principles, assembling regularly together, led by qualified elders[3] who are supported by qualified deacons,[4] under the authority of God's Word and the Headship of Christ,[5] and observing the ordinances. The ordinances are those commands of Christ given to the Church, specifically baptism[6] and the Lord's Supper.[7] They are an act of obedience, not the conveyance of salvific grace.

[1] Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Corinthians 12:13; [2] Acts 2:41-47, Acts 6:1-7, Acts 11:19-26, Acts 13:1-3; [3] 1 Timothy 3:2, Acts 11:30, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28, Titus 1:5-7; [4] 1 Timothy 3:8-13; [5] Ephesians 1:22-23; [6] Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:38, 41, Acts 8:38-39, Mark 1:5-10; [7] Luke 22:17-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-31; [8] Acts 2:41-47

> *[8] Acts 2:41–47 - [41] So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. [42] And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of*

> *bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (ESV)*

CONCERNING SIN

We believe that sin was not a part of creation but entered creation early in the Genesis account. Sin is a failure[1] to conform to the divine standard[2] of (and/or the transgression of) God's law.[3] Sin entered the created order when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God in the garden.[4] All mankind has inherited original sin and guilt from Adam[5] and all are totally depraved.[6] The basis of ultimate and complete victory over sin is found in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[7] Those who believe in Christ are justified from their sin, but sin is not dead in them until it is removed at their glorification.[8]

> *[1] Romans 5:20-21, Romans 6:1-2, 6-7, Romans 7:17-18; [2] Deuteronomy 19:15, John 1:29; [3] 1 John 3:4, Romans 2:17-29, Matthew 7:23, 1 Timothy 2:14; [4] Genesis 3:1-7; [5] Romans 3:9-18, Romans 8:2, Romans 5:16; [6] Romans 3:10-12, Ephesians 2:1-3, Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3; [7] Romans 5:1, 9; [8] 1 Corinthians 15:50-53*

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF SALVATION

We believe that because of sin,[1] its results,[2] and the character of God,[3] all of mankind needs salvation. This salvation was sufficiently[4] provided for through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ but efficiently[5] applied to those who believe. Salvation is wholly the work of God's grace,[6] God's mercy,[7] and is completely apart from works.[8] All three members of the Trinity are involved in salvation. The Father planned it,[9] the Son purchased it,[10] and the Spirit preserves it.[11] The redeemed have been converted and justified as God has made and declared them to be righteous,[12] growing daily to be more like Christ.[13] A saved person will be glorified in the New Creation.[14] The sinless Christ is the sinner's substitute, whereby reconciliation is made with God on his behalf,[15] redemption is made from the slavery of sin,[16] regeneration makes him alive,[17] and he is adopted

as a child into God's family with all its rights, privileges, and responsibilities.[18] All this is possible through the atoning death of Christ. The benefits of His atoning death are for all who by faith assent to the facts of the gospel,[19] exercise repentance toward God,[20] and place their trust in Christ and His atoning work.[21] This salvation is evidenced by one's relationship with God and His people,[22] one's obedience to God through His Word,[23] one's love for God's people,[24] one's confession of Jesus,[25] one's being made new,[26] and one's works of righteousness.[27] Salvation is secure as it is based in the very character, promises, power, and deeds of God so that the true believer will persevere until his glorification.[28]

[1] Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:10-12; [2] Romans 5:12, Isaiah 59:2; [3] Hebrews 12:14, Romans 5:19, John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21; [4] 1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Timothy 4:10, Titus 2:11-14, Hebrews 2:9, 1 John 2:2; [5] John 17:9, 20, 24, Ephesians 1:4, 7, 2 Timothy 1:9-10; [6] Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 2:11-15; [7] Romans 6:23, Titus 3:5; [8] Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5; [9] Ephesians 1:3-6; [10] Ephesians 1:7-12; [11] Ephesians 1:13-14; [12] Romans 3:24, Romans 5:1; [13] Ephesians 2:10-13; [14] Romans 8:30; [15] Colossians 1:20-21; [16] Romans 3:24, Ephesians 1:7; [17] Titus 3:5, John 3:3-7; [18] Ephesians 1:5, Galatians 4:5, Romans 8:14-17 [19] Acts 16:14, 32, Romans 10:9-10; [20] Acts 17:30, Acts 20:21, Acts 26:20; [21] John 1:12, Galatians 2:16; [22] 1 John 1:3; [23] 1 John 2:3; [24] 1 John 3:14; [25] 1 John 4:15; [26] 2 Corinthians 5:17; [27] 1 John 2:29; [28] John 10:28-29, Ephesians 4:30, John 3:16, John 5:24, Romans 8:33-39

CONCERNING MANKIND

We believe in a creator God of a created cosmos. We believe that mankind came into being through the creative act of God. Mankind is the crowning work of God's creation, in that he was created in God's image[1] and was given dominion as coregents over all creation. The nature of mankind is material[2] and immaterial.[3] He fell from his original state of perfection[4] through willful disobedience.[5] As a result, his nature was corrupted,[6] death was introduced to the world,[7] and the sinful nature was passed down through him to all proceeding generations.[8] As a result of original sin, mankind is spiritually dead in their sin and in need of salvation.[10]

[1] Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 9:6; [2] Genesis 2:7; 3:19; [3] Genesis 2:7, Psalm 3:2, Genesis 41:8, 2 Timothy 4:22, Hebrews 4:12; [4] Genesis 2:16-17; [5] Genesis 3:6; [6] Romans 8:1-14; [7] Genesis 5:5, Genesis 3:23-24; [8] Romans 5:12; [9] Genesis 2:15-23; [10] Ephesians 2:1-10

CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe God created male and female and that marriage was ordained by God at creation as the sacred union between one naturally born as a

male/man and one naturally born as a female/woman. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that sacred union. Christian marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His church. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a biological man and a biological woman who are married to each other (a natural sexual identity is one that is biologically male or female). We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be indulged outside of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, pedophilia, bestiality, incest, pornography, polygamy, or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.[1]

> *[1] Genesis 1:26-28; 2:24; Psalm 127 & 128; 139:13-16; Matthew 19:1-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrew 13:4*

CONCERNING THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

We believe that marriage between a man and a woman was established by God in the beginning[1] in order to ultimately image Christ and the church[2]. Therefore, we believe that marriage is a holy covenant that should be cherished and protected in order that the image of Christ and the church may be displayed clearly and without blemish.[3] We believe this image is rightly displayed when a husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church and the wife responds to her husband's loving leadership in the same way the church responds to Christ.[4] Due to this holy image of marriage, we believe that God is grieved by the sin that results in divorce, as well as the dissolution of the marital covenant, permitting divorce only in specific circumstances. Likewise, remarriage after a divorce should be done in accordance with the Scriptures and in transparency with the elders.[5]

> *[1] Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:23-24; [2] Ephesians 5:21-32; [3] Matthew 19:4-6; [4] Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:7; Hebrews 13:4; Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; [5] 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Matthews 19:7-12; Matthew 5:31-32*

CONCERNING CREATION

We believe that God, in His goodness, created the heavens and the earth out of nothing, including all life, by direct act, according to the Genesis account and it was good, untainted by sin. We believe Scripture is the final

authority in our understanding of creation, and we reject any system of thought that displaces God as the creator and final authority over the cosmos. The entirety of the universe is the product of the creative, intentional design of the God of the Bible. Humankind is created in the image and likeness of God, descendants of a literal Adam and Eve. God's creatorship means that he owns the earth and all its inhabitants. As stewards of both our lives and the earth, we value life and are accountable to him for the way we invest our lives and treat his creation.

Genesis 1:1–2:3; John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17

CONCERNING ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Men and women are equal in essence, dignity, and value, but are distinct by divine design. As part of God's good, created order, men and women are to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and church. While the gift of leadership can reside in both men and women and can be exercised within various capacities of the local church, the office of elder is reserved for qualified men.

Genesis 2:18-24; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5-9

CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL REALM

We believe in the existence of the spiritual realm which consists of created personal beings referred to as angels.[1] Angels were created by God[2] to serve as special agents of His worship,[3] as His special messengers of warning and hope,[4] and as warriors fighting on behalf of God and His chosen people.[5] Angels are unredeemable beings who ponder the wonder of God's choice to redeem the elect through the giving of His Son.[6] We also believe that some angels rebelled alongside Satan against God's rule and were expelled from participation in the glory of God's presence.[7] These beings are referred to in Scripture as demons.[8] The demonic world with Satan at its head is organized to execute warfare against the design and purpose of God and is opposed to the followers of Jesus Christ.[9] The extent of the influence of this demonic realm is limited in its scope and ability in that it finds itself in subjection to the power and authority of God Himself.[10] While demon possession is a reality for those outside of Christ,

the believer cannot be possessed but can experience the spiritual oppression of the demonic realm.[11] The believer does not need to fear because their identity and security has been purchased by the blood of Christ.[12] The diminishing of demonic influence in the life of believers is done through the normative means of grace (preaching of the Word, fellowship of the saints, participation in the ordinances, Scripture reading, prayer, and a life of holiness).[13]

[1] Matthew 28:1-3; [2] Nehemiah 9:6; [3] Isaiah 6:1-3, Luke 2:13-14, Psalm 148:2, Revelation 5:11-14; [4] Genesis 22:11-18, Genesis 19:1-13, Genesis 21:17, Exodus 3:1-4:17, Exodus 33:2, 1 Chronicles 21:18-19, Matthew 1:20, 2:13-20, Luke 1:11-17, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:8-14, Luke 24:23; [5] Psalm 103:20, 2 Peter 2:10-11, 2 Samuel 24:15-16, 2 Kings 19:35, Psalm 35:5-6, Psalm 78:49, Matthew 13:39-41, Matthew 13:49, 16:27, 24:31, 25:31-46, Mark 8:38, Luke 12:8; [6] Matthew 25:31, Revelation 20:15, Revelation 12:4, 9, Matthew 8:29, Jude 6, 1 Peter 1:12; [7] Note: Somewhere between Genesis chapters 2 and 3; [8] Added verses; [9] Ephesians 6:11-20, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, Job 1-2, Acts 26:18, 2 Timothy 2:26, 1 John 5:19; [10] Job 1-2, Matthew 4:1-11; [11] 1 John 4:4; [12] Colossians 1:16-17, Luke 10:17-19, Ephesians 6:10-18; [13] James 4:7, Ephesians 6:10-20, 1 John 4:18, John 15:4-11

CONCERNING END TIMES

We believe that the victory of Christ is assured.[1] The return of Jesus will be physical and visible, and is imminent.[2] He is returning for His Church[3] and to earth to establish His Kingdom.[4] We believe in the resurrection of the body,[5] the final judgment,[6] the eternal blessed state of the righteous in heaven,[7] and the endless suffering of the unregenerate in Hell.[8] In Christ's victory, sin is extinguished,[9] death is defeated,[10] and Satan is banished for eternity in the Lake of Fire.[11] His victory culminates in a New Creation, a New Eden, a New Jerusalem, and the enjoyment of His presence forever.[12]

[1] Zechariah 14, Revelation 19; [2] 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Hebrews 9:28, James 5:8, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 22:20; [3] 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, John 14:3, Acts 1:11; [4] Revelation 21-22; [5] 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; [6] Revelation 20:11-15; [7] Matthew 5:12, John 14:1-3, Philippians 10:20; Hebrews 12:23; [8] 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, Revelation 20:11-15; [9] Romans 5:12-19, 1 Peter 2:24; [10] John 3:16, John 11:25, Isaiah 25:8, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, 2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 2:14, Revelation 12:11, 21:4; [11] Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10; [12] Revelation 21-22