

# MARANATHA COMMUNITY CHURCH

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- The Holy Scriptures
- The Doctrine of God
  - God The Father
  - God The Son
  - God the Holy Spirit
- God's Decree and Providence of God
- The Act of Creation and Mankind
- The Fall of Mankind and Sin
- The Covenant of God
- The Doctrine of the Gospel and Good News
  - Free Will
  - Effectual Calling
  - Justification
  - Adoption
  - Perseverance of The Saints
  - Sanctification
  - Repentance and Saving Faith
  - Assurance of Salvation
  - Gospel and the Extent of Its Grace
- The Law of God
- The Liberty of Christians
- The Worship of God
- Civil Government
- The Family and Marriage
- The Church
- The Sacraments
  - Baptism
  - The Lord's Supper
- Evangelism and Missions
- Stewardship
- The Judgment and State After Death

\*\*Maranatha Community Church Statement of Faith is derived, informed, and guided by the 2nd London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. We also affirm the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, and all of the Historically Orthodox Creeds of the Christian Church (Apostle's Creed, Nicene, Chalcedon, etc.)

# THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, clear, inerrant, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. To preserve the truth and to establish the church with greater certainty, the Lord put the revelation of himself and his will completely in writing. The whole counsel of God, concerning everything essential for his own glory and man's salvation, faith, and life, is either explicitly stated or by necessary inference contained in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is ever to be added to the Scriptures, either by "new revelation" of the Spirit or by human traditions. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God's former ways of revealing his will to his people have now ceased. The infallible rule for interpreting Scripture is Scripture itself. Therefore, when there is a question about the true and full meaning of any part of Scripture (and each passage has only one meaning, not many), it must be understood in light of other passages that speak more clearly.

The Holy Scriptures, or the Word of God written, consist of all the books of the Old and New Testaments. These are:

## THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

All of these human writings were given by God through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They have everything needed for understanding and carrying out faithful teaching, reproof, correction, training, and salvation. All of this is for God's glory and our good.

2 Timothy 3:15–17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29,31; Ephesians 2:20; Romans 1:19-21, 2:14–15; Psalm 19:1-3; Hebrews 1:1; Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19–20

# THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

The Lord our God is one. He is the only living and true God. He is self-existent. He is infinite in being and perfection. His essence cannot be understood fully by anyone but himself. He is invisible and has no body, parts, or changeable emotion. He alone has immortality, dwelling in light that no one can approach. He is unchangeable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, in every way infinite, absolutely holy, perfectly wise, wholly free, and completely absolute.

He is most loving, gracious, merciful, and patient. He overflows with goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. He rewards those who seek him. At the same time, he is perfectly just and terrifying in his judgments. He hates all sin and will certainly not clear the guilty.

He alone is all-sufficient in himself. He has absolute sovereign rule over all creatures and things, to act through them, for them, or upon them as he pleases.

This divine and infinite Being consists of three real persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three have the same substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence without this essence being divided. The Father is not derived from anyone, neither begotten nor proceeding. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. All three are infinite and without beginning and are therefore only one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being. Yet these three are distinguished by several distinctive characteristics and personal relations. This truth of the Trinity is the foundation of all of our fellowship with God and of our comforting dependence on him.

1 Corinthians 8:4,6; Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; Exodus 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15–16; Malachi 3:6; 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23; Psalm 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36; Exodus 34:6–7; Hebrews 11:6; Nehemiah 9:32–33; Psalm 5:5–6; Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2–3; 1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Cor. 8:6; John 1:14,18; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6

## GOD THE FATHER

God the Father reigns with providential care over his entire universe, his creatures, and the flow of history according to his purposes of grace. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, and all-wise. God is the Father in truth, particularly to those whom he has chosen to be his children through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in his attitude toward all men as Creator.

John 1:12; Galatians 4:6; Nehemiah 9:32–33; 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15–16; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 115:3

## GOD THE SON

The Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, is truly and eternally God. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, the same in substance and equal with the Father. The world was made through him, and he sustains and governs everything that he made. When the fullness of time came, he took upon himself human nature, with all the essential properties and common weaknesses of human nature—but he remained without sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary who was a virgin. In order to fulfill the Scriptures the Son was born of a woman through the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham and David. In this way, the Son is both truly God and truly man. Which allows him to be the Christ, the only mediator between God and humanity.

The Son was born under the law and perfectly fulfilled it. He also experienced the punishment that we deserve and that we should have endured and suffered. The Lord Jesus has fully satisfied the justice of God, obtained reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those who have been given to him by the Father. This price of redemption was not actually paid by Christ until after his incarnation. Yet the effectiveness and benefit of this work were imparted to everyone who was chosen by God to be his people since the beginning of the world.

Galatians 4:4-7; Hebrews 1:1-2, 2:14-17, 4:15, 10:14; John 14:11; Philippians 2:5-11; John 5:26; John 1:14; Romans 8:3, 30; Matthew 1:22-23, 28:18; Luke 1:27-35; 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 9:5; Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19-20; Acts 3:22; Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-57.

## **GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, and he is fully divine. He is the one who inspired the men of God to write the Holy Scriptures. Through his illumination: he exalts Christ, he convicts people of sin and he guides them toward righteousness. The Spirit calls people to the Son—who is our Savior—and he brings their regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, he baptizes every new believer into the Body of Christ. He then cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows spiritual gifts, which allow God's people to serve faithfully as his church. The Spirit is also the one who seals the salvation of every true believer for the final day of redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring that believer into the fullness of redemption in Christ. He teaches and empowers the people of God's church in the ways of worship, evangelism, and service.

Matthew 28:18-19; John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Colossians 1:27.

## **THE DECREE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD**

From eternity past God has decreed everything that will occur according to his perfect, wise, and holy counsel, such that nothing would ever happen that would be outside of his own will which is free and unchangeable. Yet God did this in such a way that he is neither the author of sin nor does he have fellowship with anyone in their sin. This decree does not violate the will of the creature, nor does it take away the reality of secondary causes or man's will. Rather, God's wisdom is seen in directing all things, and his power and faithfulness are demonstrated in the accomplishment of his decree. God knows everything that would happen under any given condition. However, his will is not based on passive foresight of the future but rather is based on his decree. This must be the case, because God's will alone must not be conditioned by anything outside of himself.

Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15-23; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11; Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5; Acts 15:18; Matthew 25:34.

## **THE ACT OF CREATION AND MANKIND**

In the beginning God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were pleased to create or make the world and all things in it, both visible and invisible, in a six-day period, and together everything was considered to be “very good.” God did this to manifest the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness.

In this time of creation, after God had made all the other creatures, he then created humanity. God decided to make them male and female, with rational and immortal souls. As well, all humanity was made in the image of God, therefore being endowed with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.

Genesis 1:26-27, 1:31, 2:7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; John 1:2-3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13; Colossians 1:16; Romans 1:20.

## **THE FALL OF MANKIND AND SIN**

God created humanity upright and perfect. He gave them a righteous law that would have led to a righteous life if they had kept it, but it also threatened eternal death if they broke it. Adam and Eve, being the first people of humanity, failed to obey God’s law. Eve was deceived into breaking this law and Adam deliberately transgressed against it.

By this sin, our first parents fell from their original righteous position which allowed them communion with God. We are considered fallen with them as we have received both their physical and spiritual nature. Therefore, through this inheritance death came upon all of humanity. All humanity is born dead in sin and affected by sin in all of the soul and body. From that moment forward, all of humanity was unable to make ourselves right with God because we can not restore our own holiness.

Genesis 3:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Romans 3:23, 5:15-21; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10–19.

## **THE COVENANT OF GOD**

Although all rational creatures are responsible for obeying God as their Creator, the distance between God and these creatures is so great that they could never have attained the reward of life except by God’s voluntary condescension. He did this by establishing covenants with his creatures.

Although humanity brought the curse of death upon itself by failing to follow God’s law, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace. In this covenant, God freely offers sinners life and salvation through Jesus Christ. This is offered to us on the basis of trust and faith in Jesus alone. And, he promises to give his Holy Spirit to all of those who are given eternal life by making them willing and able to believe in Jesus the Son. This is the covenant that is revealed in the gospel.

Luke 17:10; Job 35:7-8; Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20-21; Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16; Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 6:44-45; Psalms 110:3.

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL & THE GOOD NEWS

## FREE WILL

God created human will with the liberty and power to act on choices that would not be either forced or inherently bound to do good or evil. But, humanity lost the moral power to act righteously when we fell into sin. We are now totally unable to choose anything that is spiritually good in regard to salvation. This is because we are now naturally disposed against what is good; we are considered to be born spiritually dead in our sinful nature. This state leaves us totally dependent on God's grace.

Genesis 3:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Romans 3:23, 5:15-21; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 2:16-17.

## EFFECTUAL CALLING

God, in his free grace, converts us from the state of being spiritually dead and frees us from our enslavement to sin. He does this according to his own will as he effectively calls us out of death and into new life in him. And, by being given this new nature, we are made to be born again to a living hope. This is what the scriptures call being "born again."

1 Peter 1:3; John 3:3-16; John 6:44; Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-9; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Deuteronomy 30:6; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Corinthians 2:14.

## JUSTIFICATION

Those that God calls he also totally justifies and reconciles to himself. In order for this to occur he had to remove all the necessary condemnation that hangs over our heads. This was accomplished on the cross. He now counts all who have faith to be justified totally and forever for the sake of Christ and by the work that Christ has completed in his life, death, and resurrection. This gift of faith and reliance in Christ Jesus is not self-generated by us, it is only and always a gift of God.

Romans 3:24-28; 4:5-8, 5:17-19, 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Philippians 3:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Romans 5:17; Galatians 5:6; Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Isaiah 53:5-6.

## ADOPTION

God has granted that all those who are justified would receive the grace of adoption, in and for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ. Because of this, everyone who has been given faith in Jesus is counted among the children of God and enjoys the freedom and privileges of this relationship. Together they inherit his name and receive his Spirit. And through this gracious gift of adoption, all now have access to the throne of grace which they may approach with confidence and assurance. All of God's children are given compassion, and protection, and are provided for, and disciplined by, God who is

their heavenly father. By this adoption, we know that those with true faith will never be cast off but are sealed for the day of redemption and have inherited the promise of every spiritual blessing as heirs of everlasting salvation.

Romans 8; Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4-5; John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18; Psalms 103:13; Proverbs 14:26; 1 Peter 5:7; Isaiah 54:8, 9; Lamentations 3:31; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 1:14; 6:12, 12:6.

## PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Those whom God has accepted in Christ, those whom he has effectively called and regenerated – will never be lost. Their salvation is secure because it is assured by the promises of God. Therefore, this certainty does not depend on our own will and faithfulness, but on the faithfulness and determination of God according to his own covenant of salvation. By his Spirit, we will graciously protect and preserve the faith of the believer, such that they always stand righteous before him as God's child by faith.

Romans 8:29-30; John 10:28-29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Psalms 89:31-32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6; Romans 9:11, 16; Hebrews 6:17-18; Jeremiah 32:40.

## SANCTIFICATION

Those who are united to Christ in justification and adoption have a new heart and a new spirit given to them through the power of the Holy Spirit in accordance with Christ's death and resurrection. In this, the dominion of sin has been destroyed, and they are freed to do good and obey God by the power of the Spirit and the grace of God. This new life will be recognized over the course of our life, as we are made more and more into the likeness of Christ through the process of sanctification (i.e. growing more in obedience to God and our love for him). This gift of sanctification reveals itself in the life that we live, necessarily, through the fruit of good works.

Romans 6:5-6, 14; Romans 8:29-30; John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

## REPENTANCE AND SAVING FAITH

The gift of faith is solely given by the work of the Spirit of Christ. This saving grace causes us to turn from sin and to repent as we pursue Christ instead of sin. This new course of life is one of consistent repentance that will continue on until the end of this life. No believer is saved by faith in faith, rather it is the object of that faith which saves. Therefore, it is God who has made it possible, through Christ, to preserve the faith of a believer for their ultimate salvation. This by no means makes little of the wrath due for sin, as all sin is deserving of damnation. And yet, there is no sin so great that it will bring damnation on those who repent in faith and trust in Jesus who is the Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:14, 17; Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32; Hebrews 10:14; Romans 8:1.

## ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus—those who love him sincerely and endeavor to walk in a right and good conscience before him—can be certain and assured, even in this life, that they are eternally secured by grace. They have been placed in the hands of Christ by the Father for his provision and protection. All who trust in this gospel may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and this hope will never cause them to be ashamed or let down.

1 John 2:3; 3:14-24; 5:13; Romans 5:2, 5; Hebrews 6:19; Psalms 42:5; John 6:39.

## GOSPEL AND THE EXTENT OF ITS GRACE

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only sure news by which we can be saved from sin. This Gospel has always been the only means of salvation for humanity due to the fall of mankind.

Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8; Hebrews 10:1-8; John 14:6; Galatians 3:11; Romans 4.

## THE LAW OF GOD

The law that was first written in the human heart at creation continued to be an intelligible rule of righteousness even after the fall—though impacted by our sinful nature. It was delivered by God on Mount Sinai in the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments contain our duty to God and the other six our duty to humanity.

In addition to these moral laws, God was pleased to give the people of Israel ceremonial laws. In some ways these ceremonial laws were considered worship, as they prefigured the Messiah to come—how he would act, what he would suffer, and what benefit he would provide. Therefore, since the ceremonial laws were given to God's people for that specific purpose, they were only expected to remain until the new covenant arrived. They can now be put away because those shadows are fulfilled in Jesus who is the Christ whom those ceremonies point to.

Israel was also given various judicial laws. These were given to govern the nation of Israel. They were also designed to be fulfilled by the New Covenant. Therefore, these judicial laws no longer obligate anyone as they were a part of that specific civil institution. Only their general principles of justice continue to have moral value for us today.

What this means is that true believers in Christ are not under the law as a covenant of works, in which a person would be justified or condemned by completing it. However, the law is useful to everyone as a rule of life because it informs us of the will of God and what goodness and righteousness look like. The law also exposes our sin, and teaches us to lean more on Christ. It also functions to restrain our sin through the right knowledge and the threat of just punishment.

These uses of the law are not in conflict with grace but are in harmony with it, for the Spirit of Christ enables the human will to do freely and cheerfully what the will of God as revealed in the law requires.



Romans 2:14, 15. Deuteronomy 10:4. Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17. 1 Corinthians 5:7. Colossians 2:14, 16, 17; Ephesians 2:14, 16. 1 Corinthians 9:8–10. Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16; Romans 8:1; 10:4. Romans 3:20; 7:7, etc; Romans 6:12–14; 1 Peter 3:8–13. Galatians 3:21. Ezekiel 36:27; Deuteronomy 4:4-9.

## THE LIBERTY OF CHRISTIANS

Christ brings his people freedom. This freedom means freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, and the severity and curse of the law. It also includes deliverance from bondage to Satan, the dominion of sin, and the fear and sting of death. In addition, it includes free access to God and right obedience to him, coming not from devastating fear but from a childlike love and willing mind. This liberty is not a freedom to sin because grace abounds. Rather, it is the gift of freedom to obey God and pursue life.

Galatians 3:13; Galatians 1:4; Acts 26:18; Romans 8:3; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 15:54–57; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:15; Luke 1:73–75; 1 John 4:18; Galatians 3:9, 14; John 7:38, 39; Hebrews 10:19–21; James 4:12; Romans 14:4; Acts 4:19, 29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9; Colossians 2:20, 22, 23; 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24; Romans 6:1-2; Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18-21.

## THE WORSHIP OF GOD

God's word informs us that all of nature plainly shows that there is a God and that he should be worshiped by all. God also speaks to us through his word as he tells us the only true and acceptable ways to worship him. We learn the full truth about what God has revealed by looking at his word. This revelation is what defines the elements of worship. We are to be reading the scriptures, teaching one another through song, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, while always faithfully preaching the Word of God, and praying together.

Under the gospel, neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship is restricted to or made more acceptable by the place where it is done or toward which it is directed. Instead, God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth—daily in each family and privately by each individual. Also, more formal worship is to be performed in public assemblies on the sabbath day, and these must not be carelessly or deliberately neglected or forsaken when God by his word or providence calls us to them.

Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33; Deuteronomy 12:32; Exodus 20:4–6; Matthew 4:9, 10; John 5:23; John 4:21; Matthew 28:19; Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19; Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; Esther 4:16; Joel 2:12; Exodus 15:1–19; Psalms 107; John 4:21; Isaiah 58:13; Nehemiah 13:15–22; Matthew 12:1–13; Exodus 20:8; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10.

## **CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

God is the supreme Lord and King of the whole world, and he has ordained civil authorities to be under him and over the people. He did this for his own glory and the public good. In God's ultimate authority he has armed the civil governments with the responsibility to defend and encourage their citizens who do good—and to punish those citizens who do evil. These earthly governments are ordained by God and accountable to him as they execute this responsibility according to his rule. It is acceptable for Christians to hold the position and carry out the duties of public office when called to do so. In performing their office they must especially maintain justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each political entity. Their ultimate obligation is to God, as he is always and in everything sovereign. Therefore, because civil authorities are established by God for the purposes stated, we should submit in the Lord to them in everything that is lawful (in the eyes of God) that they require. We should be faithful in making requests and prayers for those who hold positions of governmental authority, so that under their rule we may live a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty.

Romans 13:1–4; 2 Samuel 23:3; Psalms 82:3, 4; Luke 3:14; Romans 13:5–7; 1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; Acts 5:29; Matthew 13:3-4.

## **THE FAMILY AND MARRIAGE**

The Family is the foundational institution of human society and culture. It was created to reflect the glory of God, and it has been defined by him in the scriptures. Marriage is a lifelong covenant that unites man and woman both spiritually and physically. Marriage is only to be between one man and one woman. A man must not have more than one wife nor a woman more than one husband at a time. In marriage, the design and intention of human sexuality find its purpose and its glorious expression. Therefore, any sexual activity that is outside of this God-blessed union is sinful and harmful to all individuals concerned.

God created man and woman with equal dignity and worth. Meaning, they both fully bear his image. He also defined their beautiful roles within a marriage, as he created each gender for these roles. A husband is given the responsibility to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. He is to sacrificially provide for, protect, and lead his wife and family; as he bears ultimate responsibility for them as the head of that family. The wife has the indispensable responsibility to come alongside this and submit graciously as Christ in the incarnation submitted himself to God the Father. She is asked to respect her husband and carry out the mission of God that has been given to Christians—the discipleship of the nations.

Because we see that this union was made before the fall, we know that its design for creation was not detrimental, it was perfect and without confusion. Because of the fall, though, our understanding of all things has been marred. This includes the good, fulfilling, and dignifying design

of sexuality and marriage. This marring doesn't exempt us from following God's design; rather it demonstrates to us that any deviation from this original design is evidence of that painful disorder that is brought about by the reality of sin in this world. This marring also points to the truth that every single one of us needs to learn from God in his word what the design for these things was made to be—and then we are accountable to embrace them as God's creation.

Children are a precious gift from God. They bear the image of God and the dignity of God from the moment of conception. All human beings bear his image. Therefore, all deserve proper dignity and should be protected from the moment of conception until natural death. The parents of every child have been entrusted by God to lovingly raise their children in the knowledge of God. Children are commanded to obey their parents in the Lord in all things that are considered lawful by God.

Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5, 6; Genesis 2:18; Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Nehemiah 13:25–27; Leviticus 18; Mark 6:18; Deuteronomy 22:5; 1 Corinthians 5:1; Psalm 139:13–14.

## **THE CHURCH**

The universal church consists of the full number of those who believe in Jesus Christ from every age. The church was instituted by Christ, and he promised that it would advance and persist in every age and that even the gates of Hell would not stand against it. The Lord Jesus Christ, by his ultimate authority, is the head of the church—which was given to him by the Father. He now works with all authority in a supreme and sovereign manner as he calls, institutes, orders, and governs his church. The church is made up of the people whom Jesus saves by effectively calling them out of death and into life, so they would live before him in all the ways of obedience that he prescribes for them in his Word. Those who are called he commands to live together in local churches, for their mutual benefit and for the corporate worship that he calls for while they are in the world.

The local church is to be gathered and organized according to the design of Christ. There are to be officers to care for the congregation of united individuals—referred to as members. These officers are ultimately appointed by Christ but also locally affirmed to be elders and deacons for that church. Elders' purposes are to be teachers and overseers of the flock of God, and deacons' purposes are to physically care for each other. Elders are appointed with the authority over the local church. Any man who is to be set apart by Christ and the church to be an elder must qualify according to the direction given in God's word. According to the scriptures, deacons may be men or women who meet the standards established in the scriptures.

Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10, 22, 23; Ephesians 5:23, 27, 32; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 11:26; Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:20–22; 1 Corinthians 5; Revelation 2; Revelation 3; Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11–12; Matthew 16:18; Psalms 72:17; Psalm 102:28; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18–20; Ephesians 4:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:2–9; John 10:16; John 12:32; Matthew 28:20; Matthew 18:15–20; Romans. 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 5:13, 14; 2 Corinthians 9:13; Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 6:3, 5, 6; Acts 6:4;

Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6, 7; 2 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Corinthians 9:6–14; Acts 11:19–21; 1 Peter 4:10, 11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15.

## **THE SACRAMENTS**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances or sacraments that declare and recognize our proclamation of faith in Christ. They are also the church's helpful affirmation of that faith. These holy activities are to be administered within the corporate witness of the church and only by those who are qualified to administer them, according to the commission of Christ.

Matthew 28:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 4:1.

### **BAPTISM**

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. To those baptized it is a sign of their fellowship with him in his death and resurrection, of their being grafted into him, showing that we have been given remission of our sins and that a person is submitting themselves to God through Jesus Christ to live and walk in the newness of life given by Jesus.

The only proper receivers of baptism are those who have personally professed repentance toward God, and in faith, chosen to live a life of obedience to Jesus Christ. The normative mode of baptism, in keeping with scriptural teaching and example, is full immersion in water, unless there is a providential hindrance that might make this administration impractical.

Romans 6:3–5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36–38; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8; Matthew 28:19–20; Matthew 3:16; John 3:23.

### **THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Lord's Supper is to be observed within the gathering of his churches to the end of the current age as a continual remembrance and display of the sacrifice that was his death on the cross. When a believer participates in communion they are making a profession of faith while the church is administering a confirmation of their faith in regard to all the benefits of Christ's death—their spiritual nourishment and growth in him. The supper is to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Christ and to each other. In keeping with most clear teachings and examples in Scripture, the bread and the cup are to be taken separately. Communion is to be taken by all believing and visible saints.

1 Corinthians 11:23–28; 1 Corinthians 10:16–21; Hebrews 9:25–28; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26–27; 2 Corinthians 6:14–15; 1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6.

## **EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS**

It is the duty and privilege of every Christian to work towards the call of making disciples of all nations that Jesus gave to the Church. The new birth that the children of God have been given

through the Holy Spirit bears the fruit of a royal love for others. There is no greater way to love a person than to share the gospel truth with them. Therefore, the responsibility of this missional effort rests upon everyone who has received a regenerated life from Jesus whom the gospel reveals for us. This calling is a wonderful gift that we are welcomed into by our Lord with our inclusion in his kingdom family. Therefore, it is the duty of every child of God to seek out how they might preach Jesus by verbally defending and speaking what is true, living out a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods that are in harmony with the gospel. All while prayerfully hoping that others would be brought to life by the Spirit of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2:8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

God is the source of all blessings, both temporal and spiritual. All that we have, we owe to him. This makes all Christians trustees and gives us a binding stewardship for our possessions before Jesus. All Christians are therefore under obligation to serve Jesus with their time, skills, and material possessions; they should recognize all these resources have been entrusted to them to use for the glory of God. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute their resources cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and generously for the advancement of Jesus' cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

## **THE JUDGMENT AND STATE AFTER DEATH**

God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and authority to judge has been given by the Father. All people will at that time appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds. And, they will receive a reckoning according to what they have done in the body, whether that be good or evil. On this day of Christ's return, those who have been justified by faith in him will be welcomed into an eternal and perfect life in a fully renewed Heaven and Earth. Not according to their works, but according to Christ's finished work. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be cast into hell, where they will remain in utter suffering, separated from the goodness of God. This reality of suffering ought to convince us even more fully of our need to run to Jesus for salvation today.

Until that day, Christ's kingdom will continue to extend to all the Earth through the work that he commanded and commissioned his people to do. That being: going into all the world, proclaiming

the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ alone, and teaching the nations to obey all that Christ commanded us.

Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6,8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Jude 6-7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23-24; 1 Corinthians 15:42, 43, 51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Job 19:26-27; Acts 24:15; John 5:22-29; Philippians 3:21; Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10-12; Matthew 25:32-46; Romans 9:22-23; Matthew 25:21-34; 2 Timothy 4:8; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-36; Revelation 22:20.

## **RESOURCES AND SOURCES**

1689 in Modern English <https://founders.org/library/1689-confession/>

1689 in Original English <https://www.the1689confession.com>

Baptist Faith and Message <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#vi>