

HOPE

FELLOWSHIP

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THE BIBLE

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being verbally inspired by God and inerrant and infallible, and that they are of supreme and final authority.

Terms explained:

- I. **Verbally:** This means that the individual words of the Bible are true and without error. Therefore, more than just the thought or concept is inspired, but also every word (Mat. 5:17,18; Prov. 30:5,6). The term "plenary" is often used with the word "verbal" to give the view that all Scripture is fully and equally inspired (2 Tim. 3:16,17).
- II. **Inspired (Inspiration):** Inspiration is that particular work of God by which the Holy Spirit, becoming the co-author of Scripture, supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture and without excluding their human intelligence, individuality, literary style, personal feelings, or any other human factor, God's own complete and coherent message to men was recorded in perfect accuracy and the very words of the Bible bear the authority of this divine authorship. Inspiration is not equivalent to dictation except in certain instances, as God uses the experience, feelings and thinking of the human author. The end result, however, is just as accurate as if God Himself had taken the pen. Hence, the Scriptures were inspired or breathed out by God and, though the authors were fallible men, what they wrote was without error (2 Peter 1:20,21). Inspiration does not suppress the intellectual ability and talent but rather uses that intellectual ability and talent (Luke 1:1-3; 2 Samuel 23:2; 1 Corinthians 2:13).
- III. **Inerrant:** Inerrant means that the Scriptures are without error and are never wrong. (Psalm 12:6, Psalm 119:89-91, Proverbs 30:5-6).
- IV. **Infallible:** Infallible means that the Scriptures are absolutely trustworthy and sure. The Word of God in holy Scripture is unailing in its effectiveness and operation. (Isaiah 55:11; Matthew 24:35; John 10:35, 17:17).
- V. **Final Authority:** The Scriptures are God's special revelation (communication of truth) to man, and because they are inspired and inerrant, they become our final authority. The meaning of Scripture is to be found through diligently studying the Scriptures, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet, the truth of Scriptures stands in judgement of men; never do men stand in judgement of it. (John 5:45-47, 7:17, 16:12-15; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15, 13:9-10; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 1 John 2:20).

TRINITY

We believe in one God eternally existing in one essence, yet three co equal persons, the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Terms explained:

- I. **Eternally existing:** There is but one God (Deuteronomy. 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-6,14,18,21-22; Mark 12:29 32; 1 Corinthians 8:4), Who has no beginning and no ending (Ps. 90:1-2; Gen. 1:1).
- II. **Three in One:** God is one in essence, yet three persons, co-equal, eternally existing (Mat. 28:19; John 14:26, 15:26, 16:15; Acts 2:32-36; II Cor. 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Rev.1:4).
- III. **Co-equal:**
 - A. The Bible tells us that the Father is God (John 6:27; Rom. 1:7).
 - B. The Son is recognized as God (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8; I John 5:19-27; Phil. 2:6).
 - C. The Holy Spirit is also identified as God (Mat. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; Eph 4:30).

GOD THE FATHER

We believe the heavenly Father is the creator of all that exists, whether of matter or spirit. With the Son and the Holy Spirit, He made man, male and female in His own image. He is the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. By intention He relates to people as Father, thereby forever declaring His goodwill toward them. In love, He both seeks and receives penitent sinners.

Terms explained:

- I. **Creator:** Along with the Son and the Spirit, He created all things. (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9).
- II. **Father:** His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator, He is Father to all men, but the spiritual Father only to born again believers. (Psalm 68:5; Isaiah 64:8; Matt 7:11; John 1:12-13, 3:17; Romans 8:14-17; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 4:5-7; Ephesians 4:6).
- III. **Omnipotent / sovereign:** God is sovereign over all things such that there is NO aspect of reality outside of His ultimate control. (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36).
- IV. **Seeks / Receives:** He made a way for salvation, and saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:4-6; Galatians 4:4-7).

GOD THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is the Christ, the Savior of the world, through whom people are saved. Jesus was begotten by God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born to the virgin Mary.

Terms explained:

- I. **Jesus Christ:** Christ is the Anointed One, the Messiah, possessing two natures in one person, so that He was simultaneously fully God and fully man. This relationship was such that there was no dividing of person, nor confounding of the two natures. (John 1:1-14; 20:31; Acts 2:36).
- II. **Savior:** Jesus' stated purpose of His earthly incarnation and ministry was to be a Savior for God's elect; to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 4:14)
- III. **Saved:** People who take Jesus as Lord, and thereby Savior, are rescued from God's wrath against all sin (Romans 5:9-11; Eph 2:3; 1 Thes 1:10), thereby secured for everlasting life (John 3:16, 6:37-40, 10:27-29; Acts 4:12; Romans 8:28-31, 38-39, 10:9-13, 11:29; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:4-5; Jude 24).

- IV. **Conceived by the Holy Spirit:** The conception of Jesus was a divine act of God, without human agency (Mat. 1:18; Luke 1:26-38).
- V. **Born to the virgin Mary:** At the time of Christ's conception and birth, Mary was a virgin (Mat. 1:18-25; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:27).

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the life of the believer, and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the gospel.

Terms Explained:

- I. **Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son (John 14:16; Mat. 28:19).
- II. **Convicts:** Jesus Christ said that the Spirit would perform this ministry with respect to the world (John 16:7-11).
- III. **Life:** The Holy Spirit is the agent of spiritual birth (John 3:5-8). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation (Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31; 13:52). The Spirit regenerates, indwells, seals, and baptizes into the Church body all believers (1 Cor. 12:13; Titus 3:5; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9,11; 2 Cor. 1:21,22). The believer's life is strengthened and guided by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 3:16; John 16:13; Rom. 8:4,14, 26-27). The believer is commanded to be led by the Spirit, instead of the flesh, so that the characteristics of Christ likeness will be evident (Gal. 5:16).
- IV. **Empowers:** The Holy Spirit enables the spreading of God's word in testimony, preaching and practical living (John 15:26-27). Spiritual obedience will give fruit to a spiritually powerful life of service for Christ (Acts 1:8; Romans 8:12-13; Eph. 5:15-21; Gal. 5:22-25).

MANKIND

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God. Through Adam's sin, mankind incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and became subject to the wrath of God. Thus, all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and are inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing, or doing, that which is acceptable to God, apart from divine grace.

Terms explained:

- I. **Created in the image of God:** God created mankind to glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this, accomplish God's purpose for mankind in the world. (Gen. 1:27, 5:1; 1 Cor. 11:7; Isaiah 43:7; Ephesians 1:11-14; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).
- II. **Separation from God:** When mankind, of its own free will, chose to disobey God, we sinned (the breaking of God's law). This original sin separated us from God, Who, because of His holiness, could not tolerate sin, and therefore, judged such sin. With no recuperative powers to enable mankind to recover, we are hopelessly lost. Mankind's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; John 3:36; Romans 5:12, 17, 19, 3:9-18, 23, 6:23, 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14; Galatians 3:22, Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

ATONEMENT

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins per the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood.

Terms Explained:

- I. **Sin:** Any thought or deed contrary to God's perfection and holiness (1 John 5:17). Sin violates the moral law of God and is therefore lawlessness (1 John 3:4). The punishment of sin is death (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23)
- II. **Representative:** This means that Jesus Christ represented all the sins of the world and that He who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:14-21). As Adam was the representative of man in the fall, so Christ was the representative of man in the Atonement (1 Cor. 15:22). Therefore, if Christ represented all, His sacrifice will cover all (John 3:16).
- III. **Substitutionary:** This is called the "vicarious" suffering since Christ died in our place. He did not die for His own sin (Heb. 4:15; 1 John 3:5) but died for the sins of others (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:8).
- IV. **All Who Believe:** The gift of salvation provided by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is for all mankind (Romans 10:13; 1 John 2:2), yet only those who exhibit saving faith are justified (Galatians 2:16, 3:11).
- V. **Justified:** Justification is that act of God whereby He declares the guilty and depraved sinner to be righteous because of God's own righteousness having been imputed, or credited, to the sinner (Genesis 15:6; Acts 13:39; Romans 3:23-26; 4:5-8, 25, 5:18, 8:33).
- VI. **Shed Blood:** Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love has provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for sinners (1 Peter 3:18). Christ's death satisfied the demands of God's justice, and Christ's perfect life satisfied the demands of God's holiness (2 Corinthians 5:21), thereby enabling Him to forgive and save those who place their faith in Him (Romans 3:26)

RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, EXALTATION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into Heaven and His present life there as High Priest and Advocate for us.

Terms Explained:

- I. **Resurrection:** We believe that after three days, Jesus Christ arose bodily from the grave (Luke 24:23-40). The doctrine of the resurrection is essential to salvation (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:12-23, 35-37).
- II. **Ascension:** After His resurrection and forty day ministry Jesus ascended up into Heaven (Acts 1:1-11; 1 Peter 3:22).
- III. **High Priest And Advocate:** Since Christ's atonement has restored our relationship with God, we now can approach God through Christ, Who as our High Priest represents us before God. As our Advocate, He compassionately deals with our needs and strengthens us (Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:1-10, 7:25-28, 8:1-2, 9:11-15, 24).

ESCHATOLOGY

We believe in the blessed hope, the personal, visible and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the restoration of creation. No one knows when Jesus Christ will return, but His promise is sure. Accordingly we seek to live a patient lifestyle

Terms Explained:

- I. **Blessed Hope:** The return of the Lord is an event that believers ought to wait for with high expectation and excitement. (Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:7, 13, 4:13; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:7).
- II. **Personal, visible:** Jesus, not just in spirit, but in bodily form, will return to this earth (Acts 1:11).
- III. **Imminent:** The Church, as God's steward, ought to consider the return of Christ as an event which is about to happen, and therefore, though patient, we are to be alert to such an event as we seek to glorify Him through our lives (Mark 13:33-37; Matthew 24:15-51; Luke 12:35-40, 21:34).
- IV. **Patient Lifestyle:** The Bible's teaching concerning the Lord's impending return is always set in the context of practical exhortation, focusing upon our present lifestyle, rather than upon undue speculation. Faithfully we continue God's work in stewardship of His Church, serving one another, preaching and teaching Scripture, and making disciples (2 Peter 3:11-13; Matthew 24:36, 42-51, 28:18-20; Romans 12:1-21; 2 Timothy 4:1-8).
- V. **Restoration of Creation:** As still imperfect people, we eagerly await the restoration of all things to perfect Christ likeness after the return of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:18-25).

SALVATION

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life.

Terms explained:

- I. **Faith:** Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8) and is produced by the Word of God (Rom. 10:14,17). We are saved by faith alone, apart from works (Ephesians 2:9; Romans 3:20; Titus 3:5).
- II. **Born again by the Holy Spirit:** The new birth (regeneration) is absolutely necessary for fellowship with God (John 3:7). Man is totally passive in regeneration since it is completely a work of God (John 1:13; 3:6). The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8) by which He creates within a person a new nature, a new heart, a new spirit (John 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4; Ezek. 11:19, 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17).
- III. **Children of God:** Those who have received the Spirit have therefore been born again into God's family (John 1:1-12; Rom. 8:9,14-17). As members of His family we not only have fellowship with our Father in Heaven, but we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of Christ (Romans 12:2), and when Christ returns we will be completely changed in body and spirit to be like Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:19-23; 1 John 3:2). This experience of the life of Jesus Christ within us now by the presence of the Holy Spirit and forever ours in the presence of Jesus Christ is eternal life.
- IV. **Evidence of Saving Faith:** Genuine saving faith necessarily leads to good works. This is not a private faith, but a public and visible transformation, evidenced by fruit/works. It is not the works that save us; it is our salvation that shall bring about a changed life that bears fruit. (Eph. 2:8-10; Mat. 5:3-16, 7:21-23; Galatians 5:22-24; James 2:14-26).

HEAVEN AND HELL

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in hell, and the fellowship of the saved in heaven.

Terms explained:

- I. **Bodily resurrection:** Those saints who are "asleep in Jesus" will be raised at the same time the living saints are "raptured" and changed (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58). After the resurrection, all the unsaved will stand before the Great White Throne for judgment, and since their names will not be found in the Book of Life, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 3:5, 13:8, 20:11-15, 21:8, 27; Mat. 25:31-46; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Acts 13:48).
- II. **Everlasting conscious suffering:** Those who have not submitted to the lordship of Christ, and are thus unsaved, will perish in their sins and be committed to an eternal conscious torment in hell. (Luke 13:3, 16:19-31; Mat. 24:51, 25:30, 41; John 8:24; 2 Thes 1:8-9; Rev 14:10-11).
- III. **Heaven:** We believe heaven to be a literal place where Jesus Christ is preparing an eternal home for believers of all ages (John 14:1-6; Heb. 11:10-16).
- IV. **Hell:** We believe hell to be a literal place where all unsaved will spend eternity (Rev. 20:15; Mat. 13:36-43).

SATAN

We believe in the existence of Satan, who is still working in the world to destroy the souls of men. He, and all his fallen angels, and all who receive not Christ as their Lord and Savior, will eternally perish in the lake of fire, hell.

Terms explained:

- I. **Satan:** Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgement of God by rebelling against his Creator, by taking numerous angels with him in his fall, and by introducing sin into humanity through his temptation of Eve. Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and mankind. He is the prince of this world and has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Genesis 3:1-15; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14).
- II. **Eternally perish:** The judgment upon the devil and his followers is an unending punishment (Ezekiel 28:11-19; Revelation 19:20, 20:10,14,15).

CHURCH

We believe in the Church, whose purpose is to glorify God; all its endeavors being guided by multiple leadership and supported by the wise stewardship of God's people.

Terms explained:

- I. **Church:** All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the Church, the bride of Christ. The Church is designed by Christ, made up of all born again believers, and that the Christian of a local body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Cor 12:12-13; Colossians 3:15; Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:11-36; 4:3-5, 5:23-32; Hebrews 10:25).
- II. **Purpose:** The purpose of the Church is to honor God by building itself up in the faith, by instruction of the Word, by fellowship, by keeping the ordinances, and by advancing God's truth in the gospel to the entire world, through the totality of the lives of every believer (Acts 1:8, 2:38-42, 47; Mat. 28:18-20; Rom. 15:6; Eph 3:8-10, 21, 4:13-16; Col 1:10-28; 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17). The Church cooperates with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. He gives the Church spiritual gifts for the equipping of the saints, for edifying one another, and for all the works of service (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Cor 1:17-18, 12:4-31, 15:58; Eph

4:12; Col 1:23-29; 1 Peter 4:8-11; Revelation 22:12).

- III. **Multiple leadership:** There is one supreme authority for the Church, Christ (1 Cor 11:3, Eph 1:22; Col 1:18). Within each local body, church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The Biblically designated officers serving under Christ, and over the assembly, are elders (also called bishops, overseers, pastors, and pastorteachers) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). These leaders lead, or rule, as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17). Specifically, elders are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the flock and establishing areas of ministry. Deacons oversee the meeting of physical needs, coordinate ministry areas, and ensure the carrying out of acts of service.
- IV. **Stewardship:** As members of God's family, we recognize the obligation under which God places us to exercise care and concern with regard to all: time, possessions, wealth and persons, as may be entrusted to us. One mark of the spiritually wise person is the mature choices made with respect to these areas (Mat. 20:8; Luke 16:1-3; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor 8:19-21; Col. 1:25).

ORDINANCES

We believe that the ordinances of the Church given by our Lord, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion).

Terms explained:

- I. **Baptism:** Baptism is commanded of all believers. It is an act of obedience signifying the believer's faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, and union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism also serves as a sign of fellowship and identification within the local Church. Through corporate observation of baptism, we can celebrate with one another and participate in follow up and accountability with the believers' growth (Acts 2:38-42, 8:36-39, 18:8; Rom. 6:1-11; 1 Peter 3:21).
- II. **Lord's Table (Communion):** On the night of His arrest, Jesus instituted what is known as the Eucharist, or Communion service, which symbolizes and calls our attention to the atonement. Communion should always be preceded by solemn self-examination. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration and proclamation in which we look back to the finished work of Christ and also forward to the yet to be completed consummation of our redemption (Mat. 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:23-32; 2 Peter 2:13).

CREDITS & REFERENCES

Hope Fellowship would like to credit the following references used to assist with the formatting and structure of our Statement of Beliefs. In no way have these references endorsed, or encouraged the use of their content. Hope Fellowship simply acknowledges the effectiveness of the structure these references have employed, and chose to follow a similar format.

- Parkside Church, Chagrin Falls, OH
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