

## COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

### I. THE BIBLE

The 66 books of the Bible are God's written revelation to man—the very words of God. The Bible came by means of dual authorship whereby men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit superintended the human authors such that even though they wrote using their own unique personalities, vocabularies, and styles, the result was God's own words composed without error (2 Timothy 3:16). This "inspiration" of Scripture was verbal plenary, meaning it extends down to the very words chosen. As a result, the Bible, in part and in whole, is inerrant and infallible in its original documents. Consequently, the Bible is the only authoritative and sufficient rule of faith and practice for all people of all generations (Matthew 24:35; John 10:35; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21). Because the Bible is God's word, it is our duty to handle it correctly and rightly interpret it (2 Timothy 2:15). The correct meaning of Scripture then is found by employing the literal-historical-grammatical method of interpretation, under the Spirit's illumination (John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15). This method of interpretation treats the Bible as the literal word of God while taking into account the historical context, the original languages, the grammar and syntax, as well as figurative language. For any given text of Scripture, there is one interpretation, but many applications.

### II. GOD

There is one true God (Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7). This God is infinite and perfect in all of His attributes, which include omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, veracity, wisdom, immutability, wrath, love, justice, and eternity. God is the sovereign Creator of the universe and created the heavens and earth out of nothing in six, literal, twenty-four hour days (Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 148:1-5). This God is one in essence or being, yet eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Titus 3:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2). Referred to as the Trinity, each person fully shares in the essence of God, yet they have different roles or functions. Together, God in the Trinity is worthy of all worship and obedience (Psalm 150:6).

#### 1. GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity. The Father decrees all things according to His eternal purposes. He is the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9) and ruler of the universe. Being all powerful, God is sovereign in creation, providence, history, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Isaiah 14:24, 27; Acts 4:27-28; Romans 8:28-29). God also continually upholds, directs, and governs all things for His purposeful ends, but He neither authors nor approves of sin (Habakkuk 1:13). God is the moral ruler and judge of the universe and will hold all beings accountable according to His holy standard. His title of "Father" relates to His role in the Trinity as well as relationship with mankind. God is Father over all mankind (Ephesians 4:6), but as He chooses to save sinners through Jesus Christ, He adopts them and becomes their father in a special sense (Ephesians 1:4-6; John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians

4:5).

## 2. GOD THE SON

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with God (John 10:30; 17:5). Jesus was the means of creation in tandem with the Father (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2). In the incarnation, without surrendering His divine essence or attributes, but only His divine prerogatives, the second person of the Trinity took on a human nature and became the God-man—fully God and fully man (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9). He did not lose a single attribute, nor His divine essence, but instead gave up the independent exercise of His divine rights, privileges, and attributes. The incarnation was achieved through the means of the virgin birth where Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a human mother (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:26-38).

On earth, Jesus lived a perfect life (Hebrews 4:15; 5:9). His life ended on the cross where He shed His blood and died to accomplish our redemption. This death on the cross was historical, sacrificial, voluntary, substitutionary, vicarious, propitiatory, and redemptive (Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). Jesus was buried, but rose from the dead on the third day. Our justification is assured by His literal and physical resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:38-39; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Colossians 2:13-14). Jesus then ascended to the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 10:12), where He received all power, authority, and dominion in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). Jesus is now the one and only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5) and serves as an advocate for believers before the Father (Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1). Jesus will return to judge all mankind (John 5:22-23; Acts 17:30-31) and to establish an earthly kingdom (Luke 22:28-30; Revelation 20:1-6), which will be followed by an eternal kingdom where He will reign and rule with His people forever (2 Peter 1:10-11; Revelation 21-22).

## 3. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is fully God and fully shares in the divine essence and attributes (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14). The Holy Spirit notably played a role in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Luke 1:35), and the inspiration of Scripture (Zechariah 7:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21). The Holy Spirit also convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11).

The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in redemption, applying salvation and effecting regeneration in believers (Ezekiel 36:27; John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5). After salvation, believers are permanently indwelt by the Spirit, who seals them unto the day of salvation and serves as their pledge and guarantee of their future inheritance (Romans 8:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30). Believers are to be filled with or controlled by the Spirit as the basis for the Christian life (John 16:13; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18). The Spirit now also illuminates God's word, enabling people to understand His written revelation (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 John 2:20, 27). Additionally, the Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts on each and every member of the church for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Although God can and still

does work miracles, the sign gifts given to the early church were meant to authenticate apostolic authority and are not normative for today (1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

### **III. MAN**

Man and woman were created by God on the sixth day of creation. Man was created first, and then the woman to be the man's helpmate. Though created with different roles, man and woman are equal in nature, being made in God's image and likeness, thereby setting them apart from all creation (Genesis 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 15:39; James 3:9). God formed man directly out of the dust of the ground and breathed life into him (Genesis 2:7). Mankind was created to glorify God, to enjoy God through fellowship, and to worship God through obedience (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16-18; Revelation 4:11). At this time, man was morally responsible to God, but free from sin (Genesis 2:16-17).

Through Adam's willful disobedience to God and rebellion, mankind fell into sin and lost its innocence. Being the representative head of humanity, Adam's sin was imputed to all his descendants, with Jesus being the only exception (Romans 5:12-14; 1 Corinthians 15:22). The result of Adam's sin is physical death for all (Genesis 5:5; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27), spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1-2; Colossians 2:13), and being subject to the wrath of God.

Now, every person is totally corrupt and depraved in their sin. All people are conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5), born sinners (Genesis 8:21; Psalm 58:3), and now sin because they are sinners (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 3:10-18, 23; Ephesians 2:1-3). People are sinners by nature and by choice as they suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18-25; Titus 1:15). Man is inherently corrupt and incapable of doing good or choosing God on his own. He is unable to understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14), unable to please God (Romans 8:5-8), and unwilling to seek God (John 3:19-21). Therefore man's only hope for salvation is the redemptive work of Christ administered through God's grace (John 3:36; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:4-10).

### **IV. SALVATION**

Because of man's sin problem, he is separated from God and in need of salvation. The Bible teaches that salvation comes only by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7). Man is unable to save or contribute to salvation, but God prepared and perfected man's salvation.

#### **1. THE PLAN OF SALVATION**

Man's salvation is no accident. God has planned for man's salvation from the beginning. Fundamentally, all spiritual blessings, including salvation, come to man by God's grace. Grace can generally be defined as free, unmerited, unearned favor. God shows a common grace to all people and all creation (Matthew 5:44-45; Acts 14:16-17), but reserves a special grace for the elect, which when given, results in their salvation (Ephesians 1:6; 2:4-5, 8; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:7). God's special grace is irresistible

or effectual in that it always accomplishes what it sets out to do, namely affect a person's heart such that he or she no longer resists God and the gospel. Recipients of God's special, effectual grace come to choose God willingly, but God's grace acts first and guarantees their right response (Isaiah 46:9-10; 55:10-11; John 5:21; 6:29, 37, 44, 65; Ephesians 2:4-5; Luke 10:21-22).

God's effectual grace results in salvation for everyone to whom it is given, but this grace is not given to all.

Only the elect receive God's saving grace. Before the foundation of the world, God elected some people for salvation, not according to anything foreseen in them, but entirely according to His sovereign will (Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28-30; 9:11-13; Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:9).

In other words, God's choosing and saving of sinners is not conditioned on their foreseen faith, works, or merits, but rests entirely on His grace and mercy. Hence this is termed unconditional election. The doctrine of election does not negate man's responsibility to repent and believe in Jesus for salvation (John 3:16-19, 36; 5:40). Although God is sovereign in salvation, man is still responsible for his sins and his rejection of God and the gospel.

## **2. THE PROVISION OF SALVATION**

God's provision of salvation for mankind is termed the atonement. The atonement can simply be defined as the work Jesus accomplished on the cross to achieve man's salvation. The nature of Christ's death on the cross was that of a penal substitution. Being penal, Jesus bore the penalty of sin. Being substitutionary, Jesus bore the penalty of sin in place of others. As a substitute for sinners, Jesus paid the penalty for sin that sinners should have paid (Isaiah 53; Mark 10:45; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). Jesus suffered physically and spiritually on the cross and bore the holy wrath of God.

More specifically, Jesus accomplished propitiation on the cross—the satisfaction or appeasement of God's wrath (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Jesus accomplished redemption on the cross—the ransoming and freeing of enslaved sinners from sin's domain (Mark 10:45; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Colossians 1:13). And Jesus accomplished reconciliation on the cross—the removing of the barrier of sin, thereby enabling God and man to be restored in fellowship (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:20-21). Overall, there is no salvation apart from God's provision in the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

## **3. THE APPLICATION OF SALVATION**

Salvation from man's perspective begins with a call. A general gospel call goes out to all people, but can be rejected (Ezekiel 18:30; Mark 1:15, 6:12; John 1:11-12; 7:37; Acts 17:30). An effective, effectual call goes out also through the gospel, but only to the elect, enabling them to respond to the gospel and ensuring they will do so (John 6:44, 45, 47, 65; Acts 2:14-39; Romans 8:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9). If God did not effectually call people to salvation, no one would be saved because no sinner would ever turn to God on his own. Original sin and depravity make man spiritually incapable of choosing God, so God works through the effectual call to illumine darkened minds, soften

hardened wills, and incline lost hearts to Him, leading the unregenerate to regeneration and conversion (Acts 16:14; Ephesians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5).

Necessary for salvation is regeneration, which takes place at the moment of true conversion. Regeneration is a work of God whereby He gives new spiritual life (hence being “born again”). Regeneration affects the heart, mind, and will and brings dead sinners to new spiritual life before God (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 2:13). Regeneration or the new birth is necessary for salvation (John 3:3-8; Ezekiel 36:25-27) and is entirely a work of God in which man does not participate at all (John 1:12-13; Titus 3:4-6; James 1:17-18; 1 Peter 1:3, 23).

Being brought to new life, man then experiences conversion, which involves turning away from sin (i.e. repentance) and turning toward Christ (i.e. faith). Repentance involves a change of mind about sin that necessarily leads to a change of life. It is a turning away from sin (Psalm 51; Jonah 3; 2 Corinthians 7:5-11).

Faith involves trusting in Jesus Christ to save you (John 3:16; Romans 3:23-31; Ephesians 2:8-9). Faith and repentance are both required. The result is a change in the direction of one’s life (Acts 20:21; Hebrews 6:1; Isaiah 55:6-7).

Regeneration is needed to deal with the spiritually dead state of sinners, but it does not deal with the guilt and condemnation already brought on by sin. For this there is justification. Justification is also entirely a work of God whereby He declares sinners to be not guilty in His eyes (Romans 5:9; 8:1, 33-34; Psalm 32:1-2) and instead perfectly righteous before Him (Romans 3:19-31; 4:1-6; 5:19; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:8-9). Sinners are in fact guilty and unrighteous before God, but God imputes or transfers their sin to Jesus and Jesus’ righteousness to them in order to justify them (Romans 3:23-24, 28; 5:17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:11). God uses faith as the means through which this verdict of justification is rendered (Romans 3:26, 28; 4:1-5:1; Galatians 2:16; 3:11; Philippians 3:8-9).

God takes the salvation of sinners even further in that He also adopts them into His own spiritual family. At salvation, God regards believers as sons and daughters (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; 1 John 3:1-2). God also reckons believers as being united with Christ, resulting in all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3, 10-12; 2 Timothy 1:9).

#### **4. THE CONTINUATION OF SALVATION**

Once a person comes to faith and salvation in Jesus, their salvation continues, not in the sense of contributing to their salvation, but in the sense of living it out. The continuation of salvation is understood primarily in terms of sanctification. To sanctify means to set apart or to make holy. At salvation, God positionally sanctifies believers or declares them to be holy before Him (this is akin to justification). One goal of the Christian life then is to conform one’s practice to one’s position. This is referred to as progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification is the work whereby Christians become holier in life (1 Peter 1:1-2, 16; Hebrews 10:14; 12:14; Romans 6:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7). Since Jesus is the model of perfect holiness, progressive sanctification can be thought of as

the pursuit of Christlikeness (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:13, 15). Progressive sanctification is a work of both God and man, although God and man do not play equal roles. God's work is primary and provides the power for change (Galatians 5:16, 22-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Peter 1:2). Man's work is secondary and consists of striving for holiness while relying on God's power (Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 8:13; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Colossians 1:29).

Additionally, once a person comes to genuine salvation in Christ, he or she cannot lose their salvation. True salvation is permanent. From God's side, this perseverance is really a preservation. Man's work of perseverance is a result of God's secret work of preservation. God preserves and protects true believers from falling away or being lost (John 6:38-40; 10:27-29; 17:11-12; Romans 8:28-39; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 4:18; 1 Peter 1:5). Man is still responsible to persevere in the faith though, even if this involves suffering (Matthew 10:22; John 8:31; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 3:12-14). If any so-called Christian abandons the faith, he or she is showing their conversion was never genuine. False believers are spoken of in Scripture and identified by their lack of spiritual fruit (Matthew 7:21-23; 13:3-9, 18-23; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 2:4).

## **5. THE COMPLETION OF SALVATION**

Salvation has many aspects. It can be viewed from the past (justification) or the present (sanctification). Salvation viewed from the future is known as glorification and this is the completion of salvation. Salvation presently is real and true, but not fully realized in this life. Sin and its affects still ruin this world. The first stage of glorification takes place at death. Immediately upon death a believer departs from their body and enters the presence of Jesus. This place of fellowship may be called heaven where the believer is free from the power and presence of sin, but this is not the final state (Luke 16:22; 23:43; Acts 7:59; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8). The second stage of glorification takes place at the resurrection. When Christ returns, all believers, whether living in heaven or on earth, will be given resurrected bodies fit for eternity (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:39-40, 44, 54; Romans 8:11, 23; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17). The third stage of glorification takes place at the end of history. God will create a new heavens and a new earth free from sin, pain, and death. Believers then will have perfected spirits, perfected bodies, and a perfected environment in which to worship God forever (Romans 8:20-22; 1 Corinthians 15:54-55; 2 Corinthians 4:16-17; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21-22).

## **V. THE CHURCH**

There are several different understandings of the word "church." Biblically, the church is not a building or a denomination. Rather the church is the gathering of followers of Jesus Christ. These believers can be organized by region (e.g. Asia), by city (e.g. Corinth), or by small gatherings (e.g. house meetings). These are all expressions of the local church. Within the local, visible church, there may be false believers, or tares among the wheat as Jesus taught (Matthew 7:15-16; 13:24-30; Acts 20:29-30). In contrast, the invisible church consists only of those who are truly saved and is sometimes associated with the universal church,

which consists of all true believers in all places (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 10:32; 12:13; Ephesians 1:22; 5:25; Colossians 1:18, 24). The church in this sense began at Pentecost in Acts 2 and is distinct from Israel. The purpose of the church is threefold. In an upward sense, the church is to exalt God (1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 1:12; 3:21; Colossians 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:10-11). In an inward sense, the church is to edify the saints (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28-29; 1 Peter 4:10-11). In an outward sense, the church is to evangelize the lost (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:4; 11:19-20; 16:31; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; 2 Timothy 4:5). The ministry of the church should align with its threefold purpose and therefore focus on worship, the Word, prayer, singing, fellowship, evangelism, and the ordinances.

Two ordinances are to be practiced by the church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the Christian practice of immersing believers in water to publically declare their entrance into the body of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:47). Baptism signifies identification with Christ and membership in His body. Baptism does not bring nor contribute to salvation in any way, but it does commemorate the death of the old self, the washing away of sins, and the birth of the new self, all through Christ (Acts 2:38, 41; 22:16; Romans 6:3-11; Colossians 2:12). Only professing believers in Jesus should be baptized, with the mode of immersion (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-39; 10:44-48; 16:30-34; Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the Christian practice of partaking of bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's death. As believers participate in the Lord's Supper, they are remembering Christ's sacrifice, proclaiming His death, and awaiting His return. Such an act of remembrance should be done solemnly, seriously, joyfully, hopefully, and introspectively (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

In the Lord's Supper, Jesus is not present physically or metaphysically in the elements. Rather Jesus is present only spiritually or symbolically. The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's once-for-all death. The Lord's Supper should be limited only to professing believers.

The church is governed and ruled by Christ, its head, King, and Lord. Jesus is the supreme authority over the church and all other leadership and gifts flow from Him. The church is His body and He builds and directs His body (1 Corinthians 11:3; 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15-16; 5:23; Colossians 1:18). Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, gives spiritual gifts to all believers, yet with the completion of Scripture, the miraculous or sign gifts are no longer needed or in operation today (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 13:8-14:12; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4).

Jesus has delegated some of His authority to the leaders of the church who are to serve as under-shepherds. The primary level of leadership in the church is given to elders/pastors/overseers who are responsible for leading, guiding, protecting, teaching, ruling, and watching the flock (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22; 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:7; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2-5). The secondary level of leadership is given to deacons who are responsible for meeting the material needs of the church (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-10). Both elders and deacons must meet spiritual qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

Local churches are to be autonomous, free from any external control, and that authority over a local church rests with the local elders (Titus 1:5). Churches can and should cooperate for the spread of the gospel and the needs of the saints, but local elders are held accountable by God for the leadership, discipline, and

doctrine of their local church (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Each local church should have a plurality of elders (Titus 1:5). Elders should also oversee and practice church discipline whereby sinning members who persist in unrepentant sin are removed from the assembly, although with the hope of restoration (Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1; Titus 3:10-11).

## VI. LAST THINGS

There is both some continuity and some discontinuity between Israel and the church. The church is not the new/true Israel which replaces/fulfills the identity, role, blessings, and promises of national Israel (Acts 3:12; 4:8, 10; 5:31, 35; 21:28; Romans 9:3-6; 10:1; 1 Corinthians 10:32). The church is not to be equated with national or spiritual Israel. However, right now the believing remnant of national Israel or “true” Israel exists within the church (Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:1-12). The church does not replace or become true Israel, but incorporates true Israel, just as the church incorporates the saved from all the nations, both now and in the future. Still, God is not finished with national Israel and the unconditional land, seed, and blessing promises made to national Israel in the Old Testament will be fulfilled with national Israel in the future (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18; 2 Samuel 7:8-16; 23:5; Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:36-44; Ezekiel 34:11-31; 36:22-38; Matthew 19:28/Luke 22:30; Matthew 23:37-39/Luke 13:34-35; Luke 21:24; Acts 1:3, 6-7; 3:19-21; Romans 9-11).

The church is the New Covenant people of God, comprised of the saved from all the nations (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6-8; Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:9-18; 12:23-24). In the church, different people from different nations come together as one and are united soteriologically in Christ, though retaining other meaningful differences (e.g. ethnicity, gender, role; Galatians 3:28; Romans 3:22 cf. 10:9-13; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 3:11). Seeing that the church is God’s plan for the nations, all nations will be a part of the church, including the restored nation of Israel, but this soteriological unity among the one people of God does not remove legitimate differences in identity, function, and role.

The rapture will occur unexpectedly, immediately preceding the seven year tribulation (pretribulation rapture). The rapture of the church will occur at the end of the church age and all the saints, both dead and alive, will be caught up in the air to be forever with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Christ’s coming to take His church away at the rapture is imminent and will come like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2; Titus 2:13). Before Christ comes to earth there will be a seven year period of tribulation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24; Revelation 6-19) when God will primarily focus His attention on the ethnic nation of Israel, bringing many to faith in their previously rejected Messiah (Romans 11:25-27; Hosea 3:5). The tribulation period will close when Christ bodily returns to earth (Zechariah 14:4, 9; Acts 1:11), separating the Sheep from the Goats (Matthew 25:31-34), binding Satan (Revelation 20:1-2), and setting up His literal earthly kingdom.

We believe in a premillennial view of the kingdom which teaches that Jesus Christ will come back bodily to earth to set up a literal thousand year kingdom where He will rule from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4; Zechariah 14:3-4; Acts 1:9-12; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-7). During the millennial reign of Christ, the saints will rule and reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12), the curse will be partially lifted (Isaiah 11), and men will live extended lives



as before the flood (Isaiah 65:20). At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed (Revelation 20:3), deceiving the nations, bringing God's final Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:7-15).

All mankind will end up in one of two eternal destinies—the new heavens and earth or the lake of fire (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29). All unbelievers will appear before the Great White Throne to be judged according to their deeds (Revelation 20:11-15). Those who have repented of their sins and placed their faith in Jesus Christ will enjoy perfect happiness in heaven forever and receive rewards in accordance with their faithful service on earth (Matthew 24:45-47; 25:21-23; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 22:5). Those who reject Christ and who will not submit to Him as both Lord and Savior will suffer conscious torment away from the presence of Christ in the lake of fire forever (Matthew 13:42; Mark 9:47-48; Luke 16:24; 12:5; Revelation 14:11; 20:10, 15).