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Doctrinal Statement

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Preface

The Bible—God’s love letter to man. To know it is to know the One who gave it. To love it is to love the One who shared His wonderful plan with humanity.

Recognizing that the Bible is the very Word of the Living God and that God wants us to understand His Word so we may intelligently worship and serve Him, the Elders at Grace Chapel are deeply committed to being, “...diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” (*2 Timothy 2:15*)

This doctrinal statement presents the primary doctrines of the Christian faith, and forms the heart of the theological foundation here at Grace Chapel. May God bless you.

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I. Concerning the Holy Scriptures

We believe that the Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) are the inerrant Word of God. We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. By verbal, we mean that the original writers were guided by the Holy Spirit in the exact choice of words yet respecting and using the personality characteristics, style, and vocabulary of each writer. By the word plenary, we believe that this divine verbal inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original manuscripts – historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic – so that every word is both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority (*2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:21; John 10:35; 2 Peter 3:16; John 5:39*).

We believe in the literal method of interpretation; which gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether implied in writing, speaking, or thinking. We believe that the greater part of the Bible makes sense when interpreted literally; that it is the only sane and safe check on the imaginations of man; that it grounds interpretation in fact; and that this approach does not blindly rule out figures of speech, symbols, allegories, and types, but if the nature of the sentence so demands, it readily yields to the second sense. Therefore, when the plain sense of the Scriptures makes common sense, we would seek no other sense; we must take every word at its primary, ordinary, literal, usual meaning unless the context indicated clearly otherwise.



However, we believe that the following principles are prerequisites to a proper interpretation of the Scriptures. These are: one must be born again and have an utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit to guide and direct (*John 16:7-14; 1 Corinthians 2:7-16*).

We also believe one must interpret Scripture according to the immediate context; according to the larger context, such as the scope or the design of the book itself; and by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

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II. Concerning God

We believe in one God, Who is a personal and eternal Spirit, perfect and unchangeable in all His attributes. This one God eternally exists in three persons, impossible of division, but capable of distinction as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All have precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience (*Isaiah 45:5-6; Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Kings 8:60; Psalm 90:1-2; Acts 5:3,4; Matthew 3:16-17; 16:16; 28:18-19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; John 1:1-14; Mark 12:29; Luke 22:70; 11:13; John 10:30; 14:10-11,16-17; Revelation 1:4-6*).

1. God the Father. We believe in God the Father as Creator of Heaven and earth, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. We marvel and rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully and lovingly in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer and that He saves from sin, its power over our life, and from spiritual death. He also takes the fear out of physical death for all who come to Him through faith in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ upon the cross (*Genesis 1:1; Psalm 34:6; Psalm 147:5; John 1:3; 3:36; 6:27; Romans 1:18-20; 6:1-13; 1 Corinthians 15:2-4; Ephesians 2:4-5; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 1:5; 2:1-2; 4:8; Revelation 3:20; 19:6*).

2. Jesus Christ. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, God the Son. We believe that He was pre-existent and is eternal, that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, and is fully God and fully man. We believe that His death on the cross was substitutionary and representative and a sufficient propitiation for the guilt of all men. We believe that He arose bodily from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He now carries on a ministry as Advocate and Intercessor for the saints. We believe in His imminent, personal, and bodily return to the earth (*John 1:1,14; Luke 1:30-35; 1 Timothy 2:6; John 1:29; Romans 3:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 10:5-14; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 1 Corinthians 15; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:9-10*).

3. The Holy Spirit. We believe in the deity and personality of God the Holy Spirit and that He is said to be eternally “proceeding” from the Father and the Son. We believe that the Holy Spirit was the agent in the revelation and the inspiration of the Scriptures, and is the one who bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God’s written Word. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit who performs the work of salvation in the heart of the individual believer, baptizing them into the Body of Christ, sealing, indwelling, and filling them. He also bestows spiritual gifts upon them, empowering them for works of service (*Genesis 1:2; Titus 3:5; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; Ephesians 4:30; John 16:13-14; 15:26; 16:7-8; Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 12; John 3:5-6; Ephesians 5:18*).

III. Concerning Satan and Angels

1. Their Origin. The angels were all created by God as a great host of sinless spirit-beings, most of whom kept their first estate of holiness and presently worship God and serve His purposes

(Psalm 148:2-5; Matthew 26:53; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:14).

2. The Fall of Some. One of the angels, Lucifer, fell through the sin of pride, thereby becoming Satan, and influenced a large company of angels to follow him, who

thereby became demons *(Isaiah 14:12-17; 1 Timothy 3:6; James 2:19; 2 Peter 2:4).*

3. Satan's Work. The work of Satan and the demons is the attempted subversion and supplanting of the work of God. By a subtle suggestion, Satan accomplished the moral fall of the progenitors of the human race, subjecting them and their posterity to his own power

(Genesis 3:1-7; Job 1:12; 2:6; Ezekiel 28:13-15; Zechariah 3:1-2; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:2).

Satan continues as the enemy of God and the accuser of God's people and persistently seeks to counterfeit the works and truth of God

(2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 11:13-15; Ephesians 6:12, 16; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10).

We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, and that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years. After the thousand years, he will be loosed for a little season and then the judgement will be executed by his being "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where he shall be tormented day and night forever and ever *(Revelation 20:1-3, 10; John 12:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14).*



IV. Concerning Man

1. His Original Nature. Man was directly and immediately created in the image of God, free from sin. He was created an immortal being with a rational nature, high intelligence, and moral responsibility to God (*Genesis 1:26–28; 2:15–25; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; James 3:9*).

2. His Original Purpose. He was originally created with the divine intention that he should glorify God, enjoy His fellowship, and fulfill His will and purposes in the earth (*Genesis 1:26–30; Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11*).

3. His Subsequent Sin. Man subsequently fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the revealed will of God (*Genesis 2:16–17; 3:1–19; 1 Timothy 2:13–14*).

4. His Present Condition. As a consequence, man became subject to the wrath of God, inherently corrupt, and incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Thus he is hopelessly lost apart from the salvation which is in the Lord Jesus Christ (*John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1–3; 1 John 1:8*).

The fall of man was a historical and non-repeatable act, the effects of which are transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ excepted. All men thus are sinners by divine pronouncement, nature, and deed, and thus face God's wrath and judgment (*Psalms 14:1–3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:12–19; James 2:10*).

V. Concerning Salvation

We believe that salvation is by grace through faith based upon the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ. All who receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God (*Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:5; 1:12-13*).

The purpose of salvation is that the believer might glorify God in his body through a life of fellowship and service for the Lord (*Colossians 3:17; Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 6:13; 12:1-2*).

The consummation of salvation will occur at the Rapture when the believer will be delivered from the presence of sin, at which time he will also be glorified, being conformed to the image of Christ (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-3*).

We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of the immutable covenants of God, because of God's freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory death of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending and effective advocacy of Christ in Heaven, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, salvation is eternal and unchangeable (*John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16-17; 7:11; Romans 8:29-39; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Hebrews 7:25; John 17:15; Jude 1:24; 1 John 2:1-2; 5:13; 2 Timothy 1:8-12*).

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VI. Concerning Sanctification

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting-apart to God, is threefold:

(1) Sanctification is already complete for every saved person because God sees that person as complete in Christ. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart to God in the measure in which Christ is set apart to God.

(2) We believe, however, that the saved person retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. While the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. The pursuit of every Christian is to personal holiness. But when he does sin, he may confess his sin and appropriate the forgiveness which God has provided, thus growing in victory over sin while also growing in grace as he is changed by the unhindered power of the Holy Spirit.

(3) We also believe that as the child of God is now sanctified in his standing in Christ, he will yet be fully sanctified in this state. This will be when he enters into the presence of his Lord and will be “like Him.” (*1 Corinthians 1:2;*

Hebrews 10:10,14; Romans 6; John 17:17, 19; Galatians 5:22–25; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 12:10; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Peter 1:13–16).

VII. Concerning the Church

1. Its Nature. All who have placed their faith in Christ are united together immediately by the Holy Spirit in one spiritual body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head. The Church was prophesied by Christ

(*Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:4–5*), born on the day of Pentecost (*Acts 11:15; 2:46,47*), and will be completed

at the coming of Christ for His own. In addition to the spiritual union and communion which extends to the entirety of the body of Christ, the members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (*1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22–23;*

Ephesians 2:19–22; 3:4–6; 5:25–27; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:25).



2. Its Mission. We believe the Church as the Body of Christ has a four-fold mission:

Worship – The highest privilege and responsibility of the Church both gathered and scattered is worship and adoration of our great God, the Father, and our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Lord through the eternal Spirit (John 16:13,14; 4:23–24; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 9:14; 13:15; Revelation 4:11; 5:12–13).

Education – One of the prime responsibilities of the Church is the nurture of the believer through the instruction and admonition of our Father's Word (Colossians 1:28; Acts 20:28,32; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2:2).

Edification – Since the believer is a part of a body and not simply an isolated individual, one of the primary responsibilities of the Church is to so order its corporate life that genuine fellowship occurs among believers (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24–25; Philippians 2:1–4; 1 John 1:3).

Evangelism – The last command of the risen Christ was for His followers to make disciples, and in so doing permeate the entire world in a continuous effort to disciple men (Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15; Colossians 1:28; Matthew 28:19–20).

3. Its Organization and Relationships: Authority.

These local assemblies have been given the needed authority for administering that order, discipline, and worship which Christ the sovereign Head has appointed. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are Elders and Deacons

(Acts 6:1–6; 1 Corinthians 14:40; Ephesians 4:11–12; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Peter 5:1–5; 1 Corinthians 5).

4. Its Organization and Relationships: Spiritual Gifts. We believe that every member of the body of Christ has been given at least one spiritual gift at their conversion according to the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit. The use of these gifts is to be developed and exercised to the end that every believer will become mature in Christ. The use of spiritual gifts should promote unity in the church. Their specific purpose is the mutual edification of the saints. We believe that the Holy Spirit sovereignly used some gifts for the establishment of the Church while others are used for the ongoing growth and development of the Body of Christ

(Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 12; 13; 14:22; Acts 2; 8:4–17; 10; 1 Peter 4:11; Ephesians 4:11–16; Hebrews 2:1–4).

5. Its Organization and Relationships: Ordinances.

Baptism – We believe that water baptism is commanded by Christ. We believe that baptism by immersion was practiced by the New Testament Church. It is an outward sign and confession of identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection *(Romans 6:3–4,6; Colossians 2:12; Ephesians 2:4–6; Acts 2:38–41; 10:48).*

The Lord's Supper – We believe the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the Lord's body which was broken for us and of His blood that was shed for our sins. There are two requirements that should be met before a person partakes of the Supper. First, a person should be born again. Secondly, a Christian should examine himself to determine if he is in fellowship with the Lord. We believe it is the Lord's table, and as such, is open to all believers. Not only is the Lord's Supper a memorial of what Christ has done on the cross, but it shows our faith in that past work and faith in His anticipated return *(Luke 22:19, 22; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:23–30).*

VIII. Concerning Last Things

1. The Intermediate State. At death the souls of the redeemed pass immediately into the presence of Christ and there remain in joyful fellowship. The soul is then united with a resurrected body at the Rapture. The souls of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades. Here they remain until the second resurrection when both body and soul are cast into eternal damnation (*Luke 16:22-23; 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23*).

2. The Rapture of the Church. The next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the personal, bodily coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself those who have died in Christ and all those who are alive at His coming. At that exact moment, every believer will be conformed into His image. This event is the blessed hope set before us in Scripture, and we are encouraged to be constantly looking for it. During this time with Christ, two significant events occur; believers will be judged according to their works and will participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb (*John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Revelation 19:7-10*).

3. The Tribulation Period. After the removal of believers from the earth, the wrath of God will be poured out upon the unbelieving world. This period will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth, at which time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will also be raised. This is known as the first resurrection. Satan and his angels will be bound for a thousand years (*Daniel 9:27; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:15–31; 25:31–46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7–12; Revelation 6; 19:11–21; 20:2*).

4. The Millennium. After the tribulation, Christ will establish His Messianic Kingdom in which He will reign with His saints over Israel and all the nations of the earth for one thousand years. After this, Satan will be loosed and lead a worldwide rebellion against Christ (*Deuteronomy 30:1–10; Isaiah 11:1–16; Isaiah 65:17–25; Ezekiel 37:21–28; Revelation 20:1–6*).

5. The Eternal State. Finally, the unsaved dead will be raised and judged and committed to eternal punishment. This is the second resurrection and the Great White Throne Judgment. The saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. Having fulfilled His redemptive and Kingdom missions as the Son of Abraham and the Son of David, Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father that the Triune God may reign forever in all spheres (*Mark 9:43–48; 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; Jude 1:24; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:10–13; Revelation 20:11–15, 21:1–4; 22:5, 11*).

How Can I Become a Christian?

Receiving Christ Jesus as your personal Savior is the most important act you or anyone else will ever do. There are various reasons why many people believe they are “Christians.”

1. I was born in a religious home.
2. I try to keep the Ten Commandments.
3. I am a church member.
4. I go to church regularly.
5. I do the best I can and live a pretty good life.
6. I believe in God, in Jesus, and in the Bible.

ALL of these things may be true, but the Bible teaches that you still may not be a Christian. You can become a Christian by taking these steps:

First, acknowledge that you—along with all people—have sinned and fallen short of God’s standard (*Romans 3:23; Matthew 5:48; Isaiah 53:6; 59:2*). According to the Bible, sin is a failure to be what God wants us to be and failure to do what God wants us to do.

Second, recognize that God loves you very much! His son, Jesus Christ died on a cross [to take away your sin] and rose from the dead [to give you eternal life]. (*Romans 5:8; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4*.)

Third, turn to God by personally inviting Jesus Christ into your life and trust Him to forgive your sins (*John 1:12; 14:6; Romans 5:1; 10:9*).

Wouldn't you like to trust Jesus Christ to forgive your sins right now? You may want to use this prayer to express your decision: "Dear Father, I admit that I am a sinner. I believe that the Lord, Jesus Christ, died for me. I trust Jesus Christ to forgive my sins right now. Let me start a new and meaningful life with You today. Amen."

If you took the above steps and really meant it – you are now a Christian! (*1 John 5:11-13*)

This is a personal decision between you and God, but we would like the joy of knowing about your decision and assisting you in this eternally important matter. If you make this decision or desire to know more about it, please feel free to contact us. We are here to help.



GRACE

CHAPEL

Our Vision

We dream of generations,
neighborhoods, and cultures
transformed by the presence of Christ
working through us.

Our Mission

Our mission is to build relationships with God
and others and to broaden our impact for Christ.

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