

# The Bible Fellowship Church Articles of Faith

## Preamble

The Bible Fellowship Church has adopted this statement of faith and order to declare with clarity and precision its faith and testimony to the glory of God.

The Bible Fellowship Church acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of man. It submits to the written Word of God and to the Holy Spirit as its only sources of guidance and power in maintaining its redemptive life and work in the world.

The Bible Fellowship Church has adopted this Faith & Order not in substitution for but in subordination to the Word of God. These standards have been received as being based on the Scriptures; even the elements not drawn directly from the Word have been acknowledged as based on the general rules and tenor of the Word. These standards seek to provide an effective means for the application of the teaching of the Scriptures to the faith, worship, government, and discipline of the church. Although these standards have been acknowledged to be of lesser importance than the inspired words of the Scriptures, they cannot be neglected without resulting in serious impairment of the life of the church.

The Bible Fellowship Church acknowledges as brethren all those who share its confession of faith in the person and work Jesus Christ. It confesses gladly the benefits of the historical and geographic breadth of this fellowship. It acknowledges specifically the benefits derived from similar statements of faith and order devised at many times in the history of the church. It seeks to respond to the responsibilities that these benefits bring by beseeching Almighty God to indwell it in such a way that it may by His grace bring glory to Himself and blessing to men.

## Article 1 - The Holy Scriptures

**1-1.** The Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired,<sup>1</sup> infallible Word of God,<sup>2</sup> a divine revelation, the original writings of which were verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> They are the supreme and final authority of faith and conduct.<sup>4</sup>

**1-2.** Inspiration is a special act of the Holy Spirit<sup>3</sup> by which He guided the writers of the Scriptures so that their words would convey the thoughts He wished conveyed, would bear a proper relationship to the thoughts of the other inspired books, and would be kept free from error of fact, doctrine, and judgment.<sup>5</sup>

**1-3.** The Holy Scriptures, the written Word of God, are composed of all books of the Old Testament and New Testament, namely:

<u>Old Testament</u>		<u>New Testament</u>
Genesis	Hosea	Matthew
Exodus	Joel	Mark
Leviticus	Amos	Luke
Numbers	Obadiah	John
Deuteronomy	Jonah	Acts
Joshua	Micah	Romans
Judges	Nahum	1 Corinthians
Ruth	Habakkuk	2 Corinthians
1 Samuel	Zephaniah	Galatians
2 Samuel	Haggai	Ephesians

1 Kings	Zechariah	Philippians
2 Kings	Malachi	Colossians
1 Chronicles		I Thessalonians
2 Chronicles		II Thessalonians
Ezra		I Timothy
Nehemiah		II Timothy
Esther		Titus
Job		Philemon
Psalms		Hebrews
Proverbs		James
Ecclesiastes		I Peter
Song of Solomon		II Peter
Isaiah		I John
Jeremiah		II John
Lamentations		III John
Ezekiel		Jude
Daniel		Revelation

<sup>1</sup> And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim.3:15-17).

<sup>2</sup> Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens (Psa.119:89). If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came--and the Scripture cannot be broken-- (John 10:35). The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever (Isa.40:8).

<sup>3</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow (1 Peter 1:10,11). We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words (1 Cor.2:12,13).

<sup>4</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17). And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:27,44). I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book (Rev.22:18,19).

<sup>5</sup> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished (Mat.5:17,18).

## Article 2 - The Trinity

**2-1.** There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son,<sup>1</sup> and the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> These three are one God,<sup>3</sup> the same in substance, eternally equal in power and glory.

<sup>1</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Mat.3:16,17). Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

<sup>2</sup> Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3,4).

<sup>3</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Gen. 1:1,26). Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mat.28:19). May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor.13:14).

### **Article 3 - God The Father**

**3-1.** There is but one living and true God,<sup>1</sup> immanent, transcendent, infinite in being and perfection, pure spirit,<sup>2</sup> invisible, immutable,<sup>3</sup> eternal, almighty, all wise,<sup>4</sup> most holy, most free, most loving, most gracious, most merciful, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin,<sup>5</sup> the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and withal most just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin. He will by no means clear the guilty.

<sup>1</sup> I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other (Isa. 45:5,6).

<sup>2</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

<sup>3</sup> I the LORD do not change (Mal.3:6a).

<sup>4</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" (Rom.11:33,34).

<sup>5</sup> And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (Exo.34:6,7).

### **Article 4 - God The Son**

**4-1.** Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Word,<sup>1</sup> the eternal and true God who is of one substance and equal with the Father.<sup>2</sup> He took on Himself man's nature, with all of its essential properties except sin: Being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary,<sup>3</sup> He embodied two perfect and distinct natures in one person. He is truly God and truly man, the only mediator between God and man.

**4-2.** The Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation of God to man.<sup>4</sup> In the days of His humiliation<sup>5</sup> He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, taught the will of God,<sup>5</sup> was crucified, and died. He was buried and arose bodily from the dead on the third day. The Lord Jesus offered Himself a sacrifice for sins,<sup>6</sup> satisfied the justice of the Father, propitiated the wrath of God, reconciled God and man,<sup>7</sup> and obtained an eternal inheritance.

**4-3.** The Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, from whence He had come, and was exalted, taking His place at the right hand of the Father, where He makes intercession on behalf of all who come to God through Him.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-3,14).

<sup>2</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Col.1:15-20).

<sup>3</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us" (Mat. 1:22,23).

<sup>4</sup> In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs (Heb.1:1-4).

<sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil.2:5-11).

<sup>6</sup> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Heb.9:14).

<sup>7</sup> For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Rom.5:10).

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin (Heb.4:14,15).

## **Article 5 - God the Holy Spirit**

**5-1.** The eternal<sup>1</sup> Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son,<sup>2</sup> is of the same substance and equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son. By Him the prophets were moved to speak the Word of God, and all writers of the Holy Scriptures were inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God.<sup>3</sup> He is the only efficient agent in the application of redemption. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,<sup>4</sup> moves them to repentance, and regenerates<sup>5</sup> them by His grace, enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ by faith.

**5-2.** The Holy Spirit indwells all true believers, baptizing them into one body, of which Christ is the head.<sup>6</sup> He, the divine Comforter, Intercessor, and Advocate, empowers the believer for service.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God (Heb.9:14b).

<sup>2</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you (John 14:16,26).

<sup>3</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

<sup>4</sup> But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned (John 16:7-11).

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5).

<sup>6</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (1 Cor.12:13).

<sup>7</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

## **Article 6 - Creation**

**6-1.** The triune God, according to His sovereign will, created out of nothing and out of things that He had made, by immediate and mediate action, the worlds and all that is in them.<sup>1</sup> He is the Governor and Upholder of the creation by His wisdom and by the word of His mighty power.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters (Gen.1:1,2). (See also Gen.1:3-2:3). By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible (Heb.11:3).

<sup>2</sup> For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Col.1:16,17).

## **Article 7 - Satan**

**7-1.** Satan is a created angelic being who fell from his first estate.<sup>1</sup> He is the god of this age, ruling by the permissive will of God.<sup>2</sup> He exercises authority over the unsaved, tempts the believer to sin, and continually accuses the brethren before the throne of God.<sup>3</sup>

**7-2.** He has been defeated by the finished work of Christ on Calvary. During the millennium he will be confined to the abyss,<sup>4</sup> to be released at the end of that period to lead the armies of evil against God. He will be finally judged and doomed to the lake of fire.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?" (Isa.14:12-17). And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day (Jude 1:6).

<sup>2</sup> In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient (Eph.2:2). The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Cor.4:4).

<sup>3</sup> For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless (1 Thes.3:5). For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down (Rev.12:10b).

<sup>4</sup> He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time (Rev.20:2,3).

<sup>5</sup> And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev.20:10).

## **Article 8 - Man**

**8-1.** God, by a special, instantaneous act, created man in His image<sup>1</sup> -- holy, righteous, and possessing true knowledge<sup>2</sup> -- by forming him out of the dust of the earth and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus man became a living soul.

**8-2.** Our first parents did not remain in the glorious and happy state of their original creation, but, through the subtlety and deception of the devil,<sup>3</sup> they disobeyed and transgressed the command of God the creator, incurring on themselves and their posterity the sentence of spiritual and physical death. The guilt and consequences of Adam's sin are imputed to the whole human race, so that all men are guilty,<sup>4</sup> inherently corrupt, totally depraved,<sup>5</sup> and subjects of the wrath of God.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Gen.1:27).

<sup>2</sup> And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph.4:24). And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator (Col.3:10). (See also Psa.8:4-6).

<sup>3</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die,"

the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it (Gen.3:1-6).

<sup>4</sup> Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men (Rom.5:12-18).

<sup>5</sup> There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Rom.3:11-18).

<sup>6</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath (Eph.2:3). (See also Rom.1:18).

## Article 9 - Sin

**9-1.** Sin is any lack of conformity to the will of God<sup>1</sup> or any transgression of the law of God.<sup>2</sup> Sin separates man from God, incurring His wrath and judgment, and it is manifest in the selfishness, rebellion, and total depravity of man's conduct and behavior before God and man. Sin is the cause of the curse on and defilement of the created universe.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All wrongdoing is sin (1 John 5:17a). Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins (James 4:17).

<sup>2</sup> Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it (James 2:10).

<sup>3</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (Rom.8:22). (See also Gen.3:17,18).

## Article 10 - Human Ability and Responsibility

**10-1.** In his original creation man was endowed with the ability to will and do good or evil and was accountable for his willing and doing.<sup>1</sup> But by the fall of Adam man lost his ability, apart from God's grace,<sup>2</sup> to will and to do those things necessary for a right relationship with God;<sup>3</sup> however, he is still accountable to God for obedience to all of His commands.<sup>4</sup> Man has not lost his ability to make decisions,<sup>5</sup> but left to himself, he acts only in accordance with his fallen, sinful nature.<sup>6</sup>

**10-2.** Only by God's infinite grace can man will or do anything necessary to his salvation.<sup>7</sup> By that grace, God saves men<sup>8</sup> whom He causes to will and to do good; however, He does this without nullifying man's ability to act responsibly.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen.2:16,17).

<sup>2</sup> As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath (Eph.2:1-3).

<sup>3</sup> There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God (Rom.3:11). Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God (Rom.8:8).

<sup>4</sup> God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile (Rom.2:6-10). In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

<sup>5</sup> Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live (Deu.30:11,19).

<sup>6</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom.3:10,12). Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil (Jer.13:23). (See also footnote 2).

<sup>7</sup> It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy (Rom.9:16).

<sup>8</sup> He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created (James 1:18).

<sup>9</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose (Phil.2:12,13).

## **Article 11 - Election**

**11-1.** Election is a free act of the sovereign God in which from eternity,<sup>1</sup> for reasons known only to Himself,<sup>2</sup> and apart from any goodness in man<sup>3</sup> He graciously chose from among the fallen mankind a people unto salvation,<sup>3</sup> that they might be conformed to Christ's image.<sup>4</sup> Those so chosen He redeemed<sup>5</sup> by His Son and seals by His Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (Eph. 1:4,11).

<sup>2</sup> "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mat.11:27).

<sup>3</sup> Who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time (2 Tim. 1:9).

<sup>4</sup> Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph.4:13).

<sup>5</sup> But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth (2 Thes.2:13).

<sup>6</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

## **Article 12 - Salvation**

**12-1.** Salvation is offered in the gospel to all men<sup>1</sup> and is received by grace through faith and the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit,<sup>2</sup> apart from works or human merit.<sup>3</sup> Salvation centers in a person, Jesus Christ, and receiving Him<sup>4</sup> includes the remission of sins on the grounds of His shed blood,<sup>5</sup> the imputation of His perfect righteousness,<sup>6</sup> the reception of the Holy Spirit,<sup>7</sup> and the impartation of eternal life.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

<sup>2</sup> When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).

<sup>3</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph.2:8,9).

<sup>4</sup> Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

<sup>5</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace (Eph.1:7).

<sup>6</sup> It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Cor.1:30).

<sup>7</sup> And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ (Rom.8:9b).

<sup>8</sup> And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:11,12).

## **Article 13 - Repentance**

**13-1.** Repentance unto life is a voluntary act of man,<sup>1</sup> accomplished by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Repentance consists in a knowledge of sin,<sup>2</sup> a sense of guilt and corruption that results in the confession and forsaking of sin and a turning to God.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

<sup>2</sup> When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).

<sup>3</sup> For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thes.1:9).

## **Article 14 - Regeneration**

**14-1.** Regeneration, or the New Birth,<sup>1</sup> is an instantaneous creative act of God through the agency of the Holy Spirit,<sup>2</sup> whereby divine life is imparted to those dead in sin, making them members of the family of God.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:3,6,7). For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God (1 Peter 1:23).

<sup>2</sup> He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

<sup>3</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God (John 1:11-13). Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Cor.5:17). He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created (James 1:18).

## **Article 15 - Justification**

**15-1.** Justification is the act of God's grace whereby the sinner is declared righteous solely through faith<sup>1</sup> in the redemptive work of Christ.<sup>2</sup> By this action the righteousness of Christ is imputed,<sup>3</sup> sin is pardoned, and the sinner is restored to divine favor.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Rom.5:1,2). Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses (Acts 13:39).

<sup>2</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us (Rom.8:33,34).

<sup>3</sup> Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men (Rom.5:18). God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor.5:21).

<sup>4</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon (Isa.55:7).

## **Article 16 - Sanctification**

**16-1.** Sanctification is a progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the believer<sup>1</sup> that purifies the life<sup>2</sup> and conforms the whole man to the image of Christ as the Word of God is believed and obeyed.<sup>3</sup> It begins at regeneration,<sup>4</sup> continues throughout the believer's life<sup>5</sup> on earth, and reaches its completion at the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor.3:18).

<sup>2</sup> It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality (1 Thes.4:3).

<sup>3</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

<sup>4</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor.6:11).

<sup>5</sup> And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold (Eph.4:24,26,27).

<sup>6</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thes.5:23).

## **Article 17 - Perseverance of the Saints**

**17-1.** Salvation is the work of God, from its commencement to its consummation.<sup>1</sup> Those regenerated by the Word of God through the work of the Holy Spirit become partakers of the divine nature.<sup>2</sup> They are preserved by the power of God<sup>3</sup> so that they shall never totally or finally fall away,<sup>4</sup> but shall persevere unto the end.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified (Rom.8:29,30).

<sup>2</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (2 Pet.1:4).

<sup>3</sup> Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil.1:6). Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time (1Pet.1:5).

<sup>4</sup> My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand (John 10:27-29). He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor.1:8). They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us (1 John 2:19).

<sup>5</sup> But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command (2 Thes.3:3,4).

## **Article 18 - The Church**

**18-1.** The Church is the body of which Christ is the head.<sup>1</sup> All those redeemed by His blood<sup>2</sup> and born of His Spirit are members of that body and are in mystical union and communion with Christ<sup>3</sup> and fellow

believers.<sup>4</sup> The Church is universal and local, visible and invisible. The visible Church consists of all those professing faith in Christ. The invisible Church is composed of all those born of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

**18-2.** The purpose of the Church is to worship God,<sup>6</sup> to edify the saints<sup>7</sup> and to evangelize the world.<sup>8</sup>

**18-3.** The Head of the Church administers the affairs of His body through overseers chosen by Himself and selected by the people.<sup>9</sup>

**18-4.** A properly constituted local Church must include the ministry of God's Word, the observance of the ordinances, the oversight by officers,<sup>10</sup> and the exercise of discipline.<sup>11</sup> The overseers of the Church are to be prayed for, obeyed, and honored.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church (Col.1:18a).

<sup>2</sup> For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect (1 Pet. 1:18,19).

<sup>3</sup> If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Rom.6:5,6).

<sup>4</sup> I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought (1 Cor.1:10).

<sup>5</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (1 Cor.12:13).

<sup>6</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24). You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Pet. 2:5,9).

<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines (1 Cor.12:7,11).

<sup>8</sup> "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mat.28:19,20).

<sup>9</sup> It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Eph.4:11,12).

<sup>10</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:2,3,5).

<sup>11</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (Mat.18:17).

<sup>12</sup> Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Greet all your leaders and all God's people (Heb.13:7,17,24a).

## **Article 19 - The Evangelistic Mission of the Church**

**19-1.** The Church has been commissioned by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to all nations.<sup>1</sup> Each Particular Church and every believer bear responsibility for this commission.<sup>2</sup>

**19-2.** God has clearly revealed in the Gospel the only way of salvation sufficient for and applicable to the whole lost race of mankind.<sup>3</sup> Based on His infinite and perfect love and His expressed desire that all men be saved,<sup>4</sup> He bids that the Church - with urgency, compassion, and persuasion - proclaim the gospel to all people and invite them to believe.<sup>5</sup>

**19-3.** It is the duty and privilege of everyone who hears the gospel to repent and receive its merciful provisions.<sup>6</sup> Those who do are saved,<sup>7</sup> and those who continue in impenitence and unbelief incur aggravated guilt and perish by their own fault.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mat.28:19,20). But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Act 1:8).

<sup>2</sup> But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

<sup>3</sup> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

<sup>4</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim.2:3,4).

<sup>5</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (2 Cor.5:18-20).

<sup>6</sup> In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom.10:13).

<sup>7</sup> They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household" (Acts 16:31). I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24).

<sup>8</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him (John 3:36). I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish (Luke 13:3). But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed (Rom.2:5).

## Article 20 - Ordinances

**20-1. Baptism.** Water baptism,<sup>1</sup> the immersion of the believer, is a visible testimony to the work of regeneration<sup>2</sup> and a mark of identification and union with Christ.<sup>3</sup> It has no saving or cleansing power, but it is the answer of a good conscience before God; hence, it should be administered only to those who have, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, realized the forgiveness of sins and possess the assurance of acceptance with God.

<sup>1</sup> As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

<sup>2</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (Acts 2:41).

<sup>3</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Mat.28:19,20). Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Rom.6:3,4). In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead (Col.2:11,12).

**20-2. The Lord's Supper.** The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> in which, by the giving and receiving of bread and wine, according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, His death is

proclaimed.<sup>2</sup> Those who worthily partake in this remembrance of Him feed upon Him to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace,<sup>3</sup> have their union and communion with Him confirmed, and testify and renew their thankfulness and commitment to God<sup>4</sup> and their mutual love and fellowship each with the other as members of the same mystical body.<sup>5</sup>

The Scriptures direct that each one spiritually examine himself before partaking of the bread and the cup "until He come."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:19,20).

<sup>2</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Cor.11:26).

<sup>3</sup> For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him (John 6:55,56).

<sup>4</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons (1 Cor.10:21).

<sup>5</sup> Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf (1Cor.10:17).

<sup>6</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1Cor.11:26).

## **Article 21 - The Lord's Day**

**21-1.** The first day of the week has been recognized by the Church as the Lord's Day since apostolic times.<sup>1</sup> We believe, therefore, that it ought to be observed by all believers, voluntarily and in love, as a continuation of the sabbath principle,<sup>2</sup> a day of remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord from the dead and a day of worship of God, rest from physical toil, service for the Master, and fellowship of the saints. Christians should engage only in duties of necessity and mercy on the Lord's Day.

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons (Mark 16:9). Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" (John 20:1,19). On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight (Acts 20:7). On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made (1 Cor.16:2).

<sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done (Gen.2:2,3). Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27,28).

## **Article 22 - Divine Healing**

**22-1.** It is the believer's privilege to seek the will of the Lord in matters of physical healing. This healing, whether by natural, medical, or supernatural means, must come from the omnipotent God who created the human body. The believer may implore the Lord for physical restoration according to the Scriptures,<sup>1</sup> and if the healing is for the highest glory of God, His power will be displayed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective (James 5:14-16).

<sup>2</sup> When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:4).

## **Article 23 - Civil Government**

**23-1.** God ordained and instituted civil government<sup>1</sup> for the welfare of society, to promote and to protect the good and restrain and punish the evil.<sup>2</sup> It is the duty of Christians to pray<sup>3</sup> for those in authority, to render due loyalty,<sup>4</sup> respect, and obedience<sup>5</sup> to them, and to pay taxes and customs demanded of them. Where demands of civil law militate against the supreme and higher law of God, Christians should obey God rather than man.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men. (Dan.4:17).

<sup>2</sup> Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you (Rom.13:1-3).

<sup>3</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Tim.2:1,2).

<sup>4</sup> Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right (1 Peter 2:13,14).

<sup>5</sup> Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good (Titus 3:1).

<sup>6</sup> But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God (Acts 4:19)." Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29).

## **Article 24 - Resurrection**

**24-1.** The bodily resurrection of Christ is the basis for the resurrection of man.<sup>1</sup> At the return of the Lord the bodies of the righteous dead will be raised, and the living believers will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.<sup>2</sup> Believers will, at the resurrection, receive spiritual and immortal bodies like Christ's own glorious body.<sup>3</sup>

**24-2.** The event of the resurrection is divided into two stages, separated by a period of a thousand years and differing in respect to both their subjects and their issues.<sup>4</sup> The first resurrection includes only the righteous dead.<sup>5</sup> The second resurrection is universal and occurs at the close of the millennium when all the unregenerate dead are raised to be brought before the great White Throne for judgment.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies" (John 11:25).

<sup>2</sup> We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever (1 Thes.4:14-17).

<sup>3</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body (Phil.3:20,21). I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27).

<sup>4</sup> Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan.12:2). Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned (John 5:28,29).

<sup>5</sup> (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev.20:5,6).

<sup>6</sup> The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done (Rev.20:13).

## Article 25 - The Second Coming of Christ

**25-1.** The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the personal visible, bodily return of our Lord to this earth<sup>1</sup> to conform believers to His image and to establish the millennial kingdom. In connection with Christ's return there will be the resurrection of the righteous dead,<sup>2</sup> the rapture of the saints,<sup>3</sup> the salvation of Israel,<sup>4</sup> the great tribulation,<sup>5</sup> and the inauguration of the millennial reign.<sup>6</sup> Following the millennium will be the resurrection and judgment of the unrighteous. The righteous will be eternally glorified with Him; the unrighteous will be eternally punished.

**25-2.** The Second Coming is the believer's source of encouragement and comfort inspiring him to active service for Christ, and is a motive for purification and holy living.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am (John 14:2,3). "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

<sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2). Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed (1 Cor.15:51,52).

<sup>3</sup> Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words (1 Thes.4:13-18).

<sup>4</sup> Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved (Rom.11:25b, 26a).

<sup>5</sup> For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again (Mat.24:21).

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev.20:6).

<sup>7</sup> Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure (1 John 3:3).

## Article 26 - The Judgments

**26-1.** The Scriptures enumerate several judgments that differ in time, place, subjects, and results. All judgment has been entrusted to the Son by the Father.<sup>1</sup>

**26-2.** Through the death of Christ on the cross, the believer's sins have been judged, and he has passed from death unto life.<sup>2</sup> In no case do the redeemed come again into judgment concerning their eternal destiny. Each saint, however, will be required to give an account before the judgment seat of Christ regarding his works and conduct.<sup>3</sup>

**26-3.** The unregenerate will be judged, condemned, and banished to eternal damnation in the lake of fire.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son (John 5:22).

<sup>2</sup> I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24).

<sup>3</sup> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom.8:1). For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad (2 Cor.5:10).

<sup>4</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev.20:11-15).

## **Article 27 - The Millennium**

**27-1.** The Millennium is that aspect of the Kingdom of God that will be ushered in when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the Earth to rule in righteousness. The unfulfilled Messianic prophecies will then be completed.<sup>1</sup> During this period, Satan will be bound and his deceitful activities<sup>2</sup> thus restricted. The created universe will undergo a transformation,<sup>3</sup> with universal prosperity and peace prevailing on earth.<sup>4</sup> The saints will reign with Christ,<sup>5</sup> and the earth will be full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness. "So then, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land." (Jer.23:5-8). (See also Isa.9:6,7).

<sup>2</sup> And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time (Rev.20:1-3).

<sup>3</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (Isa.11:6-9). (See also Rom.8:19-23).

<sup>4</sup> He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore (Isa.2:4). The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow (Isa.35:1,2,7).

<sup>5</sup> You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth (Rev.5:10).

<sup>6</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (Isa.11:9). Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear (Isa.45:22,23).

## **Article 28 - The Eternal State**

**28-1.** There are two final, eternal destinies for man: heaven for the righteous and penitent, and hell for the unrighteous and impenitent.<sup>1</sup> At the great white throne judgment, all of the enemies of God will be consigned to the place of eternal conscious punishment, from which there is no escape.<sup>2</sup> The new heavens and the new earth shall be created<sup>3</sup> as the final state in which the righteous shall dwell forever in the presence of God.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life (Mat.25:46).

<sup>2</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev.20:11-15).

<sup>3</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:10-13).

<sup>4</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God (Rev.21:3).