



Mt. Bethel Baptist Church

Faithfully Preaching the Word since 1767



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the Bible to be the Word of God. The Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, but is the Word of God. The very words are inspired. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments were all given by Divine inspiration (2 Tim 3:16). "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet 1:21). The writers were supernaturally selected and endued and wrote the original manuscripts without error or defect. The Bible is the infallible rule of faith and practice of the individual believer. The Bible is God's message to man and presents Him as its supreme Subject. The Bible unfolds His purposes and gives the only record concerning God's manifestation in Christ. The Bible is the Divine Revelation regarding God the Father, the Son, the Spirit, angels, demons, man, sin, salvation, grace, and glory.

GOD

We believe there is but one true and living God. God is Spirit (John 4:24) infinite and perfect in all His attributes. In Him all things have their source, support, and end. God is holy (Ex 15:11; Isa 6:3, 1 Pet 1:15, 16; 1 John 1:5). God is self-existent (Exod 3:14). God is eternal (Ps 90:2); Deut 32:40; Isa 41:4; 1 Tim 1:17). God is immutable (Ps 102:27; Mal 3:6; Jas 1:17). God is omniscient (Ps 139, 147:4, 5; Isa 40:13, 14, 27, 28). God is omnipotent (Gen 17:1, 18:14; Isa 26:4; Matt 28:20). God is love (1 John 4:8).

We believe in the unity, trinity, and triunity of Deity. There is only one God, but in that Godhead are three persons - - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - - yet those Three are one. They are equal, and each is worthy of honor, worship, devotion, and love. God is the Great Three-In-One and One-In-Three. The unity of God is taught in the Word of God (Deut 4:35, 6:4; Isa 43:10, 11, 44:6, 46:5; 1 Tim 2:5). The Trinity in the Godhead is taught in the Word of God (Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14, 1 John 5:7).

CHRIST

We believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and God the Son - - truly God and truly man.

THE PRE-HISTORIC CHRIST

We believe Christ is the eternal Son of God who has inhabited eternity. Christ existed before His incarnation (Mic 5:2; John 1:1, 2, 8:58). He antedates all creation because He is the Creator (John 1:3, Col 1:16; Heb 1:10). In the records of the Old Testament He appears as an angel or even as a man. To Hagar (Gen 16:7), to Abraham (Gen 18:1, 22:11, 12), to Jacob (Gen 48:15, 16), to Moses (Exod 3:2, 14), to Joshua (Josh 5:13, 14), to Manoah (Judg 13:19-22). Titles and Divine Names are given to Him which indicate His eternal Being. He is "The Son of God", "The Only Begotten Son", "The Alpha and Omega", "The First and the Last", "The Lord", "Lord of All", "Lord of Glory", "The Christ", "Wonderful", "Counselor", "The Mighty God", "The Father of Eternity", "God", "God with us", "Our Great God", "God Blessed Forever". All these titles relate Him to the Old Testament revelation of Jehovah-God. All the attributes of God are ascribed to Christ - - Life (John 1:4), Self-existence (John 5:26), Immutability (Heb 13:8), Eternity (Col 1:17), Omnipresence (Matt 28:20), Omniscience (1 Cor 4:5; Col 2:3), Omnipotence (Matt 28:18; Rev 1:8). The pre-existence of Christ is implied in the fact that He has these attributes of God. Christ is worshiped as God which also implies His pre-existence (John 20:28; Acts 7:59; Heb 1:6). He is from everlasting to everlasting.

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THE PROPHETIC CHRIST

We believe Christ is the “Coming One” repeatedly promised by the Old Testament prophets. He is the “Seed of the woman” (Gen 3:15), “the sin-offering” (Ps 22), “The substitutional Savior” (Isa 53), “The cut-off Messiah” (Dan 9:26), “The smitten Shepherd” (Zech 13:6, 7). He is the One typified by the various Old Testament sacrifices, offerings, ceremonies, feasts, etc. - - The coat of skins (Gen 3:21), Abel’s lamb (Gen 4:4), The offering of Isaac (Gen 22), The Passover lamb (Exod 12), The Levitical sacrificial system (Lev chaps 1-7), The brazen serpent (Num 21; John 3:14), The slain Lamb (Isa 53:7; John 1:29; Rev 13:8).

THE INCARNATE CHRIST

We believe in the virgin birth and the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost and brought forth her first-born Son (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38, 2:7). Jesus was born of a virgin and had no earthly father. He was “Immanuel”, being interpreted “God with us” - - that is - - God manifested in human flesh (Matt 1:23; 1 Tim 3:16). He was in the likeness of sinful flesh but was without sin (Rom 8:3). He did not partake of the fallen nature of man for He was perfect in all His ways “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb 7:26).

THE CRUCIFIED CHRIST

We believe Christ saves not by the life He lived by by the death He died. He did not die as a martyr or model or victim but freely offered Himself as a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice for our sins (John 10:17, 18; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:20; Heb 9:14, 10:7-9). He bore the judgment of God against sin (Isa 53:4-6; Matt 27:46; 2 Cor 5:19). His death was expiatory and not exemplary (Rom 5:6; 2 Cor 5:14, 14, Gal 3:13, 14). He endured the wrath of God justly due the sinner. Christ came to “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb 9:26). The efficacy of His blood is the foundation of the Gospel of Grace. Apart from faith in His death there is salvation for no man.

THE RESURRECTED CHRIST

We believe in the literal, physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb (Luke 24:6, 37-40; Matt 28:6; 1 Cor 15:20). After three days He arose from the dead a mighty conqueror over sin and the grave. His resurrection was a victorious resurrection. His resurrection is a surety and guarantee of the resurrection of all believers (1 Cor 15:20-23; 1 Thess 4:16, 17).

THE ASCENDED CHRIST

We believe that after His post-resurrection ministry Jesus Christ ascended into heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11). He has returned to the glory from which He came at the time of His incarnation. This ascension to the Father was in a real, tangible, resurrection body (Heb 1:1-2; 1 Tim 3:16). He is at the present time in this glorified, human body at the right hand of God the Father (Acts 2:23, 5:31; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 8:1, 10:12, 12:2, 1 Pet 3:22).



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THE INTERCEDING CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ having entered into Heaven itself is there to minister during the present age as Priest and Advocate in behalf of His own in the work (Heb 7:25). As Priest He is making intercession for His own (Heb 7:25). As Advocate He pleads the merits of His own blood in behalf of His own when they sin (1 John 2:1, 2). The ministries of Christ as Intercessor and Advocate are unto the eternal security of the believer (Rom 8:34-39).

THE COMING AND REIGNING CHRIST

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth again. The second coming of Christ will be literal, visible and personal (Acts 1:11). He will come “for His saints” when He descends in the air and there receives to Himself the saints who are caught up from the earth to meet Him - - some of those to be raised from the dead and some to be translated from the living state (1 Cor 15:22, 23, 51, 52; 1 Thess 4:13-18). He will receive His own into the place which He has gone to prepare for them (John 14:1-3). He will come “with His saints”, His redeemed ones (Rev 19:7-16; 1 Thess 3:13; Jude 14) to execute judgment upon the earth. He will judge the nations (Matt 25:31-46), restore the nation Israel, God’s chosen earthly people, and will sit on David’s throne (Luke 1:31-33). All creation will be restored to its Edenic glory (Rom 8:19-23). Satan will be bound and confined to the abyss a thousand years (Rev 20:1-3).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit. He is a member of the Trinity equal in power with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is truly God (Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 3:16). Attributes possessed by God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit - - Eternity (Heb 9:14), Omniscience (John 14:26, 16:12, 13; 1 Cor 2:10, 11), Omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10), Omnipotence (Luke 1:35; Rom 15:19). He was active in creation (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). He is the Source of life (John 6:63; Rom 8:11). He is the Author of the Holy Scriptures (2 Sam 23:2; Acts 28:25; Heb 3:7; 2 Pet 1:21).

Having come on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the Holy Spirit came in fulfillment of the promises of the Father and the Son (John 7:39, 16:7, 8, 13). He came to bring into being “The Church”, and to abide in all believers, and to work through them. The Holy Spirit baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). He indwells all believers (Acts 2:38, 39; Rom 5:5, 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16, 6:19; Gal 3:2). He seals all believers by His presence within them (Eph 1:3, 14:4:30; 2 Cor 1:22, 5:5). He is Leader and Guide to all believers (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18).

The Holy Spirit exercises a ministry to the world in convicting men of sin (John 16:8; 1 Cor 2:4; 1 Thess 1:5), inviting men to Christ (Rev 22:17), and in enabling sinners to believe the Gospel (1 Cor 21:3). He is the Agent in regeneration (John 3:5, 6; Titus 3:5). He instructs believers concerning Christ and the Scriptures (John 14:26, 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:10-13). He witnesses to believers of their sonship (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6). He enables believers to pray (Rom 8:15, 26, 27). He is the source of the attributes of character that are distinctive to the believer (Gal 5:22, 23). He is the author of a “unity” that is the only trustworthy basis for Christian fellowship and cooperation (Eph 4:3, 4).



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SATAN

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan. He is a created being, originally perfect and holy but fell through pride and self will (Ezek 28:11-19; Isa 14:12-17). Through his fall he became the arch-enemy of God and men. He was the instigator of the fall of man (Gen 3:1-5; 1 Tim 2:14). He is the “prince of the power of the air”, the spirit that energizes the children of disobedience (Eph 2:2). He blinds the eyes of the unsaved lest the light of the Gospel shall reach them (2 Cor 4:3, 4). He holds the ungodly world in his arms (1 John 5:19). He counterfeits the things of God, promoting extensive religious systems (1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Cor 11:13-15). He is the god of this age (2 Cor 4:4), the accuser of the saints (Job 1:6-12, 2:1-13), and the father of lies (John 8:44). He attacks the children of God because they are indwelt by the divine nature and through them he is enabled to secure a thrust at God (Eph 6:12-17). Satan has been defeated at Calvary by the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 2:14), and will eventually be cast into the lake of fire, his final doom (Rev 20:10).

MAN

We believe that man in his present human form, was created by God as the conclusion and consummation of all creation. Man was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26) and God breathed into him the breath of life (Gen 2:7). Man was created innocent but fell through Satanic solicitation. He rebelled against the authority of heaven, disobeyed his Creator, and thus became a sinner (Gen 3:1-7). By sinning, the first man, Adam, lost his blessed estate as he was created and became subject to both spiritual and physical death (Gen 2:17). Adam, and Eve also, passed immediately into spiritual death, which means separation from God. In due time they suffered the penalty of physical death which means separation of the soul from the body. Through the fall of Adam his sin is imputed to his posterity and are lost apart from the proffered grace of God in Christ. The holy judgments of God rest upon them because of imputed sin, because of an inherited sin nature, because they are under sin and because of their own personal sins. Men can be saved from these judgments only through Christ. This is the good news of the Gospel.

SIN

We believe in the reality, universality, and heinousness of sin, “Sin is any want of conformity to the character of God, whether it be in act, disposition, or state”. (Chafer). Sin is always against God (Ps 51:4; Luke 15:18). “- - sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17). “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:23). “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin” (Jas 4:17). As a result of Adam’s fall sin has been imputed to his posterity, therefore Adam’s posterity sinned when he sinned and “death passed upon all men” (Rom 5:12-18). When Adam fell he became an entirely different being, depraved and degenerate, and the only capable of begetting posterity like his fallen self. Therefore, every child of Adam is born with an Adamic nature, ever and always prone to sin (Rom 5:19). The whole world is now under sin (Rom 3:9; Gal 3:22; Rom 11:32) - - that is to say - - without any merit at all which might contribute toward salvation. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). The total depravity of man through sin is so real that only a new creation will meet his need and enable him to enter the presence of God (John 3:5).



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REGENERATION

We believe in the necessity and possibility of regeneration. Regeneration, or the new birth, is the impartation of the Divine nature in response to faith in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By nature man is dead in sin (Eph 2:1) and is in need of a spiritual quickening or new birth. Upon believing the Gospel, man is born again “of incorruptible seed, by the word of God” (1 Pet 1:23). The old nature though still present is not altered, reformed, or revitalized, but a new life is imparted - - the life of God - - and he passes out of death into life (John 5:24). He is made partaker of a new nature (2 Pet 1:4). He has put on the new man, which after God is created in holiness and righteousness (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). Christ now lives in him (Gal 2:20) and God’s seed now abides in him (1 John 3:9). Without the new birth, man “cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3), he “cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Man’s sinful condition demands a change in nature and no system of education or culture can bring about such a change. God alone can do it for to live the life of God man must have the nature of God (John 1:13; Jas 1:18). The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent in regeneration. The new birth is “of the Spirit” (John 3:5, 6; Titus 3:5) because He is the Author of the “incorruptible seed”, convicts of sin, presents Christ, and bestows faith. Having been united to God, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, the regenerated man is a son of God, the Holy Spirit witnessing to his spirit of that sonship (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6).

SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that men are but mendicants upon the mercies of God. Salvation is by grace and grace alone (Rom 5:17; Eph 2:8, 9; Titus 2:11). Works of the law or human merit play no part in justification before God. The believing sinner is “justified freely (without cause) by His grace through redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:2) whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Rom 3:25). When saving a sinner by grace it is necessary that God shall have dealt with every sin, which would otherwise demand judgment and thereby hinder His grace. This He has wrought in the death of His Son who redeemed the sinner with His own blood (1 Pet 1:18, 19; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12). Only through faith in the finished work of Christ can men come into possession of salvation. “Man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:28). Through faith in Christ they are born again (1 Pet 1:21-23), their sins are forgiven (Eph 1:7), they become children of God (Gal 3:26), have eternal life (John 3:16, 1 John 5:12) and are citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20). They are no longer under condemnation (Rom 8:1; John 5:24) having been saved from the guilt and penalty of sin.

Salvation by grace also includes God’s gracious provision of deliverance from the power of sin. Having received the Divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) while still retaining the old nature, every child of God possesses two natures. The old nature is the flesh - - one of three foes of the Christian - - the world, the flesh, and the devil. These foes are not eradicated but God provides victory over them by His Spirit (1 John 4:4, 5:4; Gal 5:16). Likewise He provides victory over sin by the Spirit (Rom 6:14, 8:2). Under these provisions the Christian may walk in the power of a new life principle which is by dependence upon the Holy Spirit alone (Gal 5:16). The justified one shall live by faith - - the faith which depends on the power of another - - the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25). “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

SANCTIFICATION



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We believe every believer is sanctified the moment he is saved. Having been redeemed and cleansed in Christ's precious blood, justified, forgiven all trespasses, purified, and having become sons of God, every believer is said to be positionally sanctified, and is therefore a saint before God (1 Cor 6:11). He has been separated from sin and separated or set apart unto God. This position bears no relationship to the believer's daily life though it should inspire him to holy living.

We believe every believer should be experimentally sanctified - - that is - - experimentally separated from the world and unto God by (1) yieldedness to God (Rom 12:1, 2). By so doing the Christian is set apart unto God by his own choice. The infilling of the Holy Spirit will be made possible, resulting in a new blessedness and a more complete separation unto God; (2) separation from sin (Rom 6:18, 22). By claiming the promised moment by moment victory through the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16-23); (3) Christian growth (2 Pet 3:18; 1 Thess 3:12, 4:1, 10). Because experimental sanctification is progressive the believer is exhorted to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" - - "to increase and abound" - - and to "abound yet more and more". There is always the danger of defilement by contact with a sinful world, therefore an ever increasing sense of duty and an ever-deepening consciousness of sin, necessitating a continued growth and development in the graces and virtues of the believer's life.

We believe every believer will experience ultimate sanctification at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess 5:23) At that day the believer will be changed - - spirit, soul and body - - that he will be "like Him (1 John 3:2) and "conformed to His image" (2 Cor 3:18). He shall be faultless" before the presence of His glory and free from every "spot" and "wrinkle" (Jude 24; Eph 5:27).

THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES

We believe that the Church - - the true Body of Christ - - is composed of all true believers, that company of people who have been called out from the old creation into the new, being gathered by the Holy Spirit into one organism or body of which Christ is the Head. This company includes only those who have been saved in the period between the day of Pentecost and the return of Christ to receive His own. Every believer has been baptized into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13) and being so united is a member of that Body (1 Cor 12:12, 27), of which Christ is the Head (Eph 1:22). The Church is Christ's fullness, or completeness, even as Christ is its fullness, or completeness (Eph 1:23; Col 1:19, 2:9, 10).

We believe in local churches. They are of Divine origin and authority (1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:2). A local church should be a company of Christians voluntarily gathered together for self edification, mutual helpfulness, and the proclamation of the Word of God (Heb 10:23-25). Membership in the local church should only be extended to those who have experienced regeneration. We also believe Baptism to be a prerequisite to membership in a local church.



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THE ORDINANCES

We believe there are two memorial ordinances: - Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We believe the subjects for baptism are believers (Acts 8:36-38) and believers only. The order of Scripture is "believe and be Baptized". Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in testimony of his union with Christ, in His death, burial, and resurrection (Col 2:12). The submersion pictures burial and the emersion pictures resurrection. The ordinance has no saving efficacy.

We believe the Lord's Supper is for believers only. This observance whereby believers partake of bread and the cup is emblematic of feeding upon the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ by faith. The ordinance should be accompanied by self-examination as to worthiness to partake (1 Cor 11:27-29). The ordinance has no saving efficacy.

HEAVEN

We believe in a real literal Heaven; a place of blessedness to which all the redeemed of the Lord go and in which place they will forever enjoy God and His Presence (Rev 21 and 22).

HELL

We believe in a real literal Hell; a place of torment to which the unsaved go and in which place they will forever experience punishment and banishment from the presence of God (Rev 20:11-15, 21:8).

FINAL REWARDS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

We believe that all believers must give an account of their daily life and service for God at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor 3:1-15). At that time the reward or loss of reward for service due each individual believer will be determined. The rewards are a prize (1 Cor 9:24), a crown (1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10, 3:11).

FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

We believe that all the wicked, the lost of all the ages will appear before the great white Throne to be judged according to their works and those judged will be cast into the lake of fire in a continued and conscious separation from God (Rev 20:11-15).