

ARTICLE III * DOCTRINE and BYLAWS

The Doctrinal Statement of Grace Bible Church is as follows:

Section 1. The Bible. We believe the total Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, all 66 books, are verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writing, and that they are the only infallible rule for faith and life.

- A. Total: The total Scriptures are full and equally inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- B. Verbally: This refers to the fact that the Bible, even its very words, is true and without error in the original writings. Therefore, more than just the thought or concept is inspired, but also every word is inspired (Matthew 5:17-18; Proverbs 30:5-6).
- C. Inspired (inspiration): Inspiration is that particular work of God by which the Holy Spirit, becoming the co-author of Scripture, supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture without excluding their human intelligence, their individuality, their literary style, their personal feelings, or any other human factor. God's own complete and coherent message to men was recorded in perfect accuracy and the very words of the Bible bear the authority of this divine authorship. Inspiration is not equivalent to dictation except in certain instances, as God uses the experience, feelings, and thinking of the human author. The end result, however, is just as accurate as if God, Himself, had taken the pen. Hence, the Scriptures were inspired or breathed out of God and, though the authors were fallible men, what they wrote was without error (2 Peter 1:20-21). Inspiration does not suppress intellectual ability and talents (Luke 1:1-3; 2 Samuel 23:2).
- D. Inerrant: Inerrant means that the Scriptures in their original writings were without error (John. 10:35; Luke 16:17).
- E. Infallible: The Scriptures are God's special revelation (communication of truth) to man and because they are inspired and inerrant they become our final authority. However, be careful to note what the Bible indicates as not being authoritative, such as Satan's statement to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "You shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4-5; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- F. Authoritative: We believe the Bible, in part and in whole, is authoritative for the believer. The authority of the Bible is both inherent in the Bible and rightfully bestowed on it as a believer comes to understand it. (Matthew 28:18-20; Titus 2:15)
- G. Sufficient: The Bible is complete and sufficient for all that can be and is known concerning God and His relations with mankind (Ephesians 3:3ff). All things in the Bible may not be fully understood at this time, but all that is necessary for man to know of God's purposes and plans is included in the Biblical documents (Proverbs 25:2; Matthew 4:4).
- H. Grace Bible Church approaches the Scriptures from a Dispensational point of view, rejecting all variants including Ultra-Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology.

Section 2. The Trinity. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

- A. One God: There is but one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah. 45:5; Mark 12:29-32).
- B. Eternally existing: Three persons who are distinct in subsistence but the same in substance.
 - 1. Distinct in subsistence: The words or thoughts of man can never fully define the doctrine of the Trinity. However, the Bible clearly describes the Trinity as being three separate distinct persons, co-equal, eternally existing (2 Corinthians 13:13-14; Matthew 28:19).
 - 2. Same in substance: Three persons of the Godhead partake of the same divine nature.

- C. The Bible tells us that the Father is God (John 6:27; Romans 1:7).
- D. The Son is recognized as God (John 1:1; 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20; Philippians 2:6).
- E. The Holy Spirit is also identified as God (Acts 5:3-4).

Section 3. Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, true man and true God.

- A. Jesus Christ: He is God-man. Two natures (deity-humanity) in one person. The relationship is such that there is no dividing of person and no confounding of two natures (John 1:1 and 14).
- B. Conceived of the Holy Spirit: This was a divine act of God (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-28).
- C. Born of the virgin Mary: The Son of God was born of a woman who was a virgin (Matthew 1:13-16; Isaiah 7:14).

Section 4. Mankind. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, bringing upon himself and his race both physical death and spiritual death, which is separation from God and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and thus are sinners in thought, word, and deed.

- A. Created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1; 1 Corinthians 11:7). Genesis 1:26-27 declares that God made and created man (mankind) in His image, not some part of man, such as the soul, but man as a unit. Furthermore, it states that God created mankind from the beginning male and female. This is further confirmed by Jesus' words in Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6.
- B. Separation from God. When man, of his own free will, chose to disobey God, he sinned (the breaking of God's law). Sin separates us from God. As a sinner, man incurs not only physical death, but also spiritual death (Romans 6:23, 3:10-23; Galatians 3:22).

Section 5. The Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity, who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is the life of the believer, and He empowers the preaching and teaching of the Gospel.

- A. Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son (John 14:16-17; Matthew 28:19).
- B. Convicts: This purpose of the Holy Spirit is seen in Christ's words in John 16:7-11. He also restrains Satan until God's purpose is fulfilled (2 Thessalonians. 2:7).
- C. Life: The Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth (John 3:5-7). At the moment of conversion, a believer is regenerated, indwelt, sealed, and baptized into the Body of Believers (1 Corinthians 12:13). After conversion, the Holy Spirit is the strength and guide of the believer's life (Ephesians 1:13; John 16:13; Romans 8:26-27). The believer is commanded to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit. This yielding to the control of God in our lives is the fullness for power and guidance (Ephesians 5:18).
- D. Empowers: He empowers the preaching and teaching of the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:4). To be filled with the Holy Spirit is the Biblical prescription for power in serving Christ (Ephesians 5:18).
- E. We believe the New Testament church was established on Jesus as the cornerstone and the apostles and prophets as the foundation. These offices have ceased, along with their accompanying signs of miracles and speaking in tongues (other known languages). The church, through the leadership of the offices that remain (evangelist, pastor/teacher (i.e., elder), and deacon), now builds on that foundation by means of the finished and sufficient Scriptures. (Ephesians 2:20-22; 2 Corinthians 12:11-12; 1 Corinthians 14:18,37; Ephesians 4:11-13)

Section 6. The Atoning Work of Jesus Christ. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood.

- A. Representative: This means that Jesus Christ represented all the sins of the world. He who knew no sin, was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:14-21). Adam was the representative of man in the fall. Christ is the representative of a saving sacrifice (1 Corinthians 15:22). Therefore, if Christ represents all, His sacrifice will cover all (John 3:16).
- B. Substitutionary: This is called the "vicarious" suffering in that He died in our place. Christ did not die for His sin (Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 John 3:5), but He died for sins of others (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:8).
- C. All: The gift of salvation provided by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is for all men. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13; 1 John 2:2).
- D. Justified: Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the guilty and depraved sinner to be righteous because of the sinner's belief in Jesus Christ. Man receives a new standing (Romans 5:1).
- E. We believe the atoning work of Christ on the cross conquered all sin and death. Therefore, His atonement purchased the effectual salvation of the elect and the right to judge those who do not believe. All will be raised to life, and Jesus Himself will determine the final destiny of all mankind. (1 John 2:2; Colossians 1:19-20; 2 Peter 2:1; Matthew 25:31-46)

Section 7. The Resurrection, Ascension and Intercessory Work of Christ. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and His present life there for believers as a High Priest and Advocate.

- A. Resurrection: We believe that after three days and three nights Jesus Christ arose bodily from the grave (Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 24:23-40). This doctrine is essential to salvation (Romans 10:9-10).
- B. Ascension: After His resurrection and forty-day ministry, Jesus ascended up into heaven (Acts 1:1-11; 1 Peter 3:22).
- C. High Priest and Advocate: This means that whereas before we could not enter the presence of God, now through Jesus Christ, who as our High Priest represents us before God, we are able to enter God's presence. As an advocate, He pleads our innocence before God based upon the payment of His own shed blood (John 14:18; Hebrews 4:14, 5:1-10, 7:25, 13:5).

Section 8. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We believe that at any moment the rapture of the saved may occur, when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven and catch away His church to meet Him in the air. We also believe in the personal, bodily, and pre-millennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom upon the earth.

- A. Any moment: There were many signs given to the nation Israel which would precede Christ's coming to earth to set up His millennial kingdom (The Revelation). However, there were no signs given to the church. The church was to live believing Christ could return immediately (at any moment) to take them into His presence (John 14:2-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The believer is told to be watching for Christ Himself, and not just for signs. The signs given for Israel are shadows that indicate the nearness of the Light, Christ Himself, returning for us (1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation. 3:3).
- B. The rapture of the saved: The word rapture means "catching up" (1 Thessalonians. 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53).
- C. Personal: Jesus, Himself, will appear, not a spirit, not a gust of wind, but Jesus Christ Himself. "This same Jesus," (Acts 1:11).

- D. Pre-millennial: This means that Jesus Christ will come before the Millennium. The Millennium is a period of 1,000 years in which Christ will set up an earthly kingdom. (This point cannot be covered in a few verses, but Revelation 20:1-10 will help illustrate.)

Section 9. Salvation in Christ Alone. We believe that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, and that all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life.

- A. By grace through faith: (Hebrews 11:1) Paul, in his book to the Galatians, states that faith is the only criterion of Salvation; works are ruled out. Therefore, a man is saved by grace through faith alone and is kept not by his works, but through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:5, 8 and 9).
- B. Born again: It is essential to salvation (John 3:7). It is a "new birth," born of the Word of God and the Spirit of God (John 3:5). This brings spiritual life as birth of the flesh brings physical life. "Must" because first birth only takes us to death. Spiritual birth gives us eternal life, the life of God.
- C. Children: We become the Sons of God because of what Christ has done for us (1 John 3:1-2).
- D. Heirs of eternal life: We are saved for eternity. We cannot fall from grace because our salvation does not depend on works. We are kept through the eternal grace of God (Titus 3:7, Romans 8:14-39; John 10:27-30). The believer is eternally secure in Christ. (1 John 5:13).

Section 10. Resurrection of the Dead. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, and the everlasting blessedness of the saved in heaven, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost in hell.

- A. Bodily Resurrection: Those saints who are "asleep in Jesus" will be raised at the same time the living saints are "raptured" and changed (this is before the Tribulation) (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58). After the Millennium and the final battle of Gog and Magog, all the unsaved will stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment. Those not found written in the Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire.
- B. Everlasting conscious suffering: Luke 16:23-31 explains this.
- C. Heaven: We believe heaven to be a literal place where Jesus Christ is preparing an eternal home for believers of all ages (John 14:1-6; Hebrews 11:10-16).
- D. Hell: An actual place; Hades (abode of the unseen dead) is where unsaved men go now. After the final judgment they will be cast into hell (Gehenna) or the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15; Matthew 13:36-43).

Section 11. Ordinances. Grace Bible Church believes strongly that the local church is the means through which the Universal Organism (the Body of Jesus Christ, the universal church) so beautifully portrayed by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians, is made visible and functional among men, and that the local fellowship of believers is God's chief agency in the world today. The following ordinances are observed by Grace Bible Church:

- A. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a reminder of the death of Christ on behalf of those who are believers (1 Corinthians 11:23-25). It is a time of meditation, as believers remember the Lord's death. It is a time of proclamation, as believers proclaim the Lord's death. It is a time of examination, as believers ponder the Lord's death. It is a time of celebration, as believers rejoice in the Lord's death (1 Corinthians 11:23-28).
- B. Baptism. The purpose of baptism as seen in the New Testament can be summed up in two words - public identification. In the New Testament whenever someone turned to Christ from his sin, that individual made that decision public by being baptized. Baptism is also a public identification with the people of God. When an individual identifies himself with Jesus Christ, he is also identifying himself with Christ's people. Those who have received the saving grace of God should make that decision a public declaration by being baptized. Baptism is an important act of obedience as seen in the New Testament. In fact, after the day of Pentecost there is not one record of an unbaptized believer found anywhere in the New Testament. This significance of baptism is best symbolized through the immersion of the participant in

water (Romans 6:3-6).

Section 12. Marriage and Sexuality. We believe that according to the Bible, marriage is the uniting of one man* and one woman* (*as genetically defined) in covenant commitment for a lifetime. Marriage is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman, within the love and bonds of marriage. (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:21-33, 1. Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4). Accordingly, based upon the Bible, we believe the following biblical standards are applicable to all men and women but particularly to Christians:

- A. Any form of sexual intimacy outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).
- B. Furthermore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, cohabitation (regardless of the age of the individuals involved), any attempt to change one's gender in disagreement with one's genetically defined gender, is sinful and offensive to God (Leviticus 18-20; Romans 1).

We do believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Romans 8). And we believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior, attitudes, or speech directed towards any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture. (1 Peter 2:13-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).

Section 13. Creation and Flood

A. We believe that the eternal God created and made the universe in six literal days (Genesis 1, Exodus 20:8-11, 31:17; Colossians 1:16), with God personally creating and making the existing universe with all its basic systems and kinds of organisms in those six literal days of the creation week. As a result, we reject allegorical interpretations of the creation account and any interpretation indicating God used evolution as His mechanism to create.

B. We believe that God sent a global flood initiated by cataclysmic events (Genesis 7:11-12, 8:1-3) that resulted in devastation and loss of life on the earth as it then existed. The flood also produced geological changes on the earth (Psalm 104:6-8) that still testify of God's eternal power and divine nature (Romans 1:18-20). Scripture warns that the flood will be forgotten in the last days, and thus the world is not expecting the coming judgment by fire (2 Peter 3:4-13)