

WHAT WE BELIEVE & TEACH

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PREFACE

Recognizing that the Bible is the very Word of God to all of mankind, and understanding the priority of knowing and obeying its truths, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is very committed to teaching the Holy Scriptures in its entirety with diligence and authority.

Thus, the central ministry of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is to effectively communicate these biblical truths to the people of God that they may become equipped to do the work of the ministry.

This statement, though it is not the entirety of what we believe, presents the essential doctrines that Pleasant Grove Baptist Church firmly believes and with convictions regarding the theological truths of the Bible. They are the primary doctrines of the Christian faith, and they reflect the heart of the teaching of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our [Pastor] & [Deacons] is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We Believe and teach:

- That the Bible is God's written revelation to man and is without errors or mistakes—([1 Corinthians 2:7-14](#); [2 Peter 1:20-21](#)).
- That God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship, inspired by the Holy Spirit and written down through human authors—([Matthew 5:18](#); [2 Peter 1:20-21](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#)).
- That there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, but there is only one true interpretation—([John 7:17](#); [16:12-15](#); [1 Corinthians 2:7-15](#); [1 John 2:20](#)).

GOD

We Believe and teach:

- That there is only one living and true God—([Deuteronomy 6:4](#); [Isaiah 45:5-7](#); [1 Corinthians 8:4](#)).
- He is an infinite, all-knowing Spirit—([John 4:24](#)).
- He is perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—([Matthew 28:19](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#))—each is fully God and equally deserving worship and obedience.

GOD THE FATHER

We Believe and teach:

- That God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, is the Creator of all things—([Genesis 1:1-31](#); [Ephesians 3:9](#)).

- As Creator He is Father to all men—([Ephesians 4:6](#)), but He is spiritual Father only to believers—([Romans 8:14](#); [2 Corinthians 6:18](#)).
- He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events—([1 Chronicles 29:11](#)).
- In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin—([Habakkuk 1:13](#); [John 8:38-47](#)), nor does He dismiss the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures—([1 Peter 1:17](#)).
- He saves all who come to Him through Jesus Christ from sin and He adopts as his own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own—([John 1:12](#); [Romans 8:15](#); [Galatians 4:5](#); [Hebrews 12:5-9](#)).

GOD THE SON: (JESUS CHRIST)

We Believe and teach:

- That Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine supremacies, and in these He is coequal, and coeternal with the Father—([John 10:30](#); [14:9](#)).
- That God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation—([John 1:3](#); [Colossians 1:15-17](#); [Hebrews 1:2](#)).
- That our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born—([Isaiah 7:14](#); [Matthew 1:23, 25](#); [Luke 1:26-35](#)).
- He was God incarnate (in human form)—([John 1:1, 14](#)).
- The purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom—([Psalm 2:7-9](#); [Isaiah 9:6](#); [John 1:29](#); [Philippians 2:9-11](#); [Hebrews 7:25-26](#); [1 Peter 1:18-19](#)).
- That our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive—([John 10:15](#); [Romans 3:24-25](#); [5:8](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#)).
- That in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers—([John 5:26-29](#); [14:19](#); [Romans 1:4](#); [4:25](#); [6:5-10](#); [1 Corinthians 15:20, 23](#)).
- That Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His Body, unto Himself at the rapture, and returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth—([Acts 1:9-11](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18](#); [Revelation 20](#)).
- That the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through whom God will judge all mankind—([John 5:22-23](#)):
 - a. Believers—([1 Corinthians 3:10-15](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)).
 - b. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return—([Matthew 25:31-46](#)).
 - c. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne—([Revelation 20:11-15](#)).

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We Believe and teach:

- That the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect—([1 Corinthians 2:10-13](#)), emotions—([Ephesians 4:30](#)), will—([1 Corinthians 12:11](#)), eternity—([Hebrews 9:14](#)), omnipresence—([Psalm 139:7-10](#)), omniscience—([Isaiah 40:13-14](#)), omnipotence—([Romans 15:13](#)), and truthfulness—([John 16:13](#)). In all the divine attributes He is coequal with the Father and the Son—([Matthew 28:19](#); [Acts 5:3-4](#); [28:25-26](#); [1 Corinthians 12:4-6](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#); [Hebrews 10:15-17](#)).
- His sovereign activity in creation—([Genesis 1:2](#)), the incarnation—([Matthew 1:18](#)), the written revelation—([2 Peter 1:20-21](#)), and the work of salvation—([John 3:5-7](#)).
- That His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ—([John 16:7-9](#); [Acts 1:5](#); [2:4](#); [Romans 8:29](#); [2 Corinthians 3:18](#); [Ephesians 2:22](#)).
- That the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ—([1 Corinthians 12:13](#)).

- The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption—([Romans 8:9](#); [2 Corinthians 3:6](#); [Ephesians 1:13](#)).
- That every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit—([John 16:13](#); [Romans 8:9](#); [Ephesians 5:18](#); [1 John 2:20, 27](#)).
- That the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by extravagant or flamboyant displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith—([John 16:13-14](#); [Acts 1:8](#); [1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#); [2 Corinthians 3:18](#)).

MAN

We Believe and teach:

- That man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, free will, self determination, and moral responsibility to God—([Genesis 2:7, 15-25](#); [James 3:9](#)).
- That God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world—([Isaiah 43:7](#); [Colossians 1:16](#); [Revelation 4:11](#)).
- Because of Adam's sin, man lost his innocence, and earned the penalty of spiritual and physical death, and became subject to the wrath of God, therefore mankind is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ—([Genesis 2:16-17](#); [3:1-19](#); [John 3:36](#); [Romans 3:23](#); [6:23](#); [1 Corinthians 2:14](#); [Ephesians 2:1-3](#); [1 Timothy 2:13-14](#); [1 John 1:8](#)).
- Because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration—([Psalm 14:1-3](#); [Jeremiah 17:9](#); [Romans 3:9-18, 23](#); [5:10-12](#)).
- That God ordained Marriage to be between One man and One Woman—([Genesis 2:21-25](#))

SECTION 1: (MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY)

We Believe and teach:

- We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that marriage is sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman as husband and wife in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. The term “spouse” refers only to a person of the opposite sex/gender who is a husband or a wife—([Genesis 2:21-25](#); [Matthew 19:3-6](#).)
- We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other—([1 Corinthians 7:1-40](#).)
- We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman—([Hebrews 13:4](#).)
- We believe that sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage and that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, pedophilia, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, and incest, are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious behavior, such as the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography or any attempt to change/alter one's sex/gender, or disagreement with one's biological sex/gender, is sinful and offensive to God—([1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#).)
- We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ—([1 Corinthians 6:11](#).)

- We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church—([Acts 10:34](#); [Romans 2:11](#).)
- We believe that marriage between one man and one woman represents the relationship that Christ has with the church. The Husband is a picture of Christ who is the groom and represents the leadership to Christ. The Wife is a picture of the church which is the bride of Christ and represents submission to Christ—([Ephesians 5:22-33](#).)
- We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

SECTION 2: (SANCTITY OF LIFE POLICY)

We Believe and teach:

- That all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other state or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life—([Gen. 1:26](#); [Jeremiah 1:5](#); [Psalm 139](#))

SECTION 3: (RACIAL EQUALITY POLICY)

We Believe and Teach:

- That all human life is SACRED and CREATED by God in His image ([Gen. 1:26](#)), DERIVED from Adam and Eve ([Gen. 5:1-32](#)), PRESERVED by God through Noah and his family upon the Ark ([Gen. 7:1 & 13](#); [2 Peter 2:5](#)), MULTIPLIED and FILLED the earth through Noah and his descendants ([Gen. 9:1](#)), SCATTERED throughout the earth by God because of disobedience ([Gen. 10-11](#)), DESCENDED through Adam and DETERMINED by God where to live ([Acts 17:26](#)), and will be JUDGE by God in the end ([Acts 17:31](#)); therefore, we believe with biblical conviction that ALL life (no matter the skin color, language, or cultural) are created equal and in the image of God.

ONE HUMANITY

- We are ALL (People) of ONE blood no matter what nation or origin; Therefore if anyone who tries to say otherwise is not speaking Biblically—([Acts 17:26](#))

ONE DEPRAVITY

- The byproduct of our shared heritage is that every member of the human race has the same problem...SIN—([Rom. 3:23](#)); therefore, we all will stand equally guilty before our righteous and holy Judge ([Rom. 3:19-20](#); [6:23a](#)); Because we are all sinners...we all need a SAVIOR—([Rom. 5:12-19](#))

ONE REMEDY

- God sees ONE race of humanity with ONE universal problem: SIN: And in the person of Christ, God provides the only acceptable payment for our sins—([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [1 Tim. 2:5](#)); Paul explains, “*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*”—([2 Cor. 5:21](#))

ONE COMMUNITY

- Having been regenerated and redeemed, we now belong to the BODY OF CHRIST—(1 Cor. 12:12-13; Galatians 3:28); Our new life in Christ erases all divided lines and brings ALL believers together in Christ Jesus—(Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6)

We Reject: (False Theories, Philosophies, & Teachings on Race)

- **The Curse of Cain**: is the assumption that black Africans had Cain's "mark" of black skin
 - ❖ “We know the circumstances under which the posterity of Cain (and later of Ham) were cursed with what we call Negroid racial characteristics”—Mormon Theology
 - ❖ “The curse which Noah pronounced upon Canaan was the origin of the black race”—Jehovah Witness Theology
- **Black Lives Matter: (Organization)**
 - ❖ “We Disrupt the Western-Prescribed Nuclear Family Structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another. We foster a Queer-Affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of Heteronormative thinking...”—BLM MISSION STATEMENT
- **Critical Race Theory/Intersectionality**: is the theory that the law and legal institutions are inherently racist and that race itself, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is a socially constructed concept that is used by white people to further their economic and political interests at the expense of people of color—(e.g. **Power Struggle: Identity Politics/Marxism/Systemic Racism/White Privilege**)
 1. **EVERYONE CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS**: Oppressor’s/The Oppressed
 2. **THOSE WHO HAVE POWER ALWAYS OPPRESS THOSE WHO DON’T**
 - ❖ **QUESTION**: “How do we know who the oppressed and who the oppressors are?”
 - The Categories of Oppressor and Oppressed are based on your group identity—(Race/Gender/Religion/Immigration Status/Income/Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity)
 3. **3 Different Views**: (Humanity/Sin/Salvation)
- **Evolution**: theory that every ethnic group descended from different primates—and that some of these groups were more “*avored*” than others.
 - ❖ “At some future period not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes...will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as the baboon, instead of as now between the Negro or Australian and the gorilla”—Charles Darwin

SALVATION

We Believe and teach:

- That salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works—(John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Therefore, salvation is not an one-time event, but a lifetime process—(Justification/Sanctification/Glorification)

JUSTIFICATION: (Salvation from the Penalty of Sin)

- Means to be (declared not guilty) before God is an act of God—(Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins—(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38;

3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7)—and confess Him as sovereign Lord—(Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11).

SANCTIFICATION: (Salvation from the Power of Sin)

- **Position Sanctification**: means that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is **positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification**. This sanctification has to do with the **believer's standing (position in Christ), not his/her present walk or condition** (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2).
- **Progressive Sanctification**: which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23).

GLORIFICATION: (Salvation from the Presence of Sin)

- Unlike justification (which saved believers from the past penalty of sin) and sanctification (which is saving believers from the present power of sin), glorification is the future act that will save believers from the very presence of sin; glorification (Rom. 8:18-23; Rev. 21:1-4, 10-11, 18-19, 21-22) is to be absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8), to be like Jesus (1 John 3:2-3) and transformed into His glorious body (Phili. 3:21) at the resurrection of every believer (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-30; 1 Cor. 15:35-58) at glorification ALL believers will experience:
 - **Abolishment**: of their sinful nature, which will be removed—(1 Cor. 13:10-12)
 - **Perfection**: to be able to see God face to face—(Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:4)
 - **Liberation**: by being delivered from the bondage of sin and satan—(2 Cor. 2:14; Heb. 2:14)

SECURITY: (Preservation of the Saints)

- That all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever—(John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).
- That it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality—(Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

THE CHURCH

We Believe and teach:

- That the one supreme authority for the church is Christ—(1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor teachers: Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications—(1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

- That these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ ([1 Timothy 5:17-22](#)) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership—([Hebrews 13:7, 17](#)).
- That the purpose of the church is to glorify God—([Ephesians 3:21](#)) by building itself up in the faith—([Ephesians 4:13-16](#)), by instruction of the Word—([2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17](#)), by fellowship—([Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3](#)), by keeping the ordinances—([Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42](#)) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world—([Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42](#)).
- The Role of the Church is to make disciples and followers of Jesus Christ ([Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2](#)), to have mutual accountability of all believers to each other ([Matthew 18:5-14](#)), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture ([Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16](#)).
- Two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper—([Acts 2:38-42](#)). Christian baptism by immersion—([Acts 8:36-39](#)) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life—([Romans 6:1-11](#)).
- That the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self examination—([1 Corinthians 11:28-32](#)).

SECTION 1: (MEMBERSHIP)

We Believe and teach: **(GENERAL)**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the right to determine who shall be members of the Church and the conditions of such membership.

What is an active member? An active member is one who sets the example of attending regularly at the worship services, attends Bible study or Sunday school classes, gives tithes and/or offerings, and consistently participates in the life of the church community. Due to physical health, shut-ins are still seen as an active member.

What is an in-active member? An in-active member does not attend the worship services regularly (absent for 6 consecutive months), does not give tithes and/or offerings, comes to none of the church activities, and does not participate in the life of the church community. An in-active member could have been a member at one time but has left to go to another church, has relocated, or maybe dropped out of church completely. An in-active member is not eligible to vote in church meetings or to hold church office.

Reinstatement: If an In-Active member desires in becoming active again, they may request to be returned to the active roll, and upon reaffirmation of the vows of membership (by signing “The

Affirmation & Commitment” sheet) and renewed participation in the worship activities of this local church (by attending regularly), this may be done. The Church leadership (Elders & Deacons) will respond to such a request within 60 days.

(CANDIDACY)

If anyone that desires to join Pleasant Grove Baptist Church as a member, He/She must:

- A. Profess Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior
- B. Be baptized through water immersion, if physically able.
- C. Read and sign “***What we believe and Teach***” (By-Laws: Heading V, Section 2: Doctrine, Pg. 2-7)
- D. Take a “*New Members/New believers*” class (6 weeks) & sign “The Affirmation & Commitment” sheet

Then any person may present themselves as a candidate for membership in this church at any regular worship service in any of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ followed by Baptism.
- B. By promise of a letter from another Baptist Church.
- C. By statement that Jesus Christ has been publicly confessed and believes Baptism through immersion, if physically able has been received.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Pastor and Deacons for investigation and recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of members present and voting shall be required to elect such a candidate to membership.

(TERMINATION)

Membership shall be terminated in any of the following ways:

- A. Death.
- B. Admission to another faith or denomination.
- C. Affiliation with a Church of another faith or denomination.
- D. Exclusion of action of this Church: Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or un-Christian like conduct, or by persistent breach of his/her covenant vows, the Church may terminate his/her membership by a three fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of those present and voting, but only after faithful and persistent efforts have been made to restore such a member to the faith through the Pastor and/or after the Deacons have approached the member—([Matt. 18:15-20](#))

(RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES)

Every member shares equally the rights and responsibilities afforded any other member of this Pleasant Grove Baptist Church.

LAST THINGS: (Eschatology)

We Believe and Teach:

DEATH

- Physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Phili. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Phili. 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phili. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:8).
- There will be a bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Cor. 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Rev. 20:13-15).
- The souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Rev. 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) and shall be cast into the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41-46), cut off from God forever (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

- Is the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ “*in the air*” before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thess. 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:15-5:11) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

- Immediately after the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matt. 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

THE SECOND COMING & MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

- After the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His messianic kingdom for a “*Literal*” thousand years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezek. 37:21-28; Dan. 7:17-22; Rev. 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 20:1-7).
- The kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isa. 65:17-25; Ezek. 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matt. 21:43; Rom. 11:1-26), but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29).
- During the Millennial Kingdom our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isa. 11; 65:17-25; Ezek. 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Rev. 20:7).

THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST

- After the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10) whereupon Christ, who is the

Judge of all men ([John 5:22](#)), will resurrect and judge sinners the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment.

- This resurrection of the unbelieving dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment ([John 5:28-29](#)), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire ([Matt. 25:41](#); [Rev. 20:11-15](#)).

THE ETERNAL STATE

- After the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers ([2 Thess. 1:9](#); [Rev. 20:7-15](#)), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved ([2 Peter 3:10](#)) and replaced with a new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells ([Eph. 5:5](#); [Rev. 20:15](#), [21:1-27](#); [22:1-22](#)). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven ([Rev. 21:2](#)) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another ([John 17:3](#); [Rev. 21-22](#)). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father ([1 Cor. 15:24-28](#)), that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever ([1 Cor. 15:28](#)).

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

Being a Christian is more than identifying yourself with a particular religion or affirming a certain value system. Being a Christian means you have embraced what the Bible says about God, mankind, and salvation. Consider the following truths found in Scripture.

SECTION 1: (GOD)

- Contemporary thinking says man is the product of evolution. But the Bible says we were created by a personal God to love, serve, and enjoy endless fellowship with Him. The New Testament reveals it was Jesus Himself who created everything—([John 1:3](#); [Colossians 1:16](#)). Therefore, He also owns and rules everything—([Psalm 103:19](#)). That means He has authority over our lives and we owe Him absolute allegiance, obedience, and worship.
- God is absolutely and perfectly holy—([Isaiah 6:3](#)), therefore He cannot commit or approve of evil—([James 1:13](#)). God requires holiness of us as well. ([1 Peter 1:16](#)) says, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

SECTION 2: (MANKIND)

- According to Scripture, everyone is guilty of sin: "There is no man who does not sin"—([1 Kings 8:46](#)). That doesn't mean we're incapable of performing acts of human kindness. But we're utterly incapable of understanding, loving, or pleasing God on our own—([Romans 3:10-12](#)).
- God's holiness and justice demand that all sin be punished by death—([Ezekiel 18:4](#)). That's why simply changing our patterns of behavior can't solve our sin problem or eliminate its consequences.

SECTION 3: (SALVATION)

- ([Romans 10:9](#)) says, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Even though God's justice demands death for sin, His love has provided a Savior who paid the penalty and died for sinners—([1 Peter 3:18](#).) Christ's death satisfied the demands of God's holiness—([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)), thereby enabling Him to forgive and save those who place their faith in Him—([Romans 3:26](#))

True faith is always accompanied by repentance from sin. Repentance is agreeing with God that you are sinful, confessing your sins to Him—([1 John 1:9](#)), and making a conscious choice to turn from

sin—(Luke 13:3, 5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9) and pursue Christ—(Matthew 11:28-20; John 17:3) and obedience to Him (1 John 2:3.) It isn't enough to believe certain facts about Christ. Even Satan and his demons believe in the true God—(James 2:19), but they don't love an obey Him. True saving faith responds in obedience—(Ephesians 2:10.)