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# OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Board of Elders has adopted the following doctrinal statement. It is intended to summarize, but not comprehensively review, the basic convictions our leadership holds at Emerald Bible Fellowship. It is believed and subscribed to by the elders, deacons, and staff, so all teaching comes from this perspective, but agreement with all its statements is neither assumed nor required of others worshipping or seeking the Lord with us. We warmly welcome everyone who wants to worship Jesus at EBF.

We accept the scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testaments, as our final authority in matters of faith and practice, and our interpretations of Biblical doctrine leads us to the following convictions:

## **Concerning the Bible**

We believe that the Bible - the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments - comprises God's authoritative and inspired Word. It is without error in all its teachings, including creation, history, its own origins, and salvation. Christians must submit to its divine authority, both individually and corporately, in all matters of belief and conduct, which is demonstrated by true righteous living.

We further believe that the correct meaning of the Bible's many texts is the one that matches the original meaning intended by the human author, who was infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit. Our goal in our use of Scripture is to accurately discover this meaning, and then seek legitimate current applications, of which there are many, based upon the text at hand.<sup>1</sup>

## **Concerning God**

We believe in one God eternally existing in one essence, yet three co-equal persons, commonly called the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who exclusively share in the work of creation, sovereign maintenance of the universe, redemption, and judgment.<sup>2</sup>

## **Concerning Humanity and its Need**

We believe that humanity was created in the image of God, then sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but spiritual death, which is separation from God, and that human beings are born with a sinful nature. We understand sin at its root to be independence from God, either an active hostility or an apathetic indifference.<sup>3</sup>

Justification (acceptance with God) is a free gift from God to anyone who truly acknowledges his/her spiritual need. Justification is by grace alone through faith alone in the Jesus Christ who is presented in the Bible.<sup>4</sup>

## **Concerning Redemption**

We believe Jesus died upon the cross as a sinless substitute for sinners of all ages and times, and that the Father in His love for us was, by means of the Spirit, reconciling the world to Himself. All who believe in Jesus Christ are justified on the basis of His shed blood.<sup>5</sup>

## **Concerning the Security of the Believer**

All who have genuinely received Jesus Christ as the substitute for their sins and as Lord of their lives are securely and permanently children of God, destined for eternal life with Him. Because God is the author and finisher of our faith, no authentic believer will ever totally or finally fall away from faith. A true Christian will, by God's grace, grow more and more to hate sin and love righteousness.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps 12:6; John 1:1-5,14,18; Heb 4:12; 1 Cor 14:37; 2 Tim 3:14-17; 2 Pet 1:20-21; 3:16; Luke 24:27, 44-45; Romans 15:4-6

<sup>2</sup> Deut 6:4; Mal 2:10; Gen 3:22; Ps 45:6-7/Heb 1; Is 63:10; Eph 4:4-6,30; 1 Cor 2:10-11; 3:16; 8:6; Matt 11:27; 28:19-20; John 1:1-14,18; 5:18; 6:46; 10:30,38; 14:7,26; 15:26; 16:13-14; 20:31; Titus 2:13; James 2:19; Is 44:6; Acts 2:33; 5:3-4; Is 40:26; Col 1:16-17; Rev 4:11; Is 48:13; Heb 1:3-8; Col 1:15-17; 2:9; Ps 34:22; Is 43:1,14; Gal 4:5; 1 Pet 1:18; 1 Sam 2:10; Is 5:16; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Pet 1:1; Rev 22:13

<sup>3</sup> Gen 1:26-27,31; 2:7,17-22; 3:1,6-8,13; 5:1; 9:6; James 3:9; Rom 1:21-32; 3:9-10,23; 5:9-21; 6:16,20,23; 8:7-8; Ti 3:3-7; Eph 2:1-5; 5:22-33; Col 1:21; 2:13; John 5:24; Matt 25:46; Jude 6-7; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Cor 2:14; 15:21-22,45; Ecc 7:29; 2 Cor 11:3; Deut 29:4

<sup>4</sup> Ezek 20:33; 36:22; John 1:29; 14:6; 10:9; 11:25; Eph 1:4-14; 2:3-10; 5:27; Rom 3:22-26; 5:1-9, 18-19; 8:1-3, 28-39; 14:9; Col 1:4-5,14,22; 2:13-14; Acts 13:38; 19:4; 20:18-21; 26:18; Mark 1:15; Is 45:17-25; 53:11; Luke 18:9-14; 1 Cor 6:11; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 2:16,21; 3:13,24-26; 5:6; Phil 3:9; 1 Th 1:10; 5:9; Ti 3:5-7; 1 Tim 1:5; Heb 10:19-22; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:3-4; 3:14; 4:8,16; 5:1,20; 2 Th 1:11; 2:13; James 2:17, 26

<sup>5</sup> Rom 3:21-22,24-26,28; 4:3; 5:6,9,18-19; 8:1-3,34; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14,21; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Gal 2:21; 3:13; Eph 1:7; 2:3-6; Col 1:14; 2:13-14; Acts 13:38; Phil 3:9; 1 Th 1:10; 5:9

<sup>6</sup> Eph 2:4-6,8-9; John 3:3,8; 6:44,65; Rom 6:17; 8:7-9; Mark 4:19; Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 36:26-28; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4-6; 2 Tim 2:24-25; Acts 11:18; 16:14; Phil 1:29; Matt 11:27; 16:17

## **Concerning the Son**

We believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary atoning death on the cross, rose bodily from the dead and ascended to heaven where, as truly God and truly man, He is the only mediator between God and man.<sup>7</sup>

## **Concerning the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the resurrected Jesus ascended to heaven and on the day of Pentecost sent the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Upon first receiving Jesus Christ, every believer receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who comes to indwell, guide, teach, and empower all who believe by imparting to them the life of Jesus, so that they may live godly lives and engage in loving service to any who are in need.<sup>8</sup>

## **Concerning God's Sovereignty and Humanity's Will**

We believe that according to the teaching of Scripture, God presents Himself as wisely and fully sovereign in both the individual and corporate circumstances of all humanity for all times. We also believe that each individual person must choose to accept by faith the offer of salvation in order to be justified. Though this seems difficult, we do not believe these two concepts to be contradictory; for conversion to occur, God initiates and a person responds.<sup>9</sup>

## **Concerning the Believer's Responsibility, and Guidance**

We believe it is the believer's responsibility to make choices in life consistent with the teachings of Scripture. In matters Scripture does not address, the believer is welcome to choose any course of action which is harmonious with God's moral will as revealed in Scripture. We further believe that because God is sovereign, no human being can ever ultimately thwart God's wise, sovereign, and good plan.<sup>10</sup>

## **Concerning Water Baptism**

We believe water baptism is an outward sign or symbol demonstrating an inward or heart change. It does not merit salvation but is a step of obedience for the previously justified believer in following our Lord's own example and teaching.<sup>11</sup>

Total immersion is the preferred means as we identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism also provides an opportunity for the believer to publicly proclaim his or her commitment and allegiance to Christ.<sup>12</sup>

## **Concerning the Lord's Supper (Communion)**

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus Himself on the night of His betrayal when He broke bread with His disciples 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." We believe the bread and the wine (or grape juice) are symbols of His broken body and spilled blood used to remind us of His sacrificial death for the forgiveness of our sins.<sup>13</sup>

His death is to be remembered and celebrated in such a way as often as believers choose.<sup>14</sup>

## **Concerning Spiritual Gifts**

Spiritual gifts are given to all true believers by God's grace and power in order to fit His people for specific and corresponding service for the building up of faith in Jesus for the entire community. Over twenty gifts are listed within the New Testament. These lists may not be exhaustive of all the gifts that our generous God grants to His people.<sup>15</sup>

## **Concerning the Future**

We believe in the blessed hope, which is the personal, visible, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Isa 7:14; Matt 1:25; Luke 1:34; John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9; Heb 1; 4:15; 7:26; 2 Cor 5:21; Luke 22:42; John 5:19,30; 8:28; Rom 4:25; 5:8; 1 Th 5:10; Eph 5:2,25; Heb 10:10; John 2:22; 21:14; Acts 3:15; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 15:20; Luke 24:51; John 20:17; Acts 1:2; 1 Tim 3:16; Eph 1:20-21; 2:6

<sup>8</sup> Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30; Judg 14:6; 1 Sam 10:6; 2 Pet 1:21; Matt 22:43; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:33; 16:14; John 3:8; 7:39; 16:13-14; Rom 8:7-9; 15:18-19; 2 Cor 3:17-18; 1 Cor 12:7-10; Heb 2:3-4; Jer 31:33-34; 32:40; Ezek 36:26-28

<sup>9</sup> Gen 15:13; Is 40:26; 41:21-23; 42:8-9; 44:6-8; 46:9-10; 60:21; Pr 16:9,33; 19:21; 21:1; 2 Tim 1:9; Eph 1:4,6,11-12,14; 3:11; 1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8; 17:16-17; Rom 1:20; 2:11-12; 3:4,19; 11:36; John 6:64; 12:27-28; 17:1,4; Phil 2:11; Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Deut 32:4; 1 John 1:5; Jam 1:13; Dan 4:37

<sup>10</sup> Rom 13:12-14; Eph 4:17ff; 5:1; 1 John 3:10; Deut 5:15; Dan 4:35; John 3:8; Rom 9:18ff

<sup>11</sup> Matt 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; 10:47-48

<sup>12</sup> Col 2:12; Rom 6:1-6

<sup>13</sup> Luke 22:13-20; Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor 11:23-26; Heb 9:15

<sup>14</sup> 1 Cor 11:25-26

<sup>15</sup> Exod 31:3-11; Rom 12:4-21; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:1-16

<sup>16</sup> Ti 2:13; Acts 1:9-11; Mark 14:61-62; Phil 3:20-21; Luke 24:39-43; Matt 19:29; 24:31; 25; 46; 1 Cor 2:9; 15:22-24; 2 Tim 4:1; Rom 6:23; Jude 24-25; Eph 5:27; Col 1:22; Dan 12:2; Matt 3:12; 2 Th 1:9; Rev 14:11; 20:15