

What We Believe

Whether someone is curious about a church, whether investigating it before visiting or placing membership, it is good to know the core teaching and beliefs of that congregation. We recognize that and for that reason give a basic summary of those things most assuredly believed by our group.

The Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

According to Peter (2Pet 1:20-21), the writers of the Bible did not come up with their own ideas but the Holy Spirit moved them to write the things they did. Paul the apostle confirms this in his letter to the corinthian church (1Cor 2:6-16), where he states that they had received the Spirit of God (validated by miracles), so that they might know the things of God, combining these spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

Paul the apostle was so moved by the Holy Spirit that he was able to bring understanding to things taught by Old Testament writers (Eph 3:3-12), that formerly were shrouded in mystery.

Concerning the Old Testament, there are some whom claim that Moses did not author the first five books of the Bible but were instead written by several different groups (called the J.D.E.P. Hypothesis), in later times starting around 'the return' during Ezra's time. However, Jesus Himself states Moses is indeed the writer (Luke 24:27, 44), as does nearly eighty passages in the NT, twenty five of which specifically indicate Moses as author.

The Triune nature of the Godhead.

The term triune is a fancy term for 'the trinity,' meaning the Godhead. It consists of; The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. Nowhere is it more clearer than the passage in Matthew (Matt 28:18-20), where Jesus gives the great commission to make disciples, baptising them in the name of, "The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." *Jesus alludes to this in Matthew Where He says, "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."* (Matt 11:27) and again, "*For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.*" (Matt 12:50)

Concerning the Holy Spirit Jesus says, "*I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*" (Jn 14:16-17). In the same passage and context, Jesus follows up saying, "*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*" . . . "*but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.*" (Jn 14:26, 31a).

Jesus goes on to explain how The Three, the Holy Triune, work together as equals with separate roles in, John 16:1-15; "*These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.*"

"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to

your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.”

The Kingship of Jesus the Christ

From the earliest chapters of Genesis, through the pages of the New Testament, the Bible sets all hope and Lordship on Jesus, the Christ of Israel. In Genesis Chapter 12, Abram (Abraham), is promised that in his seed all the families of earth will be blessed, (Gen 12:3). Later in the same book, Abraham's grandson Jacob (Israel), blesses one of his sons, Judah, saying, *“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples,”* (Gen 49:8-12) indicating the future ruler, Jesus the Christ.

From the tribe of Judah came a king by the name of David, a man after God's own heart, whom God by the mouth of Nathan the prophet said, *“When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me;”* (2Sam 7:12-14a).

For which Peter, on the day of Pentecost, through the power of the Holy Spirit said, *“Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”* (Acts 2:29-33).

The Birth, Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ

1Peter 1:20 states that Jesus was known before the foundation of the world. Heb 1:1-3, John 1:1-18, and Col 1:15-20 remind us that Jesus is the one by whom the world was created.

Genesis 3:15 says, *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”* indicating that not from the biology from a man but from a woman salvation would come to mankind. This promise passed through many generations, from Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), through David (1Chron 17:10b-15) then to Mary (Luke 1 and 2), for which the prophet Isaiah prophesied, *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”* (Is 7:14).

Hundreds of years before His birth Isaiah (Is 53), spoke of Him taking on our transgressions that would take place on the cross, and king David in great detail concerning the manner in which He would be

killed (psalm 22).

Of His life, death, burial, as well as His resurrection for which Paul the apostle addressed in 1st Corinthians (1Cor 15:3-11), *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”* and all four gospels give a detailed account of, for which we most assuredly believe and agree.

Concerning the Church of our Lord, Jesus Christ

After Jesus established a relationship with those disciples that became His eyewitnesses and apostles (Matt 10:2-4; Acts 1:15-26), He took them up to Ceasarea Philippi and asked them whom they thought he was (Matt 16:13-28). Peter spoke up and called Him “the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus acknowledged this and said upon that 'rock' He would build His Church and the gates of hades (the grave) will not prevail against, or over power it.

Fifty days after He was raised from the dead, ten days after He ascended into the clouds (Acts 1), came the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). On this day the Holy Spirit came down upon those who were gathered by the sound of a rushing wind and tongues of fire upon their heads. Peter taking his place spoke the very first sermon recorded in Acts and around 3,000 souls, of devout Jews, were added to them that day (Acts 2:41). By Acts 5:11, this congregation of people were called the church by which many were being added to it and by so, kept multiplying. Peter then in Acts 10 receives a series of visions, from which he, Peter addresses the first non-Jews, unlocking the means by which all families of the earth can come to God.

We believe that there is only one Church, and that it is also known as the body of Christ (Eph 1:22-23). *“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* and later in the same text (Eph 4:4-6), *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*

The Body of Christ, the Church, is made up of many believers (Rom 12:4-5), *“For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”* and the body of believers are to be united, one, and not divided (1Cor 12:12-), *“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”* . . . *“so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.”* Because of this we do not believe in denominationalism but believe we should be united in God’s word.

The Autonomy of the local congregation and elders.

Even though there is only one body of believers in Christ, there are also many local congregations that operate independantly of each other. As the Church spread out from Jerusalem the message of Jesus Christ went from Synagogue to Synagogue, from city to city, across the known world. These small groups were simly called churches and many of the New Testament epistles are titled by their names, The Church at Corinth, the Church of Thessolonica, The Church at Philippi for instance. For others the letters were addressed to multiple churches covering a larger geographical area like the 'churches of Galatia' (Gal 1:2), or greetings like, "the churches of Christ greet you," in (Rom 16:16).

God designed the local church to be overseen by a goup of 'shepherding elders' (Acts 20:17, 28), "*Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*" (v28). And these oversight teams are to be in every church (Titus 1:5), "*For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,*"

These Elders, are not mere board members or CEO's of a not for profit corporation, but by their qualifications in 1Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1Pet 5:1-3, and other passages, these are the body of men that direct, lead, teach, admonish, and all other funcions of the church governance and politics. The individual Pastor and Pastor's staff found in modern churches today is hard to find in the New Testament Scriptures.

Concerning Baptism

We believe in water baptism and immersion of a believer.

Baptism, by itself would just be a dunking under some water and would not be biblical. Biblical baptism is not a stand alone process. Baptism is just one part of several things, harmonizing with the salvation process.

This process starts with hearing and believing what God has to say through His Gospel. Romans 1:16-17 tells us, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."* Later in Romans 10:15-16 Paul writes, "*How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"*"

As we hear the word and Believe it John 3:16-18, 21 comes to mind, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*". . . "*But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.*"

But Salvation is not just hearing and believing alone, it requies action. Looking into scripture we also find the actions of confessing with the mouth, a never ending process, and repentance, a process that transforms our believing, thinking, and actions into conformity to how God wants us to live and be.

Rom 10:8-10 Paul writes *“But what does it say? ‘THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”*

To the Jews Peter delivered his message teaching, *“Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”* (Acts 3:19) and Paul taught to the Gentiles, *“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent,”* (Acts 17:30). So Repentance is neither a Jew or Gentile thing but for all believers as Peter again states, *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”* (2Pet 3:9).

Thus, what is baptism then? We find baptism is an act of being submissive to God, as Jesus did when He was baptized by John (Matt 4:13-17). As Abraham entered into a covenant with God, the sign of which was circumcision, so is baptism a sign of a covenant relationship with Jesus, for the believer (Col 2:11-12) *“and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”*

It also unites us with Him in his death, (Rom 6:3-4) *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”*

Baptism also is the means, the Bible tells us, by which our sins are removed. Combining repentance and baptism, as was the case with Paul the apostle after a great religious experience, (Acts 22:14-16), *“And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’”*

Peter also preaches the same thing, in Acts 2:37-38, Peter delivers his sermon by the direct power of the Holy Spirit saying, *“Now when they heard this (That they had killed the messiah), they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*

It surprises some when Peter, later in life records in his epistle, (1Pet 3:21) says *“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”* Peter compares how the flood waters saved Noah from a wicked generation and 'baptism now saves you.' Mark does the same thing when he interlaces baptism and belief together when He quotes Jesus (Mark 16:16), *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”*

Concerning water being the main element for baptism, it is observed, many times over in the New Testament as being the case.

We see it in Jesus' Baptism, (Mark 1:9-11), *“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”*

Jesus mentions water AND spirit in His conversation with Nicodemus, John 3:4-5, *“Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*

In the book of Acts, Philip teaches Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch from the Old Testament book of Isaiah, chapter 53. While being taught the eunuch makes a request (Acts 8:36-39), *“As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.”*

For these reasons we hold to the biblical teaching of baptism, and the medium being Water.