

# WHAT WE TEACH





# PREFACE

Recognizing that the Bible is the very Word of the Living God to man, and understanding the priority of knowing and obeying its truth, the elders of McLean Bible Church are deeply committed to studying and teaching it with diligence and authority.

Thus, the central ministry of McLean Bible Church is the continuous imparting of the Scriptures to the people of God that they may know God and serve Him in worship and ministry.

Through our years of study, training and teaching we as the elders of McLean Bible Church have come to convictions regarding the major theological truths of the Bible. This section presents those major truths. These are the primary doctrines of the Christian faith and reflect the heart of our teaching here.

## ETERNAL VALUES

1. The Bible is inerrant and infallible.
  - All Scripture is God-breathed... (2 Timothy 3:16a)
2. The Bible is the guide for all faith and practice.
  - and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16b-17)
3. Where the Bible is clear, we will be emphatic. Where the Bible is silent, we must allow people freedom.
  - Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17)
  - Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. (Romans 14:1-4)
4. Jesus Christ is God in human flesh.
  - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

5. All people are eternally lost; salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ apart from human works.
  - For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. (Luke 19:10)
  - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
6. Jesus Christ is the head and authority of the Church.
  - And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (Colossians 1:18)
7. All ministry that is effective must be empowered by the Holy Spirit.
  - I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)
8. God moves in response to our united and personal prayer.
  - The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)
9. The glory of God is the motive of our ministry.
  - So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

## THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the written revelation of God and that this written revelation is both objective and propositional (Exodus 17:14; Isaiah 30:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). Further, we teach that every word of it is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16) and that, because of this, the Scriptures are inerrant in the original documents and infallible in their teaching.

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. This simply means that the Holy Spirit used human authors with their individual personalities and different styles of writing and guided and superintended the process in such a way that they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Peter 1:20-21) without error in whole or in part (Isaiah 40:8). As such, we teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice for the Christian (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35, 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15-17; Hebrews 4:12).

We teach that, while there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is one true interpretation. It is to be found as one diligently applies the grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15).\*

We teach that the Bible plays an indispensable part in living a dynamic Christian life. It builds up, transforms, encourages, corrects and protects the believer's life as he or she studies and applies it (Psalms 119:11; Acts 20:32; Ephesians 5:26, 6:17).

*\* For further detail, see Protestant Biblical Interpretation by Bernard Ramm (Baker Book House)*

## GOD

We teach that there is one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing, and subsistent in three Persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving the same worship and obedience.

### GOD THE FATHER

God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity (1 Corinthians 8:6), orders and disposes all things according to His own sovereign purpose and grace (Psalms 145:9; Ephesians 1:11; Philippians 2:13). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31). As the absolute and highest Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence and redemption (Psalms 103:19; Romans 11:36). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass and continually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). He does this in such a way so as to not be the author or approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13;

James 1:13) nor to abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 14:12). He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, and He relates Himself to His own as their Father (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:3-6; Hebrews 12:5-9).

### GOD THE SON

Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial and coeternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit (John 10:30; 14:9).

We teach that in the incarnation He surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation Christ's divine nature united itself with a human nature in an indissoluble union, and so He became the God-man (Philippians 2:5-8).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents the fusion of humanity and deity into an indivisible oneness (Colossians 2:9).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:25; Luke 1:26-35), that He was God incarnate (John 1:1-3, 14, 18), and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God (John 1:29; 1 John 1:1-3), redeem men (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 5:9), and rule over God's kingdom (Isaiah 9:6).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross, and His death was voluntary (John 10:17-18), substitutionary (1 Peter 2:24), propitiatory (Romans 3:25) and redemptive (Ephesians 1:7).

We teach that, upon the basis of the efficacy of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin. As believers in Christ, we are declared righteous, given eternal life and admitted to the family of God (Romans 5:1, 8-11; 8:1, 14-17).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father where He is ministering as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39-43; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; 9:24).

We teach that by the resurrection of Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of Christ. In addition, God accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross and His bodily resurrection as the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 5:28-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the Church, which is His Body, unto Himself at the Rapture. He will then return with His Church in glory to establish His kingdom in its millennial manifestation (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:4-6).

As the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), the Head of His Body the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as the Lord of Life and the only Savior (Acts 17:30-31).

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the divine attributes, and that in these He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Compare Isaiah 6:8-9 with Acts 28:25-26, and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17.

The divine attributes of the Holy Spirit include:

Intellect	Corinthians 2:10-13
Emotion	Ephesians 4:30
Will	1 Corinthians 12:11
Coequal	Matthew 28:19, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 2 Corinthians 13:14
Eternal	Hebrews 9:14
Omnipresent	Psalms 139:7-10
Omniscient	Isaiah 40:13-14
Omnipotent	Romans 15:13
Truth	John 16:13

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to the world of men. We recognize His sovereign activity in the creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father, as promised by Christ (John 14:16, 15:26), to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His Church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7-8); glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:14) and transforming believers into Christ-likeness (2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 5:22-23).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher who guided the Apostles into all truth as they submitted to God's revelation in Scripture (John 16:13). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16), and it is the duty and privilege of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

We teach that the Holy Spirit alone administers spiritual gifts to the Church (1 Corinthians 12:11), not to glorify Himself or the gifts by ostentatious displays, but to glorify Christ (John 16:14) and implement His work of redeeming the lost (Acts 1:8), and building up believers in the most holy faith (2 Corinthians 3:18).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11) for the perfecting of the saints today (1 Corinthians 14:12). We teach that the confirming sign gifts (speaking in tongues {intelligible languages}, interpretation, healing, and working of sign miracles) were evangelistic gifts in the beginning days of the Church for the purpose of confirming the Gospel message (1 Corinthians 14:22a; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4), and were not intended by God to be part of normative church worship and service.

We also teach that (1) because God is sovereign and supreme, and (2) because the confirming sign gifts are indeed genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit that He can give and has given to born-again men and women at various times for His purposes, God may certainly choose, in His sole discretion, to give these gifts at specific times and places in the modern church, especially in (but not limited to) remote missionary contexts. We teach that believing God has this sovereign liberty in Himself in no way contradicts the teaching regarding the confirming sign gifts at MBC.

Furthermore, we teach that MBC's position on the cessation of the sign gifts is not so biblically certain and absolute that it should be used as a sole measure of orthodoxy with regard to every member and pastor at MBC (or other churches).

# MAN

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:27; 2:7; 22). Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination and moral responsibility to God (Matthew 12:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Peter 1:17).

We teach that the purpose of man's creation was with the divine intention that he should glorify God (Isaiah 43:7; Revelation 4:11), enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world.

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23); became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost (1 Corinthians 2:14), apart from the salvation which is the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5; 2:1-3; Titus 3:5-6).

We teach that all men were in the loins of Adam and that the sin nature as well as the consequences of that original sin have been transmitted (imputed) to all men of all ages (Romans 5:12), Jesus Christ being the exception. All men are thus sinners by divine declaration (Psalms 14:1-3; Romans 3:9-18, 23), by nature (Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19) and by choice (Isaiah 53:6; James 2:10).

## SALVATION

We teach that salvation is totally from God, by grace (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8), through the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). It is not on the basis of human merit of works (Ephesians 2:9; Titus 3:5).

## REGENERATION

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are communicated (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous, and it is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), so as to secure voluntary obedience to the Gospel. Regeneration is manifested by repentance, faith and righteous living. Good works are its proper evidence and fruit (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:8). Regeneration is experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:18-19; Philippians 2:12; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:3-8). This obedience causes the believer increasingly to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:2-3).

## JUSTIFICATION

We teach that justification before God is an act of God by which He declares righteous those who believe in Christ (Romans 8:33). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means, God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

## SANCTIFICATION

We teach that every believer is "set apart" (sanctified) unto God by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every believer therefore is declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification has to do with the believer's positional standing in the eyes of God: He is "in Christ" (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2). This positional sanctification is not progressive.

We teach that there is, by the work of the Holy Spirit, also an experiential sanctification by which the ongoing earthly state of the believer progressively is brought closer to the positional standing that the believer 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 the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Acts 20:32; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 5:26; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a conflict (Romans 7:22-23; Ephesians 6:10-12). The new creation in Christ is set against the flesh. Nevertheless, adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:56-57). The struggle continues and never completely ends throughout the believer's earthly life. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

## SECURITY

We teach that all the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-39; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word. However, the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality is clearly forbidden (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

## SEPARATION

We teach that the doctrine of separation from sin is clearly evident throughout the Old and New Testaments (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1), and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness will increase (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We teach that all the saved should live in such a manner as to not bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. Separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded by God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

## THE CHURCH

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), of which Christ is the Head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18), and which is His espoused Bride (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8).

We teach that the formation of this Body began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We teach that the Church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ (Matthew 16:18), made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The Church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:3-6, 9-10; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament (Acts 14:21-23, 27; 20:17, 28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1), and that the members of this one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We teach that the one, supreme authority for the Church is Christ (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18), and that the order, discipline and worship are appointed through His sovereignty. 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 who must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We teach that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have been given authority by Him in directing the Church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

We teach the disciplining of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16.

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. However, each local church through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation on all matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence and government (Acts 15:19-31, 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We teach 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 2:42; 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).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of the ministry (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12).

We teach the accomplishment of God's purpose in the world. For the accomplishment of that purpose, He has given the Church spiritual gifts. He gives gifted men for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12). He also gives unique and special abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11). At the moment of spiritual birth every believer receives such a gift or gifts.

These gifts are sovereignly bestowed and cannot be sought (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is essential that every believer discover, develop and employ his or her spiritual gift or gifts for the edification of the Body and the accomplishment of the work of Christ in the world (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given to the early church: temporary confirming gifts and permanent edifying gifts. We teach that the temporary confirming gifts—healing, speaking in tongues (intelligible languages), interpretation and the working of sign miracles—were given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message but gradually ceased as normative church practice as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (Acts 19:11-12; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4).

We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does supernaturally heal and answer the prayer of faith on the part of every believer (Luke 18:1-6; James 5:16b) and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will (1 John 5:14-15) for the sick, suffering and afflicted (John 5:5-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-15).

We teach that private or personal prayer languages are a misunderstanding of the meaning of 1 Corinthians 13:1 (“tongues of angels”) and that such private prayer languages have no basis in Scripture. We teach that these private prayer languages are not a fulfillment of Romans 8:26, “...groanings too deep to be uttered”. We teach that based on Matthew 6:7, prayer should be intelligible and coherent conversation with God.

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism (Matthew 28:19) and the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the testimony of a believer. This act is a solemn and beautiful symbol of the believer’s faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior; the union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord’s Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26) and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28).

We teach that while Christ’s flesh and blood are not actually present, the Lord’s Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

## ANGELS

### HOLY ANGELS

We teach that angels are created beings and, therefore, are not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man (Hebrews 2:7), they are created to serve and worship God (Luke 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; Revelation 5:11; 19:10; 22:8-9).

### FALLEN ANGELS

We teach that Satan is a created angel (Ezekiel 28:13-15) and the author of sin (Ezekiel 28:15-16; 1 John 3:8). He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-18), involving numerous angels in his fall (2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:9) and introducing sin into the human race (Romans 5:12) by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-6; 2 Corinthians 11:3).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1; Ephesians 6:11-12; Revelation 12:9-10), the prince of this world who was defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 12:31-33; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8), and that he will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

## LAST THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)

### DEATH

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Matthew 10:28; Luke 16:22-25; Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23), that there is a separation of soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that such separation will continue until the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-16) when spirit, soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed remain in joyful fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; John 5:29).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:22-24; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:11-15) when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). Then they shall appear before the great white throne to be judged by Christ and will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15), cut off from the life of God forever (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

### THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

We teach the personal, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to remove His Church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), and to reward believers according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10), with sufficient time elapsing between this event and His glorious return with His Church to allow for the judgment of believers' works.

## THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

We teach that immediately following the removal of the Church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17), there will be a time of great tribulation (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; Matthew 24:21) during which the righteous judgments of God will be poured out (Revelation 16:1-21) upon an unbelieving world (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12). These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:15-31), at which time the Old Testament and Tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 6:9-11, 20:4-6).

The founders of MBC and most pastors at MBC have taught that the Rapture's and the Tribulation Period's position in the chronological order of the events surrounding the Return of Christ is the best understanding of the Bible's revealed truths regarding this topic. At the same time, we do not teach that the Bible's statements about this topic are so biblically certain and absolute that it should be used as a sole measure of orthodoxy with regard to every member and pastor at MBC (or other churches).

## THE SECOND COMING AND THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

We teach that after the tribulation period Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:29-30) and establish His Messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Revelation 20:1-6). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel (Ezekiel 37:21-28) and all the nations of the earth (Daniel 7:13-14, 22, 27; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the false prophet, and the removal of Satan from the world (Revelation 19:20; 20:1-6).

We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-69; 30:1-10). The result of that disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-25), but through repentance will be awakened again to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:26-27). We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness and long life (Isaiah 11:1-9; 65:17-25), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST

We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand-year reign (Revelation 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 (Revelation 20:8-9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10), whereupon Christ, who is the Judge of all men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the great white throne (Revelation 20:11-12).

We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment, they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

## ETERNITY

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan and the judgment of the unbelievers (Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God. The elements of this earth will be “dissolved” (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1). The heavenly city that comes down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) is to be the dwelling place of the saints where they will enjoy fellowship with God and one another forever (John 17:3; Revelation 21:1-4). The Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28), that in all spheres the Triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

# HOW MAY I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Receiving Christ as your Lord and Savior is the most important decision you or anyone will ever make.

## TO RECEIVE CHRIST

- You must acknowledge yourself to be a helpless sinner in God’s sight and in need of a Savior (Romans 3:23, 5:12).
- You must believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to be the very Savior you have just admitted needing (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24a) and rose from the dead (Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:4), having accomplished the defeat of sin.
- You must personally repent of your sins (Luke 5:32; 13:3) and confess Jesus Christ as Lord over your life (Romans 10:9-10), believing that as God, He can and will forgive your sins (Acts 10:43) and grant you eternal life (1 John 5:11, 13).

This is a personal decision between you and God, but we would like the joy of praying with you and assisting you in this eternally important matter. If you make this decision or desire to know more about it, please contact any one of our pastors. We are here to help.



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