

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

## GRACE BIBLE CHURCH OF ALLEN

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### GOD

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We believe the LORD God, as revealed in the Bible, is the one and only living and true God. He is the holy, sovereign, self-existent and self-sufficient One (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 5:39; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 135:6; Exodus 3:14).

This God reveals Himself to us in the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each equal in His nature, essence, and being, yet each possessing distinct personal characteristics suitable to His person and work (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2).

He is Creator of all things, visible and invisible, physical and spiritual. Out of nothing, by the power of His Word, He called all that exists into being and sustains it according to His desire and power (Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 104; Colossians 1:16,17).

God has a purpose and plan for all things in heaven and on earth which will be accomplished according to His eternal decrees for His glory. In this, His manifold attributes, including His wisdom, power, love, and faithfulness are revealed to us (Isaiah 46:10-13; Ephesians 1:3-5, 11; Matthew 24:35; I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 1:20).

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### THE BIBLE

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We believe the Bible, as it was composed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. This Bible, which in English translations is made up of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is completely sufficient concerning all matters of belief and living (Proverbs 30:5a; II Peter 1:20,21; Deuteronomy 8:18; Hebrews 4:12,13; II Timothy 3:16,17).

Man's belief in the authority of Scripture comes from the inward work of the Holy Spirit who works in the mind, heart, and will of man. The Spirit and the Scriptures work in us to draw us into a personal saving knowledge of God in Christ, to establish the content of our belief or faith, and to direct us in the conduct of our daily lives (John 6:44; I Corinthians 2:12-14; Romans 6:17; John 16:13-15; II Timothy 3:16,17).

Nothing is to be added to or taken away from the Scriptures in any way, such as new revelation or traditions of men. It is the standard by which all knowledge is tested (Deuteronomy 4:7, 12:32; Revelation 22:18,19; Galatians 1:8; Colossians 2:8).

Each of us is called to correctly handle the Word of God. Thus, we are to discern its true, intended, and plain meaning. We establish meaning by context, by recognizing the basic unity of all Scripture, and therefore, by following the basic rule of all biblical interpretation — Scripture must be used to interpret Scripture (i.e., Genesis 12:7 with Galatians 3:16; Joel 2:28-32 with Acts 2:16-24; Genesis 15:6 with Romans 4:1-3; II Timothy 2:15; II Peter 3:15,16; II Corinthians 4:2; Romans 4:1-3,13).

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## **SALVATION**

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### **MAN'S NEED**

We believe that in the beginning all God's creation, including man, was good. Mankind, male and female, was righteous, walking closely with God. Man fell from that position of fellowship with God into disgrace, deserving condemnation to Hell, through unbelief and rebellion. Everyone has inherited Adam's sinful nature and is totally unable to do anything that is pleasing to God. All are dead in their sin and cannot in themselves respond to the gospel for salvation (Genesis 1, 2, 3; Romans 3:10-12, 5:12-21, 8:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-9).

### **GOD'S PROVISION**

And this is the gospel, that Jesus Christ, being fully God and fully man, was sent by the Father and came willingly to be the only mediator between God and man. He was born of a virgin and lived a perfect life of obedience to His Father, observing all His commands and fulfilling all His purposes. In doing so, He revealed to man the glory, mercy, grace, and truth of God, teaching man the new way of life (Hebrews 1:1-3; John 1:14; Acts 2:23,36; I Timothy 2:5; Luke 1:26-28; I Peter 2:21,22; John 14:6, 17:4).

Jesus Christ gave up His life by death on the cross at the hands of sinful men according to God's sovereign purpose. Christ, being without sin, did this in order to pay God's just penalty for sin on behalf of those whom the Father had chosen to redeem from the effects of sin. He then rose bodily from the dead, removing the power of the curse of death from His people forever (Acts 2:23; Romans 3:23-26; I Peter 1:18-21; John 20:25,27; I Corinthians 15:54-58).

After Christ ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent to make the Savior known to those whom God the Father had chosen. The Holy Spirit works in God's people by making them spiritually alive and enabling them to freely receive the free gift of eternal life as offered in the gospel through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Lord of His people, now dwells in the Father's presence, interceding on their behalf and enabling them to grow more and more in living obedience to Himself (Acts 1:8,9; John 16:7-13; Ephesians 2:4-8; Romans 3:21-26; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:18-21; Hebrews 7:24,25; II Corinthians 10:5).

### **MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE**

All who respond by faith to the gospel promises are declared righteous before God by means of the righteousness of Christ credited to them. They are reconciled to God through the forgiveness of sin by Christ's substitutionary death on their behalf. Thus reconciled, believers have passed from judgment, wrath, and death to life and have received a spirit of adoption as beloved children who know God as Father (Romans 3:21-26; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24; Romans 6:23; Romans 5:9-11).

Growth in conformity to the image and likeness of God by obedience is a vital and necessary part of the life of the believer. Thus believers, having been re-created to do good works, will grow increasingly in the grace of God, turning from their sin and following Jesus Christ as Lord (II Corinthians 3:17,18; Ephesians 4:11-13; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 6:1,2, 11-14; II Peter 3:18; I Peter 3:15a).

All those whom God has chosen and redeemed will most certainly be preserved by God and will persevere in their saving faith until that time when God chooses to take them to be with Him forever (John 10:28,29; Philippians 1:6; John 14:1-3).

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## THE CHURCH

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We believe that all those who have faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are united by the indwelling Holy Spirit into one spiritual and physical body called the church, of which Jesus Christ is the head. This church is made manifest in each local church that recognizes Jesus as Lord and Savior and serves Him according to the Scriptures (e.g., I Corinthians 1:1,2; Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:13b-14; Colossians 1:18).

God's purpose in establishing His church is to glorify Himself by making known His manifold wisdom, which He demonstrated in Jesus Christ. This is accomplished when believers:

- a. Gather together in the power and unity of the Holy Spirit for worship by the proclamation of the Word, praise, prayer, and participation in the ordinances of the church (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42-47);
- b. Mutually exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification, equipping, and growth of the members for works of service (Ephesians 3:10,11; 4:11-13; I Corinthians 12:4-7; I Peter 4:10);
- c. Proclaim the good news of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world (Matthew 28:19,20);
- d. Are salt and light in all of our various callings (Matthew 5:13-16).

God has established two ordinances for the church to observe: baptism, which is undergone once as a sign of the new life in Christ after a person has confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the Lord's Supper, which is to be observed regularly to call into remembrance the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on our behalf, until He returns (Acts 2:38,42; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

All believers are priests within the household of God. All possess a common dignity, calling, and privilege of communion before and with God. All are called to offer sacrifices of themselves, praise and thanksgiving to God. With our various gifts and callings, we serve God and one another. Within this household, Jesus Christ appoints Elders (pastors) as undershepherds to serve His people by administering the activities of His church and providing watchcare over the spiritual needs of its members. Deacons minister to the physical needs of the church, both corporately and individually (I Peter 2:9, 10; Romans 12:1,2; I Corinthians 12:7; Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

The final authority by which all disputes within the church are to be settled is Scripture, being interpreted by the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16-17).

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## LAST THINGS

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We believe that God has appointed a day when Jesus Christ will visibly return in glory to judge the world in righteousness. His justice will be displayed in the resurrection to eternal punishment of all unbelievers who will be cast into Hell to experience separation from God forever. His mercy will be displayed by the gathering of all believers in resurrected and glorified bodies to everlasting life and fullness of joy in the presence of the LORD (Matthew 24:36; John 5:28,29; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 21:3; Mark 13:26,27; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 21:8).