

HOPE CITY CHURCH - STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1: The Bible

We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, and the supreme and final authority in doctrine and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; John 17:17)

Section 2: The Trinity

We believe there is one God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are each God, and that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are each a distinct person. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; see also 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 2:9; Acts 5:3-4)

Section 3: Jesus Christ

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God, fulfill prophecy, and redeem sinful man. We believe He accomplished our redemption through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, His burial, and His bodily resurrection. We believe our redemption and salvation are guaranteed by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is the only means of salvation. (John 1:1; 14; 18; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24-26; 4:25; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 2:5)

We believe that Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, the Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth, and the Head of the church. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted to the right hand of God where, as High Priest to His people, He serves as our Advocate and intercedes for us. (Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 1:3; 3:1; 7:23-25; 1 John 2:1-2)

Section 4: The Holy Spirit

We believe God the Holy Spirit is a person who restrains evil in the world and convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He dwells in all who believe in Jesus. From the moment of belief in the Son, the Spirit baptizes believers into the body, seals them for salvation, regenerates them to new life, bestows spiritual gifts on each one, and is fully present to continually fill (control and guide) His own. (John 16:7-11; John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13; John 14:16-17; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19)

Some gifts of the Holy Spirit, however, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of miraculous healing, were given to certain individuals as authenticating signs for the early church (Acts 8:14; 10:44-48; 11:15-18; 19:1-6) and not as final evidence of God's presence in a believer's life nor as confirmations of a "second blessing" or subsequent filling of the Spirit.

Section 5: Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe angels are spiritual beings who were created as sinless personalities and that they occupy different orders and ranks. They presently exist in both fallen and unfallen states, the former including Satan and his angels. (Hebrews 1:13-14; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 7:12)

Section 5: Angels, Fallen and Unfallen (continued)

We believe Satan, by his own choice the enemy of God and His people, is the originator of sin, that led our first parents into sin and now rules as “the god of this world.” We believe he was judged at the cross and that ultimately he will be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Isaiah 14:12-14; Genesis 3:1-19; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10)

Section 6: Man

We believe man was created innocent and in the image and likeness of God, but that man sinned, bringing both physical and spiritual death to himself and his posterity. (Genesis 1:27; 2:17; 3:19) Man can do nothing to merit God’s favor, and as such, is in need of salvation. (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23) We believe that mankind’s sinful nature is rebellious toward God and His good design for life and worship. (Romans 1:20-24; Ephesians 2:1-3) Mankind’s rebellion causes confusion about good and evil, and harm to people, ultimately ending in judgment, despair, and death. (Genesis 1:31; Galatians 5:16-21; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; James 1:13-15)

We believe God created mankind in His image, forming each person in the womb from conception (Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2; 49:5; Jeremiah 1:4-5) until the point of death when they breathe their last (Genesis 25:8; Luke 23:46); and assigning gender to His people, male (man) and female (woman), as He created them sexually and biologically different, but with equal personal dignity and value. (Genesis 1:26-28)

We believe that God ordained marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:18; Matthew 19:4-9; Ephesians 5:31-33) Those who accept and live within God’s design for sex, biological gender, and marriage experience the blessing of His good design (Psalm 1:1-3; 128:1-4), and decisions to change, alter, or modify God’s will in marriage, sex, or gender are part of man’s brokenness and lead to despair. (Romans 1:21-22; James 1:13-15)

We believe that God loves and pursues mankind despite our rebellion. (Romans 5:8) He offers forgiveness, healing and abundant life to anyone who turns to Him in humility. (John 3:17; 10:10; Titus 3:3-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7)

Section 7: Salvation

We believe salvation is a sovereign gift of God and is received by man through personal faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin. We believe man is justified by grace through faith apart from works. (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8-10) We believe that Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation and that no one is saved apart from a conscious and personal decision to trust in Christ as his or her one and only Savior. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9-10) We believe all true believers elect of God, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever. (Romans 8:1; 29-30; 38-39; John 10:27-30)

Section 8: Sanctification

We believe sanctification, which is a setting apart unto God, is positional, progressive, and ultimate. Positionally, it is already complete since the believer is in Christ and is set apart unto God as Christ is set apart unto God. Since the Christian retains his sinful nature, however, there is need for progressive sanctification whereby he grows in grace by the power of the Spirit. Ultimately, the child of God will be set apart from sin in his practice (as he is now in his position in Christ) when he is taken to be with Christ and shall be like Him. (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10; 14)

Section 9: The Church

We believe the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism, made up of all born-again persons of this present age. We believe the Church began at Pentecost and that a believer is placed into the Church by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Church is distinct from Israel. (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 10:32)

We believe the local church is an assembly of professed believers in Jesus Christ who are voluntarily joined together in one locality for the purposes of worship, study of the Word of God, observance of the ordinances, Christian fellowship, equipping for and practice of Kingdom service, specifically stewarding our lives for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission. (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-13; Matthew 16:18; 28:19-20)

Section 10: The Ordinances of Baptism and The Lord's Supper

We believe Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which are to be observed by believers until He returns. (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

We believe by water baptism a believer publicly identifies with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. We believe that infants of believing parents may be dedicated to the Lord but should not be baptized until they can personally articulate their faith and the purpose of baptism.

We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death and an expression of our faith in His future coming that is to be continually practiced by all believers. We believe every Christian has a right to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper but that participation must always be preceded by solemn self-examination.

Section 11: The End Times

We believe Jesus Christ will come again to the earth personally, visibly, and bodily—to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Section 12: The Eternal State

We believe the souls of believers in Jesus Christ do, at death, immediately pass into His presence, and there remain with Him until the resurrection of our earthly bodies at His coming, when our souls and imperishable bodies shall be with Him forever in glory. We believe the souls of unbelievers remain after death in constant misery until the final judgment when soul and body are reunited to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord. (Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15)