

KEY DOCTRINES



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THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to humankind, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation, verbally inspired in every word, absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed (1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (John 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to humankind (2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that there is *only one meaning of Scripture*, the meaning which the human author, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, intended his audience to hear, and therefore, equally, the meaning which the divine Author intended through the human author. We also teach that it is the responsibility of every believer diligently to seek out the true meaning and intent of Scripture. Therefore, we must attend carefully to the simplest and most natural, normal, and customary sense of the words from the author's and original audience's perspective, realizing that context, genre, or related passages of Scripture may indicate that the words are being used in another manner. This hermeneutical method, which we refer to as the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture, is to be pursued in dependence upon the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). *Note:* Nothing in this hermeneutic *determines* the meaning of the text; that meaning was determined when the author spoke or penned the words. This hermeneutic serves only to *inform* our understanding.

We teach that Scripture is God's Word for all generations. Only from the correct understanding of the intended meaning can we: 1) discover the commands which God gives us to obey; or 2) discern the fullness of God's truth which endures as relevant to, authoritative over, and applicable for our lives today. The truth of Scripture forever stands in judgment of us; never do we stand in judgment of it.

GOD

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), infinite, all-knowing, spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

God the Father

We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 115:3; Daniel 4:34-35; Romans 11:33-36). He created all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Revelation 4:11) in six twenty-four hour days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:15-17). As the absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11-12; 1 Chronicles 29:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (Romans 11:33-36). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Deuteronomy 32:4; Habakkuk 1:13; 1 John 1:5), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as his own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with humankind. As Creator He is Father to all (Ephesians 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18).

God the Son

We teach that 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 (John 1:1; 10:30; 14:9; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3).

We teach that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We teach that in the fullness of time God the Father sent His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Galatians 4:4; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35).

We teach that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man in indivisible and unconfused oneness (John 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9). In the incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity took on all the essential characteristics of humanity while surrendering nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind (Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9). Jesus Christ is, therefore, God incarnate (John 1:1, 14); and the purpose of the incarnation is to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (John 1:14-18; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 2:14-18).

We teach that Jesus Christ was subject to physical infirmities and temptation as a true human but lived a perfect and sinless life (Hebrews 4:15). He preached and taught with unparalleled authority (Mark 1:27; Matthew 22:16; John 7:46). He worked miracles, which bore witness to His divine glory, authority, and identity (Matthew 8:27; John 2:11), and which heralded the breaking in of the new creation (Matthew 4:23; 11:4-6). He fulfilled the Law and all the Old Testament prophetic hopes concerning the coming One (Matthew 3:15; 5:17-19; Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39; 15:1).

We teach that Jesus Christ was tried (Mark 14:53-65; John 18:28-19:16), that He was crucified under Pontius Pilate (Acts 4:27-28), and that He died, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

We teach that in the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God vindicated Jesus' life and righteousness, gave proof that He has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross, and confirmed our justification (Romans 1:4; 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:17; Philippians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee and first-fruits of a future resurrection life for all believers (John 14:19; Romans 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We teach that for a span of forty days after His resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared bodily to many (Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7), and then ascended bodily to the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:9-11; 2:33), where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 4:14; 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all humankind (John 5:22-23):

- (a) Believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
- (b) Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46)
- (c) Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15)

God the Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternality (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all humankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the

incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the written revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), the work of salvation (John 3:5-7), and all of history (Exodus 31:3; Judges 3:10; 1 Samuel 16:13; Mark 1:10; Acts 2:4).

We teach that a unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16-17; 15:26; Acts 1:5; 2:4) 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; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-14; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Crossway Chapel believes that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a one-time event that occurs at salvation (Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3-4; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing Christ's work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today and that speaking in tongues, or others of the more dramatically miraculous spiritual gifts, were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers, nor the mark of true conversion or a heightened spirituality. While no single spiritual gift is the mark of a true Christian, nevertheless all believers are gifted by the Holy Spirit as He wills, and this gifting continually manifests itself for the good of the body (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:7-12; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

MAN

We teach that man, male and female, was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 1:26-30).

We teach that God's purpose in the creation of man was that they should glorify God, by enjoying God's fellowship, by living in the will of God, by multiplying and filling the world with faith-filled image bearers, and by reflecting God's benevolent kingship (Genesis 1:26-28; Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost their innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, and became subject to the wrath of God. Because all were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to every individual in every age, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 130:3; 143:2; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:9-23; 5:12-21), incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace, and therefore saved wholly by God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

SALVATION

We teach that salvation is wholly of God¹ by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His righteousness and shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12-13; Romans 5:18; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Salvation, therefore, is totally of God, and includes, though is not limited to, the following realities:

Election

We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies, leaving the rest in their sin to their just condemnation (Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate human responsibility or the need to repent (Isaiah 55:6-7; Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10) and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:18-19, 36; 5:39-40; Romans 10:9-10). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not owing to any initiative on their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7).

We teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love. This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 9-11; Ephesians 1-2).

¹ See Crossway Chapel's Doctrines of Grace Position Paper for and in depth understanding of our beliefs.

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in which spiritually dead people are made spiritually alive (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25). Regeneration is part of the Holy Spirit's ministry of glorifying Christ, for the instantaneous effect of regeneration—and thus the first evidence of regeneration—is repentance of sins and faith in Jesus Christ as the divine provision of salvation (1 John 5:1). Regeneration is, therefore, the efficient cause of faith in Christ, however regeneration and faith are temporally coincident and inseparably united. Regeneration is manifested further by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (Romans 7:4-6; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Peter 1:22-23), and will be 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 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such conformity reaches its climax in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares us righteous. Specifically, through the instrument of faith we are united to Christ, the result of which union involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us as the only basis for our justification (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus, we are freely given an "alien" righteousness, which is apart from any inherent virtue or work of our own doing (Romans 3:20; 4:6; Philippians 3:8-9). By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26) and who believes in God who raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 4:24-25).

Sanctification

We teach that there is a "positional sanctification" in which every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This positional sanctification is instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. Positional sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 10:10; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).

We teach also that the Holy Spirit causes a "progressive sanctification" in which every believer grows in personal holiness, so that their moral condition is made gradually to conform to the positional (legal) standing they enjoy through justification. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, by means of the Word, prayer, and fellowship, believers grow in holiness and become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17-19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

We teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin in this life is not promised, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9). Furthermore, we teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Bible as an aspect of sanctification (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17), and we affirm that the Christian life is a life of faith-filled obedience characterized by happy blessedness (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:1-10). Salvation involves not merely being saved from sin's penalty, but also being saved from *sin's* power over us, as well as being saved *for joyful submission to Christ*. Therefore, separation from sin is a vital part of our salvation.

Security

We teach that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. Therefore, it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of the Holy Spirit and God's Word (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 12-17, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24).

THE CHURCH

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, 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 thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6), and consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6). The church is, however, distinct from the nation of Israel, the old covenant people of God (Romans 9-11).

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

We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The

Biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (male²), also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11); and deacons, both of whom must meet Biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). We teach that the women mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:11 should be understood in context as the wives of the deacons.

We teach that these leaders lead or “govern” as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:17).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Galatians 6:1-5; Hebrews 10:24-25; James 5:13-20), and discipline in appropriate circumstances (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20).

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. Each local church, however, through its pastors and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation (Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 15:19-31; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21), by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:11-16), by instruction in 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 so that the world might be filled with believing image bearers who gladly and gratefully reflect God's benevolent kingship (Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:47).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7-12) and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities (spiritual gifts) to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

The lists of gifts in the New Testament do not seem comprehensive since the various lists differ from one another, and vary in order of gifts listed (see 1 Cor. 12:8-11; 1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 7:7). The lists include the following gifts:

² Crossway is “Complementarian” in our view of Biblical roles for men and women both in the family and the church. We affirm the many incredible ways in which gifted, mature, and faithful women will lead in and serve the church. The church would be weak and fully incomplete its representation of the Godhead without women fully functioning in the beauty of their gifting. We believe that the Bible affirms the role of women in equal value and standing with God through Christ but that the office of pastor specifically along with the duties of pastoral oversight, authority, some leadership, and some teaching are reserved for qualified men. Please see Crossway's Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Position paper for an in depth understanding of God's wonderful created design for women and men both in life and in the church. We also affirm the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Danvers Statement - <http://cbmw.org/uncategorized/the-danvers-statement/>

Utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healings, working of miracles, prophesy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, apostleship,³ prophecy, teaching, helping, administrating, service, exhortation, contributing, leadership, mercy, evangelism, shepherding, and even, perhaps, singleness and marriage.

On certain occasion in the Bible, people spoke in tongues upon their reception of the Holy Spirit (e.g. Acts 2:4; Acts 10:44-46), however, not all people speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:30), and therefore tongues is *not* a required evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life or intended to be normative in all of History.

While we believe that God will continue to sovereignly use the more manifestly miraculous spiritual gifts as He desires and in the correct biblical context (prophecy, tongues, healings), we do not teach that they are necessary as testimonies to the truth and power of the apostolic word and ministry (Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

We believe that the "gifts of healings" (1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30) are still functional today, though it is unclear how, precisely, these gifts are exercised. The use of plural nouns ("gifts" and "healings") may indicate that the gift is not permanently distributed to any single person, but that it is distributed on each occasion of healing as God freely and sovereignly decides to heal. In other words, the plural may indicate that nobody has the gift of healing on an ongoing basis—it is only granted in particular instances; which result in "gifts of healings."

"If a Christian has been granted the gift to heal one particular individual of one particular disease at one time, that Christian should not presume to think that the gift of healing has been bestowed on him or her, prompting the founding of 'a healing ministry'" (DA Carson - Showing the Spirit, p. 40).

Even apart from specifically stated "gifts of healings" we emphatically believe that God heals (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15) and performs providential miracles today. There is need for discernment since Satan can counterfeit miracles (Matthew 7:21-23; Revelation 13:13-14).

While we teach an openness to miraculous gifts today, we would also understand some of the reports of miraculous happenings to be gracious and providential acts of God instead of spiritual "gifts" of individual believers. In all, we teach that our God is a sovereign and supernatural God who does as He pleases. We should pray for and expect God to continue to work in powerful and conspicuous and miraculous ways for the good of His creatures and the glory of Christ.

We teach that the church is to observe two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is a proclamation of what God has done in Christ, a testimony of a believer's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and a symbol of union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts

³ We do not believe that this gift is operative today in the sense that there are no longer any living people who meet the criteria of apostleship (e.g. there are no living witnesses to the physical resurrection of Jesus). Additionally, Paul seems to indicate that he is the last apostle (1 Cor. 15:8).

2:41-42), in which all nations and colors and classes are welcome (Galatians 3:27-28). The Lord's Supper is a commemoration and proclamation of the Lord's death until He comes, and should be always preceded by self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). The elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, but the Lord's Supper is an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16). Furthermore, the Lord's Supper conforms diverse individual believers into one body (1 Corinthians 10:17).

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

Its Nature

We teach that Jesus Christ has purchased freedom for believers (Acts 13:38-39; Galatians 5:1). Jesus referred to this freedom at various points in His teaching (Luke 4:18; John 8:32-36). The nature of this freedom consists in believers being set free from certain things to pursue new things. Those things from which believers have been set free include the guilt and penalty of sin (Romans 6:23; 8:1; Colossians 2:13-14), bondage to sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:1-13), bondage to Satan (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13), the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57), the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9) and the curse of the law of God (Galatians 3:13). Those things believers have been freed to pursue include an intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ, having been enabled in at least two key ways. First, being reconciled to God through our faith in Jesus Christ we have been enabled to enjoy free access to Him (Romans 5:1-2). In addition, we have been granted ability to yield all obedience to Him; to voluntarily love, serve and obey Him with a child-like love and a willing mind, not out of a slavish fear (Romans 6:11-13; 8:14-15).

Its Scope

We teach that this freedom which Christ has purchased for believers has the following implications:

(a) We teach that our justification before God is based on God's grace and mercy alone through faith in Christ and is not based on our keeping of the Law (Romans 3:24-31; Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:5-8). Although believers are still obligated to keep the law of God, it forms no part of the basis for their justification.

(b) We teach that all true believers have become the Lord's bondslaves. As His servants, we will do what He commands and be separate from (avoid or abstain) what He forbids. Our lives will be given over to Him in complete obedience (John 14:21; Romans 6:16-23; 1 John 2:3-6).

(c) We teach that the Word of God (the Holy Bible) alone is to be our guide and standard for knowing what the Lord commands and what He forbids. The Word of God will be our only rule of faith and practice (Joshua 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:15-17).

(d) We teach that human rules, traditions and standards, which are either apart from or contrary to the Word of God, shall not be used as our standard of obedience or spirituality (Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 2:20-23).

(e) We teach that with respect to those things or activities about which the Word of God neither commands nor forbids, believers have the freedom to use and enjoy them

judiciously and moderately in accordance with the design for which our Creator God has given them (1 Timothy 4:4-5; James 1:17). Our use of these things is to be further regulated by the following Biblical guidelines:

- (i) We will use them only when our conscience and faith permit us, for it is neither right nor good to act against conscience (Acts 24:16; Romans 14:5, 22-23).
- (ii) We will use them in love, and only after considering whether they will encourage our brother or sister to sin against his conscience (Romans 14:6, 14, 20, 22-23; 1 Corinthians 8:7, 10). We will not knowingly use those things that would cause our brother or sister to stumble in this way (Matthew 18:6-10; Romans 14:13, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13).
- (iii) We will use them only after carefully examining this particular thing or activity in the light of God's Word and after searching our own hearts. We want to make sure we are not using our liberty as an occasion to indulge sinfully our flesh (Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16).
- (f) We teach that God has established and granted power to human authorities for the purpose of maintaining order and providing protection to individuals within a society. Those believers who, in the name of Christian freedom, either disobey or do not submit to these human authorities go against God. Only when those human authorities command what God forbids or forbid what God commands can Christians lawfully go against such authorities. God has authority over all (Psalm 103:19; Daniel 3:16-18; Acts 4:19-20; 5:28-29; Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; 6:1-9; Hebrews 13:17).

We teach that where different convictions exist with those things or activities in which Christians have liberty, we are not to judge one another wrongfully. Rather, we are to accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, constantly upholding one another in prayer, while acknowledging there will be differences of conviction in many areas the Word of God does not specifically address. In these areas it is best to challenge everyone to lead holy lives, judging ourselves while always leaving the judgment of others in the hands of God (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 14:1-12).

ANGELS

Holy Angels

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. In God's inscrutable wisdom, they are created to serve humankind and to serve and worship God (Psalm 103:20-21; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

Fallen Angels

We teach that Satan is a created angel and the originator of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 12:31-32) and that he shall be

eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

LAST THINGS

Death

We teach that at physical death there is a separation of one's soul from one's body (Philippians 1:21-24), that death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (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) and that, for the redeemed, such separation of body and soul will continue until the bodily resurrection of the dead in Christ.

We teach that the bodily resurrection of the dead in Christ will occur immediately prior to the Rapture of the living church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Matthew 24:30-31)—which is a part of the first resurrection unto spiritual life (Revelation 20:4-6)—when our soul and resurrection body will be united, to be glorified forever with our Lord (1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54; Philippians 3:21). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:6-9).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all people, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved, at death, are kept under punishment until the second resurrection unto spiritual death (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:6, 13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We teach that the single most important event in human history was the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, whereby Christ conquered sin, death, and Satan. While one sees evidences of that victory in history and in the world around us, the final consummation of that victory has not yet taken place but will occur at the second coming of Christ. Thus, we teach the literal, personal, visible, and glorious second-coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, at which time He shall return for His bride, the church, and establish His millennial reign (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28).

We teach that after God's wrath is poured out upon the earth, Christ will rule over the kingdom of God on earth, establishing His Messianic kingdom for a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over all the nations of the earth (Daniel 7:27; Revelation 2:26; 3:21). His reign will be preceded by

the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Revelation 19:19-20; 20:1-3).

We teach that the Millennial Kingdom will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Ezekiel 37:21-28) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). As a result of the nation's disobedience, God judged Israel (Matthew 21:42-44; Romans 11:1-24), but they will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Ezekiel 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29).

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).

Final Judgment and Eternity

We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (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 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

We teach a physical resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment. After receiving their judgment (Romans 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:11-15).

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release and ultimate defeat of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (Revelation 20:7-15), all believers will enter the new heavens and the new earth with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our 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).

Of fundamental importance when considering Christ's return is reflecting upon whether or not we are ready to meet our coming Lord (Matthew 25:1-13). Fervent hope, anticipation, and readiness for our Lord's return motivates us for and is manifested in the pursuit of holiness now (1 John 3:2-3), even as this pursuit of holiness now prepares us for His future return (Jude 20-21). Crossway Chapel seeks to live in the expectation of His coming (Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Timothy 4:8). Even so, come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).