

EBF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Board of Elders has adopted the following doctrinal statement. It is intended to summarize, but not comprehensively review, the basic convictions we hold at Emerald Bible Fellowship. It is subscribed to by the elders and the staff, and all the volunteer teaching will come from this perspective, but agreement with all its statements is neither required nor assumed of those worshipping or seeking the Lord with us. We warmly welcome everyone who wants to fellowship here at EBF.

We accept the Scriptures as our only authority in matters of faith and practice, and our interpretation of Biblical doctrine leads us to the following convictions:

THE BIBLE, The Written Word of God

We believe that the Bible – the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments – comprises the verbally inspired, authoritative, and infallible Word of God. It is without error in the original writings and is the supreme and final authority in all that it actually teaches, including creation, history, its own origins, and salvation. Christians must submit to its divine authority, both individually and corporately, in all matters of belief and conduct, which is demonstrated by true righteous living, exemplified by dependence upon Jesus.¹

We further believe that God's purposes are revealed through the purposes of the inspired human authors, so that the correct meaning of the Bible's many texts is the one that agrees with the meaning intended by the human author, who was infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit. While meaning does not change, the application of that meaning may change in various situations. Even so, it is not legitimate to infer a meaning from the text that cannot be demonstrated to be carried by the inspired words of Scripture.²

GOD, The Sovereign and Holy King Over the Universe

We believe in one living, sovereign, and glorious God eternally existing in three infinitely excellent persons: God the Father, eternal source of all that is; God the Son, without beginning, in one essence with the Father; and God the Holy Spirit, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son in full divine essence. Each person is fully and completely God who exclusively share in the work of creation, sovereign maintenance of the universe, redemption, and judgment, as revealed in the Bible.³

We believe that God created the universe and everything in it out of nothing by the power of His word. He did not create it out of any need or deficiency within Himself, but to display His glory and power in the salvation of the redeemed.⁴

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

¹ Ps 12:6; 119:160; Pr. 30:5; Num. 23:19; Mt. 22:29; 24:35; Jn. 1:1-5, 14, 18; 10:35; 14:26; 16:13-14; 17:17; 20:30-31; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 1:1-2; 4:12; 6:18; 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 3:16

² Matt 22:29; Luke 24:27, 44-45; Jn. 7:17; 16:12, 13; Romans 15:4-6; 1 Cor. 2:14, 15; 15:3-5; 1 Jn. 2:20; 2 Pet 1:20-21; 3:1-3, 15-16; 2 Tim 3:14-17

³ Deut 6:4; Mal 2:10; Gen 3:22; Ps 45:6-7/Heb 1; Is 63:10; Eph 4:4-6, 30; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; 3:16; 8:6; Matt 11:27; 28:19-20; John 1:1-14, 18; 5:18; 6:46; 10:30, 38; 14:7, 26; 15:26; 16:13-14; 20:31; Titus 2:13; James 2:19; Is 44:6; Acts 2:33, 5:3-4; Is 40:26; Col 1:16-17; Rev 4:11; Is 48:13; Heb 1:3-8; Col 1:15-17; 2:9; Ps 34:22; Is 43:1, 14; Gal 4:5; 1 Pe. 1:18; 1 Sam 2:10; Is 5:16; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Pe. 1:1; Rev. 22:13

⁴ Gen. 1:1; Ps 24:1-2; 50:9-15; Heb. 1:2; 11:3; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:25; Is. 29:3; 43:1, 7; 44:23; Mt. 25:23; Eph. 2:10; Rev 7:9-10

We believe that God, from eternity, has freely and unchangeably ordained and foreknown all that comes to pass according to the holy counsel of His will, in order to display the full extent of His glory to all that exists, yet in a way that He never sins or condemns a person unjustly, but that His sovereignty is compatible with the moral responsibility of those created in His image.⁵

Furthermore, God's election is a contra-conditional act of His sheer and free grace which is given in His Son before the foundation of the world. By this act of His will God chose those who would be delivered from bondage to sin, regenerated by His powerful Spirit and brought to repentance and saving faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, in order to display the full extent of His grace for all eternity.⁶

HUMANITY, The Fallen Image Bearers of God

We believe that God directly created Adam and Eve, male and female, in the image of God, without sin. They were created to worship and glorify God by trusting Him in His goodness and by enjoying His friendship in grateful and humble obedience.

We believe that though humanity was created without sin, he was subsequently deceived by Satan and sinned by not trusting God's Word. The root of sin is the desire to be independent of God as He has revealed Himself, instead preferring to rule oneself, either in active hostility or passive indifference. All persons are now sinners, corrupted in nature and by choice, and the result is death. As sinners, humanity has become enslaved by sin, enemies of God, separated from God, and is deserving of His righteous wrath and judgment.⁷

We believe that God has subjected all of creation to futility because of humanity's sin. Therefore, humanity justly suffers in sickness, decay, distress, and tragedy. This suffering is a result of, and a mirror to, the depravity of humanity's fall and is intended to reveal the holiness of God and the severity of sin.⁸

SALVATION, God's Plan of Redeeming Humanity

We believe that God, for His own glory and by a free act of His loving grace, has resolved to meet humanity's dilemma by sending His son, Jesus, to die as a sinless substitute for sinners. Having hearts regenerated by the Holy Spirit, those who humbly depend upon the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for salvation, are called righteous by God, are made children of God, are freed from sin and its eternal consequences, and are reconciled to Him in peace apart from any merit or righteousness of their own. Salvation is imputed by God's grace alone, through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone as revealed in the Bible. Saving faith necessarily produces the progressively growing fruit of love for God and neighbor by the power of the Holy Spirit.⁹

The Saving Christ, the Work of Jesus in Salvation

We believe that Jesus is the unique Son of God, fully God and fully human, born of a virgin, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit. He lived a sinless life of complete trust and submission to His Father, died a

⁵ Gen. 15:13; Is. 40:26; 41:21-23; 42:8-9; 44:6-8; 46:9-10; 60:21; Pr. 16:9,33; 19:21; 21:1; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph 1:4,6,11-12,14; 3:11; 1 Pe. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; 17:16-17; Rom. 1:20; 2:11-12; 3:4,19; 11:36; John 6:64; 12:27-28; 17:1,4; Phil. 2:11; Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Deut 32:4; 1 Jn. 1:5; Jam. 1:13; Dan. 4:37

⁶ Rom. 8:28-30; 9:11-18; 11:5-8; Eph 1:4,9-11; 2:1-9; 1 Cor. 1:26-31; John 6:37-39,64-65; 10:25-29; 17:6; 2 Ti. 1:9; 2:24-25; Acts 11:18; 16:14; Phil. 1:29; Mt. 11:27; 16:17

⁷ Gen 1:26-27,31; 2:7,17-22; 3:1,6-8,13; 5:1; 9:6; James 3:9; Rom 1:21-32; 3:9-10,23; 5:9-21; 6:16,20,23; 8:7-8Ti 3:3-7; Eph 2:1-5; 5:22-33; Col 1:21; 2:13; John 5:24; Mt 25:46; Jude 6-7; Acts 17:30-31; 1Cor 2:14; 15:21-22,45; Ecc. 7:29; 2Cor 11:3; Deut 29:4

⁸ Rom 2:4; 8:20,23,35-36; 2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Thess. 4:13; Jer. 5:3; 2 Ch. 6:36-39

⁹Ezek. 20:33; 36:22; Jn. 1:29; 14:6; 10:9; 11:25; Eph 1:4-14; 2:3-10; 5:27; Rom 3:22-26; 5:1-9, 18-19; 8:1-3, 28-39; 14:9; Col 1:4-5,14,22; 2:13-14; Acts 13:38; 19:4; 20:18-21; 26:18; Mark 1:15; Is 45:17-25; 53:11; Lk. 18:9-14; 1Cor 6:11; 15:3; 2Cor 5:21; Gal 2:16,21; 3:13,24-26; 5:6; Phil 3:9; 1Th 1:10; 5:9; Ti 3:5-7; 1Ti. 1:5; Heb 10:19-22; 1Pe 2:24; 3:18; 1Jn 2:3-4; 3:14; 4:8,16; 5:1,20; 2Th 1:11; 2:13; James 2:17, 26

substitutionary death on the cross, bearing the wrath of God in the place of the redeemed, rose bodily from the dead and ascended to heaven to complete the redemption of His people.¹⁰

We believe that by His perfect obedience, suffering, and death that Jesus Christ obtained the forgiveness of sins and the gift of God's righteousness for all who trusted in God prior to the cross and to all who trust in Jesus after the cross. By His death, the perfect Son of God, the just for the unjust, absorbed our punishment, appeased God's wrath against us, vindicated God's righteous judgment in our acceptance, and removed all condemnation of God's holy law against us.¹¹

We believe that this atoning work of Christ impels the universal offering of the gospel to all persons so that it may be said that whoever may believe in Him will not perish but will have eternal life. All who come to God based upon the blood of Jesus Christ are made righteous and cleansed of sin and will not be thrown out.¹²

We believe that the atoning death of Jesus did more than merely obtain the offer of salvation for all, however. It also obtained the effective and powerful mercy of God in repentance and faith for God's chosen people, the elect. Christ died for all, but not for all in the same way. In His death Christ entered into a New Covenant with His people, whom He chose by His grace, making them His friends, His bride, His body, and His sheep. Through the working of His Spirit He has overcome the resistance of their souls and brought them to saving faith completely of His sheer grace.¹³

The Regenerating Spirit, the Work of the Holy Spirit in Salvation

We believe that the Holy Spirit has been active in all of God's purposes from all of eternity in creation, awakening faith in God's people, and by empowering prophets to proclaim His Word and perform miracles. When Jesus made atonement for sin, was raised from the dead, and ascended into Heaven He brought about a new era by sending the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, on His Church. We believe that this new era is marked by the Spirit's conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment for the purpose of the glory of the crucified and resurrected Christ. The Spirit empowers all believers to preach the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ, opens hearts to see and receive the gospel, and reveals the beauty and glory of Jesus through His Word to all the redeemed, transforms them from glory to glory with new affections, reveals Himself in spiritual gifts for the building up of the Church, for the purpose of purifying the people of Christ for the glory of God.¹⁴

We believe that apart from the effectual heart transformation of the Spirit no one would come to faith in Jesus because all are dead in trespasses and sins, are hostile to God, and are unable to submit to God or please Him because they love their sin more than God. For those whom God has chosen by His grace, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance by awakening the dead, opening the eyes of the heart, revealing the beauty of Christ so that they will see the irresistible beauty of Jesus and freely choose Him.¹⁵

¹⁰ Isa. 7:14; Matt 1:25; Luke 1:34; John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1John 4:9; Heb 1; 4:15; 7:26; 2 Cor 5:21; Luke 22:42; John 5:19,30; 8:28; Rom 4:25; 5:8; 1 Thess 5:10; Eph 5:2,25; Heb 10:10; John 2:22; 21:14; Acts 3:15; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 15:20; Luke 24:51; John 20:17; Acts 1:2; 1 Tim 3:16; Eph 1:20-21; 2:6

¹¹ Rom 3:21-22,24-26,28; 4:3; 5:6,9,18-19; 8:1-3,34; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14,21; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Gal 2:21; 3:13; Eph 1:7; 2:3-6; Col 1:14; 2:13-14; Acts 13:38; Phil 3:9; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9

¹² John 3:16; 4:14; 6:37,39; Matt 28:19; Col 1:23; Acts 1:8; Rev 22:17

¹³ 2 Tim 2:24-25; Acts 11:18; 16:14; John 6:44,65; 10:14-15; 11:51-52; 15:13; 17:6,9,19; Matt 11:27; 16:17; Eph 2:8-9; 5:25; Rev 5:9; Rom 8:32; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20-21; Phil 1:29

¹⁴ Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30; Judg 14:6; 1 Sam 10:6; 2 Pet 1:21; Matt 22:43; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:33; 16:14; John 3:8; 7:39; 16:13-14; Rom 8:7-9; 15:18-19; 2 Cor 3:17-18; 1 Cor 12:7-10; Heb 2:3-4; Jer 31:33-34; 32:40; Ezek 36:26-28

¹⁵ Eph 2:4-6,8-9; John 3:3,8; 6:44,65; Rom 6:17; 8:7-9; Mark 4:19; Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 36:26-28; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4-6; 2 Tim 2:24-25; Acts 11:18; 16:14; Phil 1:29; Matt 11:27; 16:17

BAPTISM IN WATER, the Outward Symbol of Inward Repentance and Faith

We believe that baptism in water is an outward sign or symbol of an inward change of heart. It is not a rite that earns any part of our salvation or builds up a righteousness of our own, but rather it is a public statement of discipleship in obedience to the teaching of Jesus and is intended to show outwardly the baptism and indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.¹⁶

We believe that immersion is the *preferred* method of baptism in order to signify the completed work of Jesus Christ and our identification with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection.

THE LORD'S SUPPER (Communion), the Outward Symbol of the New Covenant

We believe that the celebration of Jesus' final Passover meal on the night of His betrayal is a memorial of His atoning sacrifice on our behalf and the inauguration of the New Covenant of grace through His sacrificial death. The broken bread symbolizes His body which was broken in our place and reminds us of His death for the forgiveness of our sins. The wine (or grape juice) symbolizes His blood which was poured out to appease the wrath of God so that we would be justified by faith.¹⁷

We believe that Christians are free to remember His atonement in the Lord's Supper as often as they desire.¹⁸

THE RETURN OF CHRIST, the Blessed Hope of the Redeemed

We believe in the blessed hope, which is the personal, visible, physical, and imminent return of Jesus our Savior to the salvation of those who trust in Him for eternal life and to the condemnation of those who trust in something else to the eternal wrath of God.¹⁹

¹⁶ Matt 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; 10:47-48

¹⁷ Luke 22:13-20; Matt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; 1 Cor 11:23-26; Heb 9:15

¹⁸ 1 Cor 11:25-26

¹⁹ Titus 2:13; Acts 1:9-11; Mark 14:61-62; Phil 3:20-21; Luke 24:39-43; Matt 19:29; 24:31; 25; 46; 1 Cor 2:9; 15:22-24; 2 Tim 4:1; Rom 6:23; Jude 24-25; Eph 5:27; Col 1:22; Dan 12:2; Matt 3:12; 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 14:11; 20:15