

Statement of Faith

The elders of New Hope Baptist Church recognize that any statements of faith are but an inadequate human attempt to summarize and classify the treasures of a flawless divine revelation. But this does not diminish the importance of such statements in defining what New Hope Baptist believes as a church. The statements which follow carefully specify our teaching position with regard to the major biblical doctrines. They also provide an anchor to protect the church against theological drift.

Section 1. The Scriptures (Bibliology)

A. Inspiration

The Bible, in its original manuscripts, is completely inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), the very words inspired by God (2 Peter 1:19-21), and is the infallible (Psalm 19:7-11) and authoritative (John 17:17) Word of God given to man.

B. Interpretation

Since the Bible was written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit through many authors (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17) over a long period of time, the most accurate and comprehensive method of interpretation is the literal-historical-grammatical method. In order to be consistent with Scriptural truth, intent, context, and meaning, this is the method this church will use to interpret the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 4:5; Proverbs 30:5-6).

Section 2. The Trinity (Theology)

There is one, true God (Isaiah 45:5-7; Deuteronomy 6:4-5) who is spirit (John 4:24) and, as such, is infinite (Psalm 102:25-27), intelligent (Isaiah 40:13-14; Proverbs 3:19), omniscient (Psalm 139:2-6), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-12), omnipotent (Genesis 18:14; Luke 18:27), immutable (Psalm 102:25-27; Hebrews 6:17), perfect (Psalm 18:30; Matthew 5:48), holy (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15), and righteous (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 11:7). God exists eternally in three Persons (Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14), Father (John 8:41), Son (John 1:1; Titus 2:13), and Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). These three Persons are equal in deity, essence, power, sovereignty, and majesty yet perform distinct but harmonious functions (Ephesians 1:3-14).

A. God the Father

God the Father is a distinct (1 Samuel 2:2) person of the Trinity, yet He shares in the same essence with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He is sovereign (Psalm 29:2; Isaiah 29:15-16; 43:6-7; Romans 9) over all creation and His purpose (Isaiah 14:24-27) for all creation is to display His glory, person, and name (Revelation 4:11). Therefore, He accomplishes His

purpose, according to His desire and for His glory and pleasure (Isaiah 46:8-13; 55:8-13; Daniel 4:34-35; Ephesians 1:9-11; Philippians 2:12-13).

B. God the Son, Jesus Christ

God the Son has eternally existed as a distinct person of the Trinity, yet He shares in the same essence with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He is the creator (Colossians 1:15-22; Revelation 4:11), the sustainer of all creation, the LORD, Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies (John 10:30-31). In the redemptive plan, even though He was still God (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1), He took upon Himself the form of man by being supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) and born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14). After His death on the cross, He rose bodily from the grave (Matthew 28:1-15), ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 1:1-4), making intercession for us (Acts 2:22-36). In this way, He became, and is today, the perfect substitutionary sacrifice for man and the only payment for the penalty of sin (John 14:6; Acts 2:38-39). Both then (incarnation) and now, He is completely God and completely man (Philippians 2:5-8), and will physically return (John 14:1-4) to rule and reign on the earth in keeping with His promises. We believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus is LORD, Yahweh (Jehovah), without sin and without the possibility of sinning (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 3:5). Jesus is the Savior and the Christ, the Messiah, the One who will establish the Theocratic (Millennial) Kingdom on earth at the time of His second advent. When the word "Christ" (Messiah) is used in the New Testament, it is a reference to His work, position, and title as the "Anointed One", the God/Man Ruler, and the King who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth. Jesus is His given name (Matthew 1:20-25).

C. God the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the Trinity, yet He shares in the same essence with God the Father and God the Son. He was active in the creation of this world, along with God the Father and God the Son (Genesis 1:2, 26). In the Old Testament, He came upon men selectively to empower them for service (Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10-11; Judges 3:10). In the New Testament, following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41) to institute the Church and to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. He came to indwell all believers, making them spiritually alive (John 3:5-8), setting them apart for purity, and sealing them as God's eternally secure possessions. Today the Holy Spirit is our helper (John 14:16-18) as He comforts and leads us through life. He teaches us the truths of God's Word, controlling and strengthening us to live Christ-like lives (John 16:7-14). At the moment we put our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit baptizes (John 3:5-8; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:13; Galatians 3:27) us into the Church, which is the Body of Christ, and gives spiritual gifts to be used in service for our Lord and the Church (1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12; Ephesians 4). Because of the completed revelation of the Bible, certain sign gifts that were used to authenticate an apostle's message from God have ceased to be needed and have come to an end (1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:1-4; Revelation 22:18-19).

Section 3. The Church (Ecclesiology)

A. The Church

There is one, true Church (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:11), called in Scripture the Body and Bride of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-32; Revelation 19:7-8). The Church was a mystery in the time before Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, yet now it has been revealed in the New Testament (Ephesians 3:1-6). The Church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32; Colossians 1:25-27), coming into existence on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2:1-13). At this time, the disciples became a part of the Body of Christ, and all who have been "born from above", either Jew or Gentile (Ephesians 3:4-6; Romans 3:22; Romans 10:12), by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are members of His Body, the Church (John 3:3-8), of which He is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23). The Church will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own, at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Romans 11:25).

B. The Local Church

The local church is comprised of those belonging to the Body of Christ who are associated together by faith. In keeping with the admonition of Scripture, they voluntarily fellowship together (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42) in order to observe the ordinances (1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Luke 22:19-20; Matthew 28:19-20), preach Jesus Christ, worship (Luke 4:8), exercise their spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11-16), care for the widows and orphans (James 1:27), and teach the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15; 4:1-5) to equip the saints for ministry (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 13:1-3). The local Church has the absolute right of self-government (Matthew 22:21; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 19, 23; 10:3-4; 1 Timothy 3:1-13) with dependence upon none, other than Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).

C. The Ordinances of the Local Church

Jesus Christ instituted the observances of baptism and communion (the Lord's Supper) as the two ordinances of the Church. These ordinances are to be observed by born-again believers who are old enough to understand their meaning and are walking with the Lord. They are an act of obedience for the believer but are not required for salvation.

Baptism

Scriptural baptism is by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20). It is to be observed only once after conversion (Acts 8:12; 10:47; 16:33) as an outward sign of the inward work of grace by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 2:38).

Communion

The Lord's Supper is to be observed regularly until He comes. It is a remembrance of all that Christ did for us in His substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection. Observance of the Lord's Supper is for believers only and has no spiritual merit for the unsaved (Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

D. The Church and Civil Government

God established both the Church and the civil government, and He gave each its own distinct sphere of operation (Matthew 22:21; John 18:36; Romans 13:1-7; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Ephesians 4; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

Section 4. Man (Anthropology)

A. The Creation

The Biblical account of creation states that God created the heavens and the earth, the physical universe, angels, and man. God created the earth in six 24 hour days, (And there was evening and there was morning, one day; Genesis 1:5.) and these days were not separated by any amount of time. The Biblical account of creation is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct and immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process. (Genesis 1&2; Colossians 1:16-17; John 1:3)

B. The Creation and Purpose of Man

Men and women are created directly by God (Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 44:24) and in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4), and we belong to Him (Psalm 100:3). We believe that human beings were created in the image of God as either male or female, that gender identity and roles are aspects of God's creative design, that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman, and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bond of biblically defined marriage (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:18; 2:24-25; Exodus 20:11; Matthew 19:4-6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; 13:4; see also our Policies and Distinctives Manual for a more detailed stance on "Marriage" and "Sexuality"). The primary purpose of man is to worship God and to bring glory to Him forever (Isaiah 45:5-9, 21; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; 3:10, 20-21; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

C. The Condition of Man

Man was created by God in a state of innocence (Genesis 1:27-31; 2:25), but as a result of the temptation of Satan, Adam and Eve voluntarily sinned and fell from their innocent state (Genesis 3:1-7). Because of Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God (Genesis 2:16-17; Genesis 3:6), man incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death (Romans 5:12) and the wrath of God abides on him (Romans 1:18). Man died spiritually and

became inherently corrupt and, therefore, utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God (Romans 3:10-18; 8:6-8). Because he is spiritually dead, with no capacity to restore his relationship to God, man is hopelessly lost (Luke 19:10; Psalm 119:176), separated from God forever (Ephesians 2:12; Colossians 1:13). Therefore, man, unless redeemed, is condemned eternally to a literal hell (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 7:13; Philippians 3:18-19; 2 Peter 2:1-9).

D. The Redemption of Man

Salvation is entirely a work of God by grace, on the basis of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and not on the basis of any human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 18-19). The sacrifice of His body and the shedding of His blood (Leviticus 17:11; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:22) satisfied God's just demand for the payment required as the penalty for man's sin (Romans 6:23). Jesus Christ acted as our only substitute and received the penalty for sin that we deserved (1 Peter 3:18).

E. The Individual Liberty of Man

God created man with a will, and he is able to make choices within the limitations of his nature (Genesis 3; John 1:12-13; Psalm 119:108; Joshua 24:15; Psalm 25:12).

Slavery for the Unbeliever

Man in his fallen state has a nature (body and spirit) that is corrupted by sin (Psalm 14:3; Jeremiah 17:9; Titus 1:15), which he inherited through the man Adam (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22). Because of the corruption of man's nature, he is unable to make choices that lead to righteousness (Ephesians 4:17-19). Man as an unbeliever is a slave to sin (John 8:34), and any perceived act of good or righteousness is still corrupted by sin and, therefore, has no impact in his standing before God (Romans 8:7-8; Ephesians 2:8-9). All of his deeds will be considered as filthy garments (Isaiah 64:6). Therefore, man as an unbeliever, without Christ, is under the law and his choices and actions are subject to judgment based on the law, and he will not stand (Romans 2:12 & 3:20; Galatians 3:11; Revelation 6:16-17, 20:12).

Freedom for the Believer in Jesus Christ

The person who believes by faith in Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, is no longer a slave to sin and is set free from the requirements of the law (Romans 3:28). For in Christ the law was fulfilled and, therefore, as a believer having the Spirit of Christ in us (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19), we are justified before God because of the righteousness of Christ, through our faith in Him (Romans 5:1, 8:3-4). We are now free to choose to obey God and His Word and to do good works that have a purpose (Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10). This freedom believers have by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is not a license to gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:1; 5:13; 1 Peter 2:15). Our freedom in Christ is the free choice to surrender our lives to Christ

(James 4:7), dying to ourselves daily (Matthew 16:24; Romans 7:4; 1 Peter 2:24), to obey His commands in demonstration of our love for Him (John 14:15).

F. Responsibility of the Believer

Every believer in Jesus Christ must give an answer to God individually (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12); therefore, no other man, and no church, can act as his conscience. He has the responsibility to interpret the Scripture for himself and to answer to God for the way in which he does so (Romans 14:1-8). The believer has the Holy Spirit to guide and enable him (Romans 8:1-5; 1 John 2:27), apart from any other ministry of man or of the Church. Every believer will stand individually responsible for the proper interpretation and application of everything the Bible teaches (Romans 14:9-12).

G. The Final Judgment

Of the Unbeliever

Unsaved individuals will someday stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15), where they will recognize Jesus Christ as Lord, be judged according to their works, and sentenced to eternal judgment in hell (Luke 16:19-31; John 3:18).

Of the Believer

Every saved individual will someday stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). This judgment is not of their worthiness of salvation but of their works, in order that every believer may receive rewards from the Lord (Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:5).

Section 5. The Spirit World (Angelology)

A. The Creation of Angels

Angels were created by God and are, therefore, not to be worshipped (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). They were created by God separate from man to serve Him and bring Him glory (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; Revelation 5:11-14; Job 38:7; Psalm 148:1-5).

B. Holy Angels

The angels that did not leave their original state of creation are unfallen, or elect, spirit beings and will forever remain in that state (1 Timothy 5:21). These spirit beings today minister in two general areas: (1) they worship God and carry out His will (Isaiah 6:1-3; Revelation 4:6-11); (2) they are ministering spirits to those believers who are heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).

C. Fallen Angels

God created all things perfect and without sin. But when Satan, the anointed cherub and God's highest created being (Ezekiel 28:11-19), determined to be like God (Isaiah 14:12-17), sin entered into the creation. Satan is a real being and is extremely powerful, but he does not have God-like attributes (Job 1-2). He is evil and cunning (John 8:44), intending to destroy God's plan and usurp God's sovereign rule (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 12:7-10). He seeks to achieve his purposes and control through deceitful temptations and trying circumstances (1 Peter 5:8; Genesis 3:1). He is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). In seeking to overthrow God's authority, Satan convinced one third of the angels to follow him (Revelation 12:4), resulting in their fall (2 Peter 2:4). Because of this willful act of sin, their eternal punishment and destiny is sealed with no opportunity for repentance (Jude 6). Until these fallen angels are sent to their eternal punishment (Matthew 25:41), they are demonic messengers under Satan's control, opposing God's plan and purpose (Revelation 12:7-9; Ephesians 6:10-12).

Section 6. Salvation (Soteriology)

A. Provision and Assurance

God authored and Christ purchased our eternal salvation (John 3:16; Hebrews 12:2). God has chosen, before the foundation of the world, those who will believe in Christ and exercise their personal faith in Him, though we are still responsible to believe in Him, yielding to His sovereignty (Ephesians 1:3-6; John 6:35-51, Romans 8:27-30; Romans 9:10-16; 1 Peter 1:2-5). This salvation is all of grace through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ Who paid the full redemptive price for our sins (Ephesians 2:8-9). He satisfied God's righteous demands by suffering the death and penalty for man's sin on the cross of Calvary (Hebrews 5:9; 10:10-18). Salvation is made effective to man only as he believes (John 20:31; Acts 16:30-31), exercising personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10). Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ are saved forever and nothing can separate them from God's love (Romans 5:5-11; 8:31-39; Philippians 1:6). Since believers are eternally His, God will not allow the believer to be separated from Himself.

B. New Birth

Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden brought the penalty of death (Genesis 2:17) to him and all his descendants (Romans 5:12-21). At the moment of his sin, both Adam and Eve died spiritually and began to die physically. In order for God to deal with mankind's spiritual death, He sent His Son to die for all sin and to be raised from death in order to give victory over the penalty of sin (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). At the moment of salvation or new birth, the Spirit of God gives to a person who is spiritually dead, spiritual life (John 3:3-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Believers are made partakers of the divine nature (Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:24; 2 Peter 1:4). This spiritual life enables them to understand spiritual truth and to communicate with God

(Romans 8:5-11). Not only are believers made alive spiritually but also indwelt with the Holy Spirit, who is the believer's source of power (Romans 8:11-14).

C. Justification

Individuals are acquitted from the guilt of sin when they are saved by faith (Romans 5:1-11). At the moment of salvation, God declares them to be righteous and holy in the person of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21), and they are set apart for a holy purpose. It is not possible for anyone to earn justification before God.

D. Sanctification

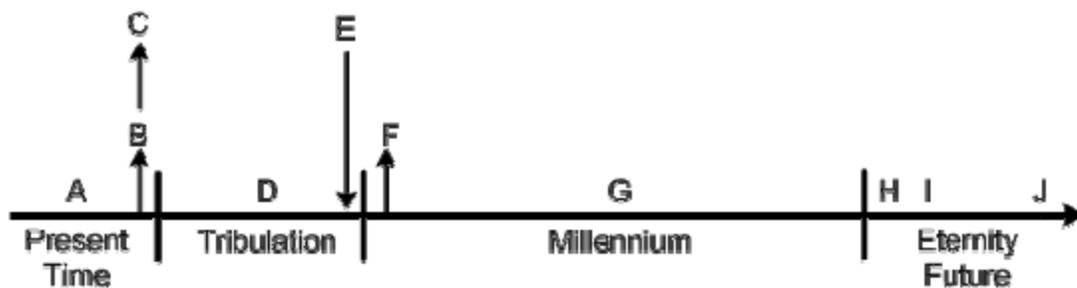
Believers are in an ongoing process of being set apart, from sin, to do the will of God in their lives. This is daily sharing and participating in God's holiness as the Holy Spirit is active in their lives (Romans 6:1-23; Colossians 3:1-11; 1 John 3:1-4).

E. Glorification

In the future, when believers are in His presence, they will be like Jesus Christ. Not that they will become gods, but they will be glorified and holy in reality as Jesus Christ is holy (John 3:1-3; Romans 6; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; 2 Peter 1:2-11; 1 John 3:1-4).

Section 7. Future Events in Prophetic Scripture (Eschatology)

Letters on the timeline correspond to the following descriptions, A-J.



A –The Church Age

The Church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when the Holy Spirit was given, and will continue on earth until the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) of the Church. During this time, Israel, the covenant nation sovereignly chosen by God, is dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ. After the completion of the church, Israel will be gathered in the Holy Land and will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. (Romans 11:1-32; Genesis 13:14-17; Ezekiel 37)

B - The Rapture

The next great prophetic event awaiting the Church, spoken of by Paul, is the bodily coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2:1) in the air to rapture all believers since the time of Pentecost. The Lord will descend and, with a shout, all the dead in Christ, those true believers who have died since Pentecost, will be raised and their souls united with their glorified bodies. After, those alive at His coming will be caught up and also united with their glorified bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 John 3:2). The word "rapture" comes from the Latin translation of the words "caught up" (1 Thessalonians 4:17) and means to seize or snatch.

C - The Judgment Seat of Christ

This is a judgment for believers in order to receive rewards (1 Corinthians 4:5). It is not a judgment of our being qualified for heaven but a judgment of our life, as we give account of what we have done for the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:10).

D - The Tribulation

This is the seven-year period, also known as "Daniel's Seventieth Week", in which God will once again focus on the people of Israel and will pour out His wrath on all nations of the earth (Jeremiah 30:7). The tribulation is divided into two equal parts: the first half being "the beginning of sorrows" and the second half being "the great tribulation". The Church will be taken to be with the Lord sometime prior to the beginning of this seven-year period (Matthew 24; Daniel 9).

E - The Second Coming of Christ

This is the personal, bodily return of Jesus Christ, with His Church, to the earth to establish His earthly kingdom, just prior to the end of the tribulation period (Zechariah 14:1-5; Jude 14-15). As Jesus Christ sets foot on the earth, He will bring the great campaign of Armageddon to an end (Revelation 19:11-21). At that time, He will conquer the nations and establish His Millennial Kingdom.

F - The Resurrection of Old Testament Saints

Following the tribulation, Old Testament saints and those believers martyred during the tribulation will be resurrected, in order to receive their glorified bodies and their inheritance in Christ's millennial kingdom (Daniel 12:1-3, 9-13 Revelation 20:4).

G - The Millennium

This is the fulfillment of God's promise to David (2 Samuel 7:8-16; Isaiah 11:1-16) that he would have a descendant who would sit on his throne forever. Jesus Christ will literally begin to fulfill this prophecy as He rules and reigns on the earth for one thousand years. At the end of the one thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison to deceive and gather for battle the rebels born during the Millennial Kingdom. However, fire from heaven will consume them, and

the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:1-10).

H - The Great White Throne Judgment

This is the judgment of unbelievers from all generations. All will be resurrected to stand before the Lord to be judged according to their works for salvation. Since their works will prove ineffective in declaring them righteous before God and because their names are not written in the Book of Life, they will be cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).

I - The New Heavens and the New Earth

Following the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ and the judgment of unbelievers, God will restore the heavens and the earth to glorious perfection (Acts 3:21; Romans 8:19-23). The new heavens and earth will be the eternal home of the saints (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1-22:5).

J - Eternity

Believers will exist eternally in the presence of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:3-57). For the unbeliever, it will be an eternal existence in hell, separated from God to bear the punishment of their sin without relief (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 21-22).