

# The Doctrinal Statement of Southern View Chapel

August 1, 2021

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*The members of Southern View Chapel are committed to handling the Scriptures accurately. The affirmations that follow explain the doctrines that lie at the core of our fellowship. They also provide a framework for all of our teaching and serve as an anchor to protect the church from theological drift and error.*

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

We believe the Bible is God's completed, written revelation. Thus, the sixty-six books of the Bible, given to us by the Holy Spirit, constitute the plenary (inspired equally and completely in all parts) Word of God (2 Pet 1:20-21; Rev 22:19).

We believe the Bible is the written and objective revelation of God (1 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim 3:16), inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. The Bible is our final rule and ultimate authority and is sufficient for all matters pertaining to our faith and practice (Matt 5:18; John 17:17; Heb 4:12).

We believe God, the Holy Spirit, superintended the human authors so that, using their individual personalities and writing styles, they composed and recorded God's Word (2 Pet 1:20-21).

We believe only one true interpretation exists for any text of Scripture. Many applications may exist, but the meaning is singular and fixed. This meaning can be ascertained through careful study of a passage's grammar and historical context.<sup>i</sup>

We believe the Scriptures—interpreted in their natural, literal sense—reveal divinely determined dispensations, administrations, or economies that define human responsibility in successive ages. A dispensation is not a way of salvation but a divinely ordered stewardship by which God directs people according to His purpose. These periods are marked in Scripture by some change in God's method of dealing with humankind, or a portion of humankind, in respect to the two issues of sin and human responsibility. Each dispensational age may be regarded as a new test of obedience for humanity, and each ends in judgment—because of humanity's utter disobedience (John 1:17; 1 Cor 9:17; 2 Cor 3:9-18; Gal 3:17-25; Eph 1:10, 3:2-10; Col 1:24, 25; Heb 7:19; Rev 20:2-6).

We believe salvation is always by grace alone through faith alone, regardless of the dispensation in which the believer may have lived. Salvation by grace alone through faith alone has always been based upon the substitutionary atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross (Eph 2:8-10; Heb 11:6; 1 Pet 1:10-12).

## II. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

We believe in the one true and living God (Deut 6:4; Isa 45:5-7). He is an infinite and eternal spirit who is holy (John 4:24; Lev 19:2). God is perfect in His attributes and ways and exists as one being in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14). Each member of the Trinity has the same nature, attributes, essence, and perfections.

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We believe God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and accomplishes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps 145:8-9; 1 Cor 8:6). He rules the universe with absolute power, being sovereign over creation, providence, and redemption (Ps 103:19; Rom 11:36).

We believe the Father has decreed for His own glory all that comes to pass (Eph 1:11), yet He is not the author or approver of sin (Hab 1:13; James 1:13). The Father has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph 1:4-6). Through the finished work of Jesus Christ, He has provided salvation and adoption to those who would come to Him as His own (John 1:12; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5).

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We believe Jesus Christ, the eternal Son and second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine attributes of the Father. He is equal with the Father, of the same substance, and eternal (John 10:30; 14:9). He created all things according to the will of the Father (John 1:3; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:2-3).

We believe Jesus Christ became man without ceasing to be God. He accepted all the characteristics of humanity and became the God-man, fully God and fully man (John 1:1, 14; Phil 2:5-8; Col 2:9).

We believe Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23, 25; Lk 1:25-35) and voluntarily shed His blood on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin. His sacrifice was a vicarious (on our behalf), substitutionary (in our place), propitiatory (satisfying the righteous wrath of God), and redemptive (purchasing from sin) work (John 10:15; Rom 3:24-25, 5:8; 1 Pet 2:24). The repentant sinner is saved from God's wrath only due to this sacrifice (1 Pet 2:24, 3:18).

We believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ was both literal and physical. It is proof that the Father accepted the atoning sacrifice of His Son and guarantees the future resurrection of believers (John 5:26-27, 14:19; Rom 1:4, 4:25, 6:5-10; 1 Cor 15:20-21).

We believe Jesus Christ, following His resurrection, ascended to Heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father. He now mediates as advocate and high priest between the Father and believers (Matt 28:6; Lk 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25, 9:24; 1 John 2:1). As the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), Christ is the Head of the church (Eph 1:22, 5:23; Col 1:18).

We believe Jesus Christ will receive the church to Himself at the rapture. After the tribulation, Christ will return to the earth with His church and establish His kingdom on the earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Rev 20). Jesus Christ is the coming King of kings, who will reign on the throne of David, ruling over the entire earth (Isa 9:6; Lk 1:31-33). He is the final judge of all humanity (Matt 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

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We believe the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine attributes of and proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is equal with the Father and Son, and of the same substance (Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Heb 10:15-17). The Spirit has all the attributes of personality and deity. These attributes include intellect (1 Cor 2:10-13), emotions (Eph 4:30), will (1 Cor 12:11), eternity (Heb 9:14), omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10), omnipotence (Rom 15:13), omniscience (Isa 40:13-14), and truthfulness (John 16:13).

We believe the Holy Spirit executes the will of God. He was instrumental in creation (Gen 1:2), the incarnation (Matt 1:18), written revelation (2 Pet 1:20-21), and in the work of salvation (John 3:5-7). The Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-9), and He transforms believers into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18).

We believe the Holy Spirit inaugurated the church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 2:22). The Spirit baptizes all believers into the church (1 Cor 12:13). He indwells, sanctifies, seals, and empowers Christians for service (Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:6; Eph 1:13).

We believe each believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Spirit at the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of believers to be filled with (in submission to) Him (John 16:13; Rom 8:9; Eph 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27). The Spirit gives spiritual gifts to the church. He administers these gifts neither for His own glory, nor for the glory of the believer, but for the glory of Christ (John 15:16). Spiritual gifts are designed to build up the church (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:12).

We believe the gifts of tongues and miracles have ceased for this church age. The Spirit gave these gifts in the early days of the church to authenticate the ministry of the apostles and their message (1 Cor 12:4-11, 13:8-10; 2 Cor 12:12; Eph 4:7-12; Heb 2:1-4). Tongues were also given as a sign to Israel of judgment (1 Cor 14:21-22; Isa 28:11-12)

### III. THE DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY

We believe men and women are created in the image of God (Gen 1:26). God created humans with both body and soul, directly and immediately, not through an evolutionary process. God created them free from sin with intelligence, will, emotions, and moral responsibility to God (Gen 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).

We believe humans were made to enjoy fellowship with their Creator by walking in God's will and accomplishing God's purposes on earth (Isa 43:7; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11). However, due to the sin of Adam, men and women became sinners, and inherited the condemnation of Adam's sin. They incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death as a subject of God's wrath (Rom 5:12-19). Their nature became totally depraved, and incapable of pleasing God (Rom 3:10-18; 6:23).

### IV. THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

We believe men and women are hopelessly alienated from God, dead in sin, and can only be saved by the redemptive work of Christ (Gen 2:16-17, 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom 3:23, 6:23; 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Tim 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

We believe salvation is made possible because of the finished work of Christ. Repentant sinners can be saved from God's wrath only through faith in Jesus Christ and the merit of His shed blood; it is not based on any work they have done (John 1:12; Eph 1:7, 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:18-19).

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We believe God chose, before the foundation of the world, each one whom He would graciously save (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-11; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1-2). We also believe God's sovereign choice does not negate the responsibility of each person to trust in Christ for salvation (John 1:12, 3:18-19, 36, 5:40; 2 Thess 2:10-12; Rev 22:17).

We believe God chose to save some sinners apart from to any personal merit, action on their part, or foreseen faith. God elected those whom He would save according to His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet 1:2). We do not believe God, by electing some to salvation elects others to damnation. We believe if the Father did not draw anyone to Christ, none would ever be saved (John 6:37, 44).

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We believe the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life at the moment a person responds in faith to Jesus Christ (John 6:63; Eph 2:5; Titus 3:5). Regeneration is a supernatural work whereby the one who was dead in sin is made alive in Christ.

We believe regeneration is an internal change that shows itself outwardly in a life of good works (1 Cor 6:19-20; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10). Regeneration begins the process of conforming a person to the image of Christ—a process that will be complete only when the believer is with the Lord in eternal glory (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:17; 2 Pet 1:4).

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We believe God declares as righteous those whom He has called to salvation and regenerated to new life. Justification is a legal verdict, a declaration of fact (Rom 8:33). The Father does not overlook the believer's sins but accepts the substitution of the Son of God on their behalf (2 Cor 5:21). By faith, the believer's sin is imputed to Jesus Christ, while the righteousness of Christ is applied to the believer (1 Cor 1:30; 1 Pet 2:24; Col 2:14). By His death, they live.

We believe Christ suffered once for sin, a past and completed act that is finished and will never be repeated (1 Pet 3:18; Heb 7:27, 9:12; 10:10). Thus, justification has no contingencies. We believe the repentant sinner who has trusted in Christ is justified at the moment of salvation and eternally.

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We believe God sets every believer apart from the world as a saint unto Himself (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Thess 2:13; Heb 2:11). He seals His people with the Holy Spirit and keeps them secure in Him by His power forever (Eph 1:13; Rom 8:1; 1 Cor 1:8; 1 Pet 1:5). Having received Christ's righteousness, believers have been declared holy. Practically, however, they still sin.

We believe the Holy Spirit empowers His people to grow in holy living, enabling them to become more like Christ in this life (Rom 12:1-2; Col 3:9-10). They do not, however, grow to the point of sinless perfection (Phil 3:12). Every believer experiences a struggle in which their flesh is set against their new nature in Christ (Gal 5:16-23; Eph 4:22-24). While believers are commanded to strive for holiness, their only hope for spiritual growth is through faith and dependence on the Holy Spirit's work through the Word (Acts 26:18; Eph 5:18-21; Phil 2:12-13; Gal 5:22-23).

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We believe the ultimate goal of redemption of the believer is their glorification (Rom 8:29-30). All believers, at the point of Christ's return, will receive a resurrected body (1 Cor 15:50-53). It is then that the image of God, which has been marred by sin, will be restored to its full glory (1 Cor 15:49; 1 John 3:2-3).

## V. THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

We believe the universal church is a spiritual family comprised of all believers of the New Testament age. All whom Christ has saved have been placed in fellowship with Him and with one another (1 Cor 1:9; Acts 20:28). Christ is the head of the church (Eph 4:15; Col 1:18) which He established on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Thus, the church is completely distinct from Israel (Matt 16:18; 1 Cor 10:32; Eph 5:32).

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We believe by the power and enablement of God, that the church exists to raise up disciples through the instrument of the Scriptures to the glory of God (Matt 28:18-20; Col 1:28; Eph 4:11-15). God has given the church the unique role of being the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). We believe God's Spirit uses the Word proclaimed by the church, to bring unbelievers to salvation (Rom 10:14-15) and to grow His people in Christlikeness (2 Tim 3:16-17). We believe every church ministry should align with the church's purpose as detailed in the New Testament.

We believe the local church has a leadership structure comprised, under the headship of Christ, of elders and deacons (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). A plurality of elders share in the responsibility of leading the local church. Elders are shepherds, men who are biblically qualified and can teach the Word (1 Pet 5:1-5; Titus 1:9; 2 Tim 4:2). Elders are men called to warn the church against error (Titus 1:9; 2 Tim 3:16-17), be devoted to ministering the Word, and prayer (Acts 2:42; 6:4; 1 Tim 2:8), and equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11, 12; 2 Tim 2:1-2).

We believe deacons are servants in the church. All believers are gifted with the strength that God supplies (1 Pet 4:11; 1 Tim 3:8-13), some, however, are selected to give attention to specific needs in the church (1 Tim 3:8-13).

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We believe the church should be devoted to God’s Word, fellowship, prayer, the ordinances (Acts 2:42), and evangelism (Acts 2:40-41).

We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government, and free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). It is scriptural for biblical churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. However, each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation as well as of all matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government—under the authority of Christ and the Scriptures (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

We believe, to fulfill his or her God-ordained mission, each believer, at the time of their conversion, is given at least one spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the body. Each member should strive to develop and use their spiritual gift(s) in a way that will glorify God (Rom 12:3-8; Eph 4:8-13; 1 Cor 12:1-31; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

We believe the Lord sovereignly bestows these gifts to fulfill specific purposes in His divine plan (1 Cor 12:11). We believe when the purpose of any gift is fulfilled, that particular gift ceases. Thus, we believe the sign gifts of speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, and healing, gradually ceased with the conclusion of the apostolic age and the completion of the canon of Scripture (1 Cor 13:8-10, 14:21, 22; Acts 19:11-12; Heb 2:3, 4; 2 Cor 12:12). (See Doctrine of God: The Holy Spirit for more details.)

We believe God heals and works miracles today, but He does so sovereignly as He wills and through the prayers of His saints, not through gifted individuals (James 5:13-18).

## **VI. ORDINANCES**

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We believe water baptism is a scriptural ordinance of the church during this church age. Baptism, while not a requirement for salvation, is a public testimony by the recipient that they have personally trusted Jesus Christ as Savior (Acts 8:36-39). Baptism is the outward symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is the inward work whereby each believer is inseparably joined to the body of Christ (Rom 8:3-5; 1 Cor 12:13). For this reason, we do not practice infant baptism.

We believe immersion in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the biblical method that best typifies what takes place at conversion (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:41, 8:36-39, 9:18, 18:8; Eph 4:5; 1 Pet 3:21; 1 Cor 12:13; Rom 6:3, 4).

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We believe the Lord’s Supper is a memorial testimony of the church, instituted by our Lord just before His betrayal, to be observed by His children until His return as a sacred, symbolic, and scriptural means of remembering His redemptive work for our sins (1 Cor 11:23, 24).

## **VII. THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS**

We believe angels are spirit beings (Heb 1:14) created by God (Col 1:15-17). Two kinds of angels exist: holy and fallen.



