



Heartbeat of a Healthy Church

Lesson 3: Having the Right Doctrine

Article IV — Statement of Faith

Section 1 — Doctrine of the Scriptures

We believe in the verbal (every word) and plenary (complete) inspiration of the Scriptures consisting of the Old (39 books) and New Testaments (27 books) without error in the original manuscripts (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Proverbs 30:5-6); the Bible is the sole authority of faith and practice because they have been providentially preserved as God's eternal Word (Psalm 19:7-11; 1 Peter 1:23-25); the Bible is infallible, authoritative, accurate, and reliable in science, history, and every other matter they discuss (2 Peter 1:16-21); the Bible should be interpreted in a dispensational understanding based upon the unfolding of the divine mysteries from God with a historical-grammatical method (Hebrews 1:1-3; Ephesians 1:10); that the inspiration of Scriptures has been completed. Anyone who adds or subtracts from their completion is in danger of God's judgment (Revelation 22:18-19).

Section 2 — Doctrine of God

A. The Godhead

We believe that God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and does not have a physical body, although He took on flesh for the incarnation. He is a self-existent person who has no beginning or no end (John 8:58; Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 33:27); that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) who perfectly coexists in three equal, eternal persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14); that the three members of the Holy Trinity are equal in substance and every divine perfection and attribute (Genesis 1:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

B. The Father

We believe that God the Father is the first person of the Trinity (number not rank) who orders and disposes all things according to his own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:11; 3:11); that he is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9); that he is the absolute and omnipotent Ruler of the universe. He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36); that His fatherhood is both his designation inside the Trinity and inside his relationship with man. As Creator he is the father of all men (Ephesians 4:6), but only the spiritual father to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18); that his holiness proclaims his sovereignty and sinlessness (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47).

C. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only unique, eternal Son of God (John 3:16), who is the second member of the Trinity (Hebrews 1:8). He is co-equal in power, existence, and eternity to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 1:1-2; Psalm 2; Matthew 28:19-20); that he is the absolute, eternal Deity of God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3; John 8:58); that he was incarnated into a physical body while being both fully God and fully man (Philippians 2:5-8); that he was conceived by the work of the Holy Spirit, and He was born of a human mother who was a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-38; Philippians 2:7-8); that after His birth He lived a sinless life on earth, died on the cross as the substitutionary atonement for sin, and was raised bodily from the tomb (Luke 24:1-6; 1 Peter 2:21-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-7, 23-26); that he now is in heaven as the

great High Priest sitting at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 4:14); that he will imminently return to rapture His bride (the church) prior to the tribulation period (1Thessalonians 4:16-17; Matthew 24:30-31; 1Corinthians 15:51-52); that Christ's second physical return to the earth shall occur and institute the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-7); that he will judge both the living and the dead at the end of time (Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15).

D. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine, eternal Person possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13); that his ministries include: restraining of evil in the world to the measure of the divine will; the conviction of the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11); that he is the agent of regeneration and baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ instantly upon salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13); that he permanently indwells all believers (Romans 8:9; John 3:16); that he continues filling for power, teaching, and service of all among the saved who are truly yielded to Him (Ephesians 5:18); that he produces His fruit in the lives of all believers (Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:10, 12).

Section 3 — Doctrine of Man

We believe that man was created directly by God on day six of the creation week (Genesis 1:26-31), in His image (James 3:9), and in a state of sinlessness (Ephesians 4:24); that Adam freely chose to disobey the will of God, and thereby, brought upon himself sin, condemnation, physical and spiritual death (Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Ephesians 2:1-3); that all men born after Adam are sinners by nature and by choice, completely depraved, destitute of any moral good, and utterly unable to merit God's favor or contribute to his salvation (Romans 3:10; Jeremiah 17:9; Ephesians 2:9; Titus 3:5; Romans 4:5-6).

Section 4 — Doctrine of Sin

We believe the origin of sin in the universe was when Satan disobeyed God and was expelled from heaven (Jude 1:6); that the introduction of sin into the human race took place when Adam chose to eat of the forbidden fruit willingly, which was in direct disobedience to God's command (Genesis 3:1-7); that God was not the author or creator of sin, but allowed his created being with a free will to make a choice to obey or disobey Him (James 1:13); that sin changed the relationship between God and man through separation (Ephesians 4:18); that as a result of the fall, mankind is blind and deaf to spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:14; Titus 1:15); that the reign of sin is universal, all men are under its power, and consequently no one is righteous (Romans 3:10-12); that without Christ as personal Savior all men will be judged for their sin, and suffer for eternity (Revelation 20:14-15).

Section 5 — Doctrine of Salvation

We believe that salvation is gift of God based on the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, through his substitutionary death, burial, and resurrection (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19); that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which spiritual life is given (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) when the repentant sinner responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation (Acts 2:38); That election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, God chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2); that

sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17); that justification is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7); that in salvation the believer is called, regenerated, Spirit baptized into union with Christ, justified, adopted, sanctified, and glorified; that the genuine believer will continue in his faith and show evidence of his faith in Christ until he meets the Lord (James 2:20); that all the elect of God, once saved, are kept by God's power and are secure in Christ forever (Romans 8:38-39; Philippians 1:6; John 3:16).

We believe that sanctification is not the direct act of salvation, but it is a result of salvation. The believer is sanctified (set apart by God) in his position (Romans 6:11; Hebrews 10:10). The believer is also sanctified to the process of becoming more like Jesus Christ through living by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3). While living on this earth, a Christian will never be fully sanctified and without sin (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:18-25).

We believe the Bible teaches a believer should separate from worldly actions (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:15-7:1), false teachers (Galatians 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11; Romans 16:17-18), and all disobedient brethren (1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15). We believe all Christians should live personal lives of holiness from worldliness and ungodliness, which are separated unto God. Life under grace does not imply freedom from all obligations to godly living, but rather to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age (Titus 2:11-12).

Section 6 — Doctrine of The Church

We believe 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); 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); 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 is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6; 5:32); that 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 (Titus 1:5); that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 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 (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42).

We believe that Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32; That whereas the elements of Communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Section 7 — Doctrine of Angels

We believe angels are created (Psalm 148:1-5 Colossians 1:16), immortal (Luke 20:35), spiritual beings with moral judgment and higher intelligence than man (Luke 4:34), but without physical bodies (Hebrews 1:7); that angels were created as sinless spirits with a free will to choose between right and wrong (Jude 6); that angels were never created for their own worship (Revelation 22:8; Hebrews 1:6); that the existence of Satan is stated from the beginning of creation (Genesis 3:1; Job 1:6), and He fell from an elevated position in Heaven taking 1/3 of the angels with him into sin (Revelation 12:4; Jude 1:6); that Satan is a wretched foe for the child of God; that he must be resisted (James 4:7), guarded against (Ephesians 6:11) and watched out for (1 Peter 5:8); that God has predetermined a time of judgment for Satan, and Satan will be removed, bound, and judged for eternity (Revelation 20:10).

Section 8 — Doctrine of End Times

We believe in the imminent rapture of the church to Heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Titus 2:13) followed by a seven-year period of tribulation upon all the Earth (Revelation 3:10); that at the end of the period of tribulation, Jesus Christ shall come back to Earth in power and glory with His Church (Revelation 19:11-16); that he shall reign for one thousand years during which time peace and righteousness will cover the earth, Satan shall be bound, and Israel shall be established in her own land (Revelation 20:4-7); that at the end of this glorious reign, Satan shall lead a rebellion against Christ, shall be defeated, and shall be forever banished to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:8-10); that the wicked dead shall be judged at the Great White Throne, and shall be condemned to everlasting conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:11-15); that the righteous shall be in eternal conscious blessedness in the presence of the Lord (Revelation 21-22).

Article V — Contemporary Issues

Section 1 — Life

We believe that God alone is the rightful giver and taker of life, granting to all men the principle of life (which is in the blood) and breath, bestowing upon all men his own image, and sustaining all men by the word of his power. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; 9:4, 6; Leviticus 17:11; Job 1:21; Psalm 139:13-16; John 1:9; Acts 17:5; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3)

Section 2 — Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception; that the unborn child is a living human being; that abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life and amounts to murder; that we must reject any teaching that promotes abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother. (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

Section 3 — Euthanasia

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention; that life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death; that an act or omission, which causes death in order to eliminate suffering, constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God; that discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of treatment. (Exodus 20:13; 23:7; Matthew 5:21; Acts 17:28)

Section 4 — Civil Government

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: the

family, the church, and the state; that every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word; that God has given each institution unique and specific Biblical responsibilities; that each institution is equal and sovereign in its respective, Biblically assigned sphere of responsibility under God. (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-14)

Section 5 — Family Relationships

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God, but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and in the church; that the husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (elders, and deacons) of the church (accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church); that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society; that the husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church; that the wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ; that children are a heritage from the Lord; that parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

Section 6 — Human Sexuality

We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman; that God has commanded abstinence from intimate sexual activity outside of a marriage between a man and a woman; that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex; that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)

Section 7 — Marriage

We believe that God has designed marriage for one man and one woman for one lifetime (Genesis 2:23-24); that all divorce is caused from a sinful distortion of God's plan (Matthew 19:8); that God hates divorce (Matthew 19:6; Malachi 2:16). We further recognize the importance of incorporating divorcees into our membership with the grace and love that God grants to all who seek to follow his will. Divorcees may not serve in the offices of elder or deacon.

We believe that physical violence and immorality inside of a marriage relationship is a perversion of God's Law; that no spouse should be subject to any abuse; that our duty is to protect, provide for, love, and encourage any spouse within our membership that is the victim of an abusive relationship; that separation may be necessary with the hope and prayer, repentance, restoration.

Marriage ceremonies performed by any pastor of New England Shores Baptist Church are a privilege reserved for members of New England Shores Baptist Church. Permission to officiate a marriage ceremony for nonmembers may be obtained by a simple majority vote of the Administrative Team.

Section 8 — Love

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward all those who are not believers, both those who oppose us, and those who oppose themselves by engaging in sinful actions; that we are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly; that God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of

violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice; that although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9-10, 17-21; 13:8-10; Philippians 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)

Section 9 — Lawsuits Between Believers

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes; that the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members; that a Christian may bring a civil lawsuit against a former church member, whose membership has been terminated as a result of his refusal to heed the advice of the church and/or its leadership; that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32)

Section 10 — Giving

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe every Christian should also give offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

Section 11 — The Charismatic Movement

We believe that the Charismatic Movement, while containing some who are genuine and sincere believers, is based upon a misunderstanding of the teaching of Scripture regarding the spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of tongues and healing. These gifts were given as a special signs to the nation of Israel as an authentication of the apostolic message, not as a gift to be used throughout this dispensation (Hebrews 2:3-4). Speaking in tongues and healing were temporary sign gifts which ceased with the completion of the Canon of Scriptures (Corinthians 13:8). We stand firmly opposed to the experience-centered, unscriptural emphasis of the Charismatic Movement.

Section 12 — Eternal Security

We believe that once a person receives Christ as Savior, he is eternally secure; that is he cannot lose his salvation. True converts of Christ can never lose, misplace, or reject their salvation (Romans 8:38-39; Philippians 1:6; John 3:16).

Article VI — Authority of Statement of Faith

This Statement of Faith (Articles IV-V) does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members.