



PROVIDED COURTESY OF:

ASSEMBLIES  
OF GOD



# OUR 16 DOCTRINES

A Paraphrased Version of:  
 *Statement of  
Fundamental Truths*







## Preface: Change and our culture:

**C**hange is common to all human life. We are not today what we were yesterday; we will not be tomorrow what we are today. Like our world, much of what we are, do, and say is temporal.

However, there are a few things in life that never change—nor should they. Such is God. Unlike the human condition, God never changes (Malachi 3:6). He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And like Him—His truth is also everlasting. It remains the single constant in our ever dynamic world of shifting cultural values. These truths of God are His word. They are recorded in the Bible and are foundational to successful happy living.

### Background:

## The formulation of the church and a need for essential standards:

**W**hen the Assemblies of God formed in 1914, America was in the midst of a sweeping global revival. This revival was deeply spiritual, and like none other of its day. Unlike many present day revivals, this one was not planned, or heavily promoted—nor was it the work of any single person or tied to any church or denomination. In reality this was more than a revival—it was a sovereign move of God's Spirit. It was one that transcended all boundaries and reached across people of all colors, ages, and denominations.

In this revival people began experiencing the baptism in the Holy Spirit in similar fashion as that recorded in the

New Testament. Like the 120 believers in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), people involved in this revival were filled with the Holy Spirit. They too began speaking in unknown languages. Outstanding miracles and signs of God's presence and anointing were openly visible. People were saved and lives were magnificently changed. Participants of the revival were given the name Pentecostals.

As news of the revival spread, sightseers and news reporters came to mock and investigate this new outpouring of God. Many who came to scoff were convicted under the power of the Holy Spirit and became converts to the cause of Christ.

As participants of the revival returned to their homes, they were now changed. All carried the message and reports of God's outpouring with them. Some were welcomed back, many weren't. Still others had been so moved by the Spirit that they involved themselves in full-time ministry.

Problems soon arose. The mainline churches quickly rejected the new Baptism phenomenon. Those involved were asked to leave or made to feel uncomfortable in their churches. Many were ostracized and ridiculed by their communities. Others, now involved in ministry and efforts to continue the revival, were isolated from friends of similar belief.

Soon Pentecostal leaders recognized the need for some type of organization or framework for supporting their ministries and continuing fellowship with one another. A call went out for the Pentecostals to meet and consider the possibility of establishing a new church.

However, many having just been scorned by their former churches didn't want anything to do with creating a new denomination. These Pentecostals felt it best for local churches to remain totally independent. Still others thought organizing a new church was the only way to continue the wonderful Holy Spirit revival.

In April 1914 some 300 of the Pentecostal leaders met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to discuss the matter. With division in the ranks they opened the meeting with 3 days of prayer. Afterwards they voted to organize, but not as a denomination. Instead they chose to form themselves in what is best described as a loosely knit fellowship. A fellowship that allowed local churches the needed freedom to conduct their own ministries, yet provided the vital network for servicing the Pentecostal work of the Holy Spirit. So was born the General

# THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

Council of the Assemblies of God in April 1914.

The first years of a headquarters operation consisted primarily of printing a paper to carry reports of the ministry, establishing a fund for supporting the work of missionaries, and formally credentialing ministers.

It wasn't until 2 years later in 1916 that the new fellowship saw the need to establish a set of doctrinal standards. After only a few months, an unscriptural practice of baptizing converts in water using "only the name of Jesus," surfaced. The teaching spread like wildfire in many churches where entire congregations were rebaptized. At stake for the young Assemblies of God was the danger of leaving the Trinitarian ranks of Christianity, creating further isolation from other Christian groups and setting sail on ill winds of biblical error. However, Bible scholars stepped forward explaining the Scriptures, and pointing out the error of the new teaching. Nearly all involved in the "Jesus only" teaching admitted their error and refuted the practice.

It is in this context that the young Assemblies of God realized its need for outlining some essential standards of truth—standards that would navigate the church on a biblical course. In a meeting held in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1916, the Assemblies of God established 16 doctrinal standards called the Statement of Fundamental Truths, standards that have withstood the test of time and served the church well.

## Concerning This Document:

**T**oday's Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths is the same as that established in 1916. Only minor adjustments in wording and clarification have been made since that first statement. Based on the eternal, inerrant Word of God, the Statement needs no alteration of the truth it proclaims.

The Assemblies of God, like every Bible believing group, must speak God's eternal truth to each generation and to each individual. Sometimes a statement of fundamental truths, with its theological terminology, speaks more to theologians than it does to the man and woman on the street or in the pew. This publication of the 16 fundamental doctrines of the Assemblies of God expresses the doctrines in non-theological terminology. We desire that every man, woman, and child understand the truth of Scripture as did our predecessors who searched the Bible, composed the Statement, experienced its truth, and left it to us as a precious heritage.

**T**he Bible is completely adequate by itself to serve as the guide for our beliefs and way of living. This paraphrased version of the Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended only to make the official Statement more readily understood. The primary Statement, as it appears in the Constitution of the Assemblies of God, is intended to be the common basis for our fellowship and unity, or as the Bible recommends, that we may agree with one another so as to avoid divisions because of disagreements on what we believe (1 Corinthians 1:10 and Acts 2:42). There is no claim that the wording of this statement is divinely inspired (as is the Bible), but the truth it sets forth is felt to be essential to a full-gospel, Bible-based ministry. Furthermore there is no pretense that this statement contains all of the Bible's truth. It merely covers some basic fundamental teaching thought to be vital to successful Christian living.

## O N E

### 1 The Bible Is Inspired



**T**he Scriptures of the entire Bible are verbally inspired of God. It was not just the ideas that were inspired; even the choice of words was inspired as the original writers were moved by God to write what He wanted them to say. We therefore believe that (1) the



T H R E E

### 3 The Lord Jesus Christ Is Fully God



The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has always existed. He too is without beginning or end (Revelation 1:8). In order to complete His earthly sacrificial mission, He became human by being born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35). He lived a perfect life, absolutely without sin (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22). While on earth He worked many miracles through the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:22, 10:38). In order to restore fallen mankind, He died on the cross as a substitute for the sins of every person (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21). He was raised from the dead by the supernatural power of God (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 6:14, 15:4). Since His resurrection He has been exalted (honored), and is seated at the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11, 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

The supernatural birth of Jesus, His sinless life, His working of miracles all give proof that He is the divine Son of God who came to earth in human form to give himself as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. No death of a natural human could provide forgiveness of sin (salvation) for the entire human race.

Knowing that Jesus came from God, and actually is God, and returned to God's presence after His death and resurrection assures us that our salvation and restored relationship with God is not only logical, but a true reality.

F O U R

### 4 The Fall of Mankind



Mankind was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, mankind by willful choice, ignored God's instructions...choosing to engage in what they knew was wrong and evil. As a result, mankind fell

Scriptures are God's revelation of himself to mankind, (2) they are infallible (never wrong), and (3) they are the divinely authoritative guide for our faith, belief, and manner of living (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Peter 1:21).

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

If we do not agree that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16) and is therefore infallible and authoritative, we have no dependable standard on which to base our lives. Instead of having a guide that is fixed and reliable, everything becomes relative and uncertain. However since God does not change as do the shifting shadows (James 1:17), we can be certain that His truth also remains steadfast, enduring all time, generations, and cultures.

T W O

### 2 One True God



There is one true God. He has revealed himself as having always existed without any outside cause or agent bringing Him into being (Isaiah 43:10). He is the Creator of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1) and the One who redeems, saves, or rescues mankind from sin and its painful consequences (Isaiah 43:11). God has further revealed himself as a single Being (Deuteronomy 6:4) consisting of three interrelated persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, Luke 3:22). This concept of one God or Being of three persons is called the Trinity.

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

It is contrary to the clear statement and meaning of Scripture to speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three gods or as three modes in which the One God has revealed himself. Through the centuries such false teachings have created division and devastation in the church. Though the concept of a "three in One" Trinity has no parallel in the human world, it is absolutely scriptural and essential to a proper understanding of the multifaceted nature of God.

Other Scripture references support the nature of the one true God and the relationship between the three persons:

Zachariah 14:9; Matthew 1:21-23, 11:25-27, 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18, 29, 49, 5:17-30, 32, 37, 8:17, 18, 14:16-17, 15:26, 17:11, 21; Acts 2:32-36; Romans 1:1-3, 7, 14:11; 1 Corinthians 1:24, 15:24-28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:8-9; Hebrews 1:1-13, 7:3, 12:2; 1 Peter 1:8, 3:22; 1 John 1:3, 4, 2:22-23, 3:8, 4:1-5, 10, 14; 2 John 3:9; Revelation 1:13, 17, 4:8-11, 5:6-14, 7:9-10.

from innocence and goodness and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:17, 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

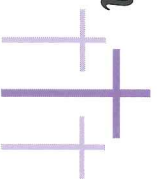
*Importance of This Doctrine:*

The fact that mankind fell from its original innocence and moral goodness is ignored by humanistic philosophes which teach that the human race can be improved and moral imperfection removed through education. The truth is that mankind apart from God is fallen or morally defective. The Bible teaches that mankind is destined to remain fallen, until his tendency toward evil thoughts and deeds is reversed through accepting of the salvation provided in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's Son. Education can improve a person intellectually and socially, but belief in the saving work of Jesus Christ is the only lasting means that can improve a person morally. Salvation restores the relationship with God that was broken with the fall of mankind.

F I V E

## 5 The Salvation of Mankind

(\*one of four cardinal doctrines)



Salvation is deliverance from spiritual death and enslavement by sin. God provides salvation for all who believe and accept His free offer of forgiveness.

Mankind's only hope of redemption from the fallen sinful state is through the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son—blood that was shed as Jesus died on the cross. [The account of the crucifixion of Jesus is recounted by four of His contemporaries: Matthew (chapter 27), Mark (chapter 15), Luke (chapter 23), and John (chapter 19).]

**The Experience of Salvation** Salvation is received as a person (1) repents before God for his sins and sinful nature or inclinations, and (2) believes or has faith in the fact that the death and resurrection (supernatural restoration to life) of Jesus Christ removes and brings forgiveness for his sin. In response to placing faith in God's love and freely given salvation, one experiences the washing of regeneration (or spiritual rebirth), the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, and is declared righteous (right with God). Regeneration, renewal, and justification (justified, or made right with God) are words describing what happens at salvation. At the moment of salvation, a person becomes heir to God's promised hope of

eternal or everlasting life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11, 3:5-7).

**The Evidences of Salvation** The inner evidence of

salvation is the direct witness of the Holy Spirit giving one the assurance that God has accepted him (Romans 8:16).

The outward evidence, visible to others, is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12). In other words it is living a life totally committed and pleasing to God.

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

The restoration of relationship between God and fallen mankind is the central message of the Bible. The entire story from Genesis through Revelation points to a God who loved fallen mankind so much that He gave His Son to die for those who believe in Jesus Christ and His work of providing salvation might have never-ending spiritual life. Every true Christian experiences salvation and becomes a new person in Christ. Without this doctrinal truth, all other doctrinal statements are empty and without meaning. More importantly, without this experience, one's life is empty and without real meaning.

S I X

## 6 The Ordinances of the Church



Some churches use the term sacraments instead of ordinances. Sacraments, however, carries for many people the idea that a spiritual work takes place in a person when the sacrament is received or experienced. The

Assemblies of God chooses to call water baptism and holy Communion ordinances because they are religious practices ordained or established by Jesus himself.

In fulfilling these spiritual duties Christians are reminded of an important work that has already taken place in the heart of the believer.

### Baptism in Water

The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water (not sprinkling) is commanded in the Scriptures (Mark 16:16). All who repent and believe on Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord are to be so baptized. This act of baptism symbolically declares to everyone that the old sinful life and life-style of the baptized believer died with Christ at

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salvation and a new spiritual being has been raised with Christ (in His resurrection) to live a new life (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:4).

## Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper or Communion, consisting of bread and the fruit of the vine (grape juice), is a memorial of Christ's suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26). In eating and drinking the symbols of Christ's suffering and death, the believer expresses his awareness that through salvation he, (1) has been made right with God, and (2) shares the divine nature of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4). The ordinance also looks forward to Christ's second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26) for it is a reminder to proclaim the Lord's death "until He comes!"

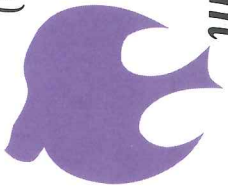
### Importance of This Doctrine:

Water baptism and Communion are not simply religious customs. Both embody the central message of the Christian faith. Water baptism is a one-time event in which the new believer announces publicly that he is now a child of God who has identified with Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection. Communion is a periodic (often monthly) reminder that the believer has received his free salvation through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both ordinances focus regular attention on the central truth of Christianity.

S E V E N

## The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

(\*one of four cardinal doctrines)



The word *ghost* in the 16th-century King James Version of the Bible meant only what we today understand by the word *spirit*.

All believers are entitled to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and therefore should expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Some references in the Bible speak of "the Holy Ghost and fire." Fire, an image commonly associated with the Holy Spirit, suggests the purging, cleansing action, and zeal of the Holy Spirit which continues the work

of spiritual growth begun at salvation.]

The baptism in the Holy Spirit was the normal experience of all believers in the early Christian church. With the experience comes the provision of power for victorious Christian living and productive service. It also provides believers with specific spiritual gifts for more effective ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31).

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is separate from salvation, and follows the new birth experience (Acts 8:12-17, 10:44-46, 11:14-16, 15:7-9). With this baptism come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Hebrews 12:28), an intensified commitment to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for those who have not yet become believers (Mark 16:20).

### Importance of This Doctrine:

Emphasis on the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a major focus of the Pentecostal movement. Some non-Pentecostals have felt that Pentecostals stress this doctrine and the person of the Holy Spirit to the neglect of the other members of the Trinity (God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ) and of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, for example: salvation and sanctification. But a survey of the teaching curriculum and general literature published by Pentecostal groups shows a balance that matches the emphases of Scripture. We believe after centuries of neglect, Pentecostals have brought back into the Christian experience an appropriate emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

E I G H T

## The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit



The baptism of Christians in the Holy Spirit is accompanied by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues (unlearned languages) as the Spirit of God gives them audible expression (Acts 2:4). This form of speaking in tongues is basically the same as

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the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-10,28). The difference is the purpose and use. [The manifestation of tongues can be observed in the life of every Spirit-filled believer at the initial infilling. The audible expression of tongues should also continue to function in the Spirit-filled believer's personal prayer life. However, the gift of tongues (sometimes called "messages in tongues") operates publicly, usually in congregational worship settings. This gift is followed by the gift of interpreting the tongues. Both are given to individuals within the church. Their purpose is for the spiritual benefit of the individual and the congregation.]

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

Some non-Pentecostal Christians teach that Christ-like character and the fruit of the Spirit are better evidences of the Baptism than speaking in tongues. They believe the Baptism experience occurs at the time of salvation, without the manifestation of tongues. The Pentecostal position maintains that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and is separate from salvation. The belief is based on the five instances of such infillings recorded in the Book of Acts (chapters 2, 8, 9, 10, 19). From these passages and personal experience the Assemblies of God holds firm that the biblical pattern of the Baptism is a separate work following salvation. It is always accompanied initially with the audible expression of tongues. While it is true the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian at the time of salvation to convict of sin and point the person to Christ, this work of the Holy Spirit is different from Baptism. Sadly, many Christians because of anti-Pentecostal teaching, fear, or lack of understanding, never open themselves to receive this wonderful gift. To some non-Pentecostal Christians the idea of speaking a language one has not learned is disturbing if not frightening. But to the millions of Pentecostals who have spoken in tongues under the impulse of the Holy Spirit—it is a precious gift. And like a gift, it must be received before its value and usefulness is personally realized. This is only accomplished through a cooperative human vessel who fully yields to the Holy Spirit and opens himself to His Spirit Baptism, signified with tongues.

N I N E

## 9 Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separating ourselves from evil and identifying with things that are good, upright, and morally pure. It is a process that takes place as Christians devote themselves to God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). Scriptures teach that

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we are to be holy because God is holy (1 Peter 1:16). For "Without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Living in holiness is possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A Christian is sanctified as he identifies with Christ and accepts in faith His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection. Sanctification is a daily acknowledgment of our union with God through His Son Jesus. As this identification occurs it is only natural for the Christian to offer every portion of his life to the control of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1-11,13; 8:1,2,13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12,13; 1 Peter 1:5).

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

Salvation is not the end of a Christian's spiritual growth. Although we are declared holy or sanctified at salvation, there is still much spiritual growth to be experienced. As the believer submits himself to the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, he is progressively transformed toward a divine nature, like that of Christ. This doctrine is important because too many Christians stop growing spiritually after salvation, or even after entry into a Spirit-filled life at Baptism. But God's design for each believer is that the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23), and the character traits of a Christ-like life, be more obvious each day.

T E N

## 10 The Church and Its Mission

The Church as described in the Bible consists of all people who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as the only remedy for their sins. The Church includes all Christians and has no boundaries as to age, race, gender, or denomination. It is the body of Christ, the dwelling place of God through the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Head of the Church. He has made every provision for the fulfillment of "the Church's" Great Commission (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). Each Christian is an integral part of that Church. The names of all true believers (those making up the Church) are written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22-23, 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

God's purpose concerning mankind is (1) to seek and to save people who are lost in sin (Luke 19:10), (2) to be wor-

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shipped by all mankind (Revelation 19:10, 22:9), and (3) to build a unified body of believers mature in faith and knowledge like His Son—Jesus (Ephesians 4:12).

Therefore the priority reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God as a part of the Church is:

1. To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16).
2. To be a corporate or unified body in which man may worship God (1 Corinthians 12:13).
3. To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:28, 14:12).

In fulfilling this three-fold mission of the Church, members of the Assemblies of God are taught and encouraged to be baptized in the Holy Spirit according to the New Testament pattern. Through this experience believers:

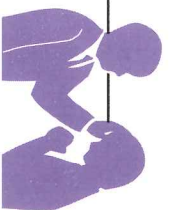
- evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Hebrews 2:3-4); worship God in an added dimension (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 1 Corinthians 12-14); and respond to the full working of the Holy Spirit in expressing the fruit, gifts, and ministries as in New Testament times in order to build up the church, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:28, 14:12; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 4:11-12; Colossians 1:29).

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

The important role of the church (all members of the body of Christ) in God's dealing with mankind is accepted by all born-again Christians. But the local church is too often less appreciated and understood. Some professing Christians, not finding a local church to their liking, choose to practice an isolated and independent Christianity. Unfortunately, they disobey the specific command of God that believers should not fail to assemble together with other believers (Hebrews 10:25). Watching a church service on television or listening to a sermon on the radio will not suffice. God's design for His people is worship, edification, and encouragement in the company of other believers. This doctrine is vital to a well-rounded Christian life.

E L E V E N

11 The Ministry



Involvement in ministry in response to a divine call is scripturally ordained in the Bible. It is a provision of our Lord for the threefold purpose of leading the Church in: (1) evangelization of the world (Mark 16:15-20), (2) wor-

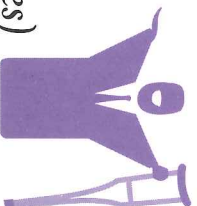
ship of God (John 4:23-24), and (3) building a body of believers conforming to the life of Christ (Ephesians 4:11,16).

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

An important New Testament teaching is "the priesthood of all believers." All Spirit-filled believers in a local Pentecostal assembly should be prompted by the Spirit to minister to or edify the rest of the body in some way. But new believers must be disciplined or trained to minister and serve. So God has provided that there be spiritual leaders who teach and lead the congregation to serve (minister to) spiritual and material needs both in and outside the local church. These specially ordained ministers today include pastors, evangelists, and teachers of the Word. They should be recognized as Christ's gifts to the Church (Ephesians 4:11) and given appropriate respect and appreciation. This doctrine is important because the success any assembly has in fulfilling its mission depends to a great degree on Holy Spirit anointed leadership.

T W E L V E

12 Divine Healing (\*one of four cardinal doctrines)



Divine healing from God is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided in the Atonement (Christ's suffering and death for our reconciliation with God). Healing is a privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; James 5:14-16).

*Importance of This Doctrine:*

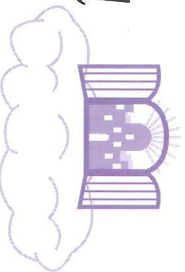
The spectacular spread of the Pentecostal message and the growth in the number of Spirit-filled believers can be attributed to a great degree to God's miraculous intervention in the lives of hurting people, those suffering from emotional, spiritual, and physical pain. Many in the Assemblies of God have personally experienced God's healing touch. Some have been restored from near death to full health. However, in spite of this truth, we know that all are not healed; the Bible that teaches the truth of divine healing itself declares that death is an appointed experience for every human being (Hebrews 9:27). Though we cannot explain why



some are healed while others are not, God knows all and does all things well according to a purpose only. He knows: The fact that some are not healed does not destroy the fact that God can and does heal. In every Pentecostal congregation are those who have received God's supernatural touch of healing.

T H I R T E E N

13  
**The Blessed Hope**  
*(\*one of four cardinal doctrines)*



**A**ll Christians who have died will one day rise from their graves and will meet the Lord in the air. Christians who have not yet died will be raptured or caught up with them, to be with the Lord. Then Christians of all ages will live with God forever. The scriptural truth of the Lord's soon return is "the blessed hope" (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Titus 2:13).

**Importance of This Doctrine:**

This doctrine is very important because it provides a primary motivation for witnessing and living a holy life. For the believer, the return of Christ for His redeemed is a blessed hope indeed! The translation or "snatching away" of living Christians, commonly called the Rapture ("to catch up"), will bring an end to suffering, pain, hardship, and difficulty. We as Christians will then be with the Lord forever. Though the body is not alive between death and resurrection, the soul does not sleep but is consciously alive in the presence of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).

For the sinner, however, the Rapture is anything but a blessed hope. To be left behind will involve indescribable suffering as God judges a rebellious and disobedient world. God desires that all mankind should ask forgiveness and be restored to fellowship with himself. He places this burden for the lost and their waiting eternal punishment on the hearts of those who already know His love and salvation. It is for this reason that a primary mission of the Church is evangelizing the world, seeking to save as many as possible from the judgment to come.

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F O U R T E E N

14  
**The Millennial Reign of Christ**



**T**he second coming of Christ includes the rapture of all Christians, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for 1000 years (Zechariah 14:5; Matthew 24:27,30; Revelation 1:7, 19:11-14, 20:1-6). This millennial (1,000-year) reign will bring the salvation of Israel as a nation (Ezekiel 37:21-22; Zephaniah 3:19-20; Romans 11:26-27) and the establishment of universal peace (Psalm 72:3-8; Isaiah 11:6-9; Micah 4:3-4).

**Importance of This Doctrine:**

It sometimes seems that Satan has the world so enslaved in his grasp that conditions have no chance of improving. But God is not dead, as some skeptics claim. He has declared that world conditions will become increasingly bad before He comes for His own and begins the sequence of end-time events. Knowing this we do not lose hope as sin, crime, and natural disasters increase year after year. God's Word has predicted what we are seeing, but His Word also tells us that in the end He is the Victor. The Millennium will demonstrate that God's reign and government is permanent. It will replace all the failed systems of human government.

Biblical prophecy indicates that Israel as a nation has a continuing place in God's plan for the end times. We believe that at some future time the hearts of Jews will turn in large numbers to the Messiah who died for them and for all mankind.

F I F T E E N

15  
**The Final Judgment**



**T**here will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead—those who have died without accepting Christ's salvation—will be raised and judged according to the way they lived. Anyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life (the recorded list of

people who received Christ's forgiveness), together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be sent to everlasting punishment in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (sulfur), which is the second death (Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20, 20:11-15, 21:8).

**Importance of This Doctrine:**

God is a God of love. But He is also a just God. He cannot allow sin and wickedness to go unpunished. One false teaching suggests that all people, whether righteous or wicked, will eventually be saved. But this is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. This doctrine is important because it reminds all humans that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), that there is a judgment of everlasting punishment waiting the devil, his cohorts, and all people who have not accepted God's gracious provision of salvation.

S I X T E E N

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## The New Heavens and the New Earth



“According to God’s promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell and reign forever” (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21, 22).

**Importance of This Doctrine:**

In the midst of our daily struggles and difficulties we are encouraged by the promise of what God has prepared for His faithful followers. Jesus told His disciples, and made the promise to all generations of Christians, “I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me” (John 14:2-3).

After the Millennium (1,000 year period), all Christians will dwell forever with God and have access to a beautiful, restored universe. This doctrine is important because it assures us of our future abode in a world far better than this one.

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