

Doctrinal Basis

From Article III of LCBC's Constitution

The Bible

The most complete and reliable way God has spoken to people is through the Bible. God directed certain people at specific times to write the Bible through His Spirit¹. This means that in its original writing, the Bible is complete² and all of it is what God wanted it to say³. It is also without error down to the forms of the words used⁴. Although the original writings of the Bible are no longer available, God has promised to preserve His Word to the end of time⁵. God has accomplished this through the preservation of reliable copies of the original writings. Since the Bible is from God, it is the ultimate authority in life and therefore directs our thinking and actions³.

The Bible is divided into two major parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was written before Jesus' birth, and the New Testament was written after His birth. One of the key differences between the Old and New Testaments of the Bible is the Old Testament's emphasis on God's relationship with the Jewish nation of Israel and the New Testament's emphasis on God's relationship with the Church. Although the Church has become the focus of God's work in this time, God will someday revive Israel spiritually as a nation and will fulfill the promises He made to them in the Old Testament⁶. The theme of the Bible is God's ongoing pursuit of a love relationship with people, despite their rejection of Him and His standards. This theme is seen best in Jesus and His death for the sins of everyone⁷.

(¹2 Peter 1:20-21; ²Revelation 22:18-19; ³2 Timothy 3:16-17; ⁴1 Corinthians 2:13 and Galatians 3:16; ⁵1 Peter 1:25; ⁶Romans 11:25-29; ⁷1 Peter 1:10-12)

God

God's existence and loving nature are evident in the world around us¹. He is better understood by seeing how He is described in the Bible. However, since God is infinite, He is beyond our understanding². The Bible tells us there is one God³, but describes Him as existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit⁴.

God the Father - He is Father over creation⁵ and all people⁶. He has a special fatherly relationship with Jesus⁷ and those who have trusted in Jesus⁸.

God the Son - Jesus is the Son of God⁹. When He became human, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin¹⁰. Though He was fully human¹¹, He was fully God¹² at the same time and never did anything sinful. He was executed on a cross to pay the penalty for the sins of all people¹³. Three days after His death, He rose from the dead to establish that those who have trusted in Jesus will rise to eternal life¹⁴. Jesus returned to Heaven¹⁵ and has been given a place of honor where He represents us before the Father¹⁶. Someday He will return to take those who have trusted Him for forgiveness of their sins to Heaven with Him¹⁷. Later, He will return to the Earth to judge all people and rule the Earth¹⁸.

God the Holy Spirit - The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and is fully God¹⁹. Although He was active prior to Jesus' return to Heaven²⁰, He began working in new ways after that event that are both predicted by Jesus²¹ and described by His followers. Today, God sends the Holy Spirit to live in everyone who has trusted Jesus²². It is through the Holy Spirit that God influences people in an unseen way. Living in us, He teaches us²³; prays with us²³; directs us²⁴; assigns us work²⁵; gives us new life²⁶; guarantees our eternity with God²⁷; and brings about positive changes in our attitudes²⁸. The Holy Spirit also gives us special abilities to accomplish His work²⁹. For the Holy Spirit to best do His work in us, we must give Him complete control of our lives³⁰. The Holy Spirit is also active in the world helping all people see that they need forgiveness from their sins²¹. Miraculous Languages - During the transitional period from the Old Testament into the New Testament, God demonstrated that the words of Jesus' early followers were from God by performing many confirming miracles. This included a miraculous ability to speak in known languages that were unknown to the speaker. This ability was never common to all followers of Jesus or necessary to demonstrate the Holy Spirit's presence in a person³¹.

Descriptions of God's character include loving³², holy³³, and never changing³⁴. His abilities include knowing everything³⁵, being everywhere in Heaven and Earth at the same time³⁶, able to do anything³⁷, and always existing³⁸. God created everything³⁹; God holds everything together⁴⁰; and everything exists to bring Him pleasure⁴¹. Everything we do should bring glory to God⁴².

(¹Romans 1:18-20; ²Psalms 145:3; ³Deuteronomy 6:4; ⁴Matthew 28:19;

⁵Ephesians 3:14-15; ⁶Acts 17:28-29; ⁷John 3:16; ⁸John 1:12; ⁹Luke 1:35; ¹⁰Matthew 1:18; ¹¹Hebrews 2:14; ¹²John 1:1-2; ¹³2 Corinthians 5:21; ¹⁴1 Corinthians 15:20-23; ¹⁵Acts 1:9-11; ¹⁶Romans 8:34; ¹⁷John 14:2-3; ¹⁸Matthew 25:31-34; ¹⁹Isaiah 6:8-9 with Acts 28:25-26; ²⁰Genesis 1:2 and 41:38; ²¹John 14:16-26, 16:7-15; ²²John 7:37-39; ²³Romans 8:26; ²⁴Galatians 5:18; ²⁵Acts 13:2; ²⁶John 3:5-6; ²⁷Ephesians 4:30; ²⁸Galatians 5:22-23; ²⁹1 Corinthians 12:1-7; ³⁰Ephesians 5:18; ³¹1 Corinthians 12:30; ³²1 John 4:8; ³³1 Peter 1:16; ³⁴Malachi 3:6; ³⁵Psalms 147:4, 5; ³⁶Psalms 139:7-10; ³⁷Matthew 19:26; ³⁸Psalms 90:2; ³⁹Genesis 1:1; ⁴⁰Colossians 1:17; ⁴¹Revelation 4:11; ⁴²1 Corinthians 10:31)

Satan

Satan is a being that was created by God¹. He was created to be one of God's angels², but rebelled against God by wanting to be equal with Him³. He entices people to rebel against God as he did⁴ and deceives people from recognizing the truth⁵. He battles against followers of God⁶ and accuses them of sins before God⁷. God will one day condemn him to eternal punishment⁸.

(¹Colossians 1:16; ²Ezekiel 28:14; ³Isaiah 14:12-17; ⁴Genesis 3:1-15; ⁵2 Corinthians 4:3-4; ⁶Job 2:7; ⁷Revelation 12:10; ⁸Revelation 20:10)

Humanity

God created the first man and woman. Unlike the other parts of God's creation, He created them in His likeness¹. This similarity to God is the reason human life is valued above other forms of life², and we are commanded to love the people around us³. God created them with the freewill to choose obedience to Him or rebellion against God, and they chose rebellion⁴. This began a process of spiritual and physical death in them and their descendants. It also caused all their descendants to be born with an inability to successfully obey God in both attitude and action⁵.

(¹Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:7; ²Genesis 9:6; ³James 3:9; ⁴Genesis 3:1-6; ⁵Romans 5:12-19)

Sin and Its Remedy

Any action or inaction, thought, or motive that fails to meet God's perfect standard is sin, and all people sin¹. God's holiness will not allow Him to overlook even a single sin², thus preventing all people from being with God. God solved this problem by sending His Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty of death for the sins of all humanity³. When people believe in Jesus' death and resurrection and trust in Jesus' payment for their sins, they are forgiven for all their sins and receive eternal life as a gift from God⁴. At death, the souls of those who have trusted in Jesus immediately enjoy being in His presence⁵. God promises that our forgiveness and eternal life can never be lost⁶. He

also tells us that there is no other method for being with God except through trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins⁷.

(¹Romans 3:23; ²Revelation 21:27; ³Isaiah 53:6, Romans 5:9-18, and 1 Peter 2:24; ⁴John 3:16, Romans 3:22 and 6:23; ⁵2 Corinthians 5:8; ⁶John 5:24 and 10:28-29; ⁷John 14:6)

The Church

The Church is made up of all the people who have trusted in Jesus.¹ The purpose of the Church is to be Christ's body, carrying out God's work in the world today. His work is done through His people ("the Church"); through the power of the Holy Spirit, under God's direction; and in obedience to Christ, who is the head of the Church². This work includes inviting others to be followers of Jesus³; gathering to help each other grow closer to God⁴; guiding people to God's truth in the Bible⁵; using our God-given abilities for the benefit of the entire body of Christ⁶; meeting the needs of those around us⁷; and attracting others to Jesus through unity⁸ and right actions⁹. The Church is commanded to perform two significant practices: baptism³ and communion¹⁰. Both are symbolic of our dependence on Jesus' death for the forgiveness of sin but are not a means of receiving that forgiveness.

(¹1 Corinthians 12:12-14; ²Colossians 1:18; ³Matthew 28:19-20; ⁴Hebrews 10:24-25; ⁵Ephesians 4:11-14; ⁶1 Corinthians 12:4-7; ⁷James 1:27; ⁸John 17:20-21; ⁹Matthew 5:14-16; ¹⁰1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The Future

The Bible describes many future events. Given God's control and knowledge of all things, we know these prophecies will come true. Jesus will one day gather His followers and take them to Heaven. This will include those that have already died and those that are living¹. All who are taken to Heaven will be given new bodies, like Jesus, reuniting body, soul, and spirit to live with Him forever². Following this, those left on the Earth will experience the worst time of suffering ever known³. The suffering will come in the form of natural disasters⁴ and unrestrained evil⁵. This time will come to an end when Jesus returns to establish His kingdom on Earth for one thousand years⁶. Every person who has ever lived will be judged. Those who have not received God's gift of forgiveness will be separated from God and punished for eternity⁷. God's people will enjoy eternity with Him.⁸

(¹1 Corinthians 15:51-58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; ²Phillipians 3:20, 21; ³Matthew 24:15-22; ⁴Revelation 6-19; ⁵2 Thessalonians 2:1-7; ⁶Revelation 19:11-20:7; ⁷2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 and Revelation 20:11-15; ⁸Matthew 25:46 and Revelation 21:1-7)