

MBC DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Doctrine of the Bible

Revelation of the Word

The Word of God consists of God's disclosure of Himself to mankind and contains the 66 books of the Old and New Testament which were finished with the completion of the New Testament (1 Cor 14:37; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Jude 3, Heb 1:1-2; 2:3-4; 2 Pet 3:15-16; Rev 22:18,19). It contains that which is necessary to know God and be rightly related to Him (Rom 10:17).

Inspiration of the Word

The Holy Spirit worked through the individual personalities and different styles of the human authors so that they composed and recorded God's inspired Word to man. Inspiration extends to the very selection of the words of Scripture (2 Pet 1:20-21, 2 Tim 3:16-17).

Inerrancy of the Word

The Scriptures are absolutely without error in any part in the original (Ps 19:7-9; Is 30:8; Matt. 5:18, John 10:35; 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16). As a result, the Word is alive (Heb 4:12), what God uses to accomplish His purposes (Is 55:10-11), and that which saves souls (James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23) and changes lives (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Authority of the Word

The Word is completely sufficient for all of life and ministry (2 Pet 1:3) and is that which alone determines what to believe and how to live to the glory of God (Acts 17:11). It stands as absolute truth to be known and applied in every area of life. As such, Scripture is the very foundation upon which the church is built and comprises not only the content of the message that the church proclaims but also the methods by which the church operates.

Interpretation of the Word

Each passage of Scripture contains only one correct interpretation, namely that intended by the author (2 Pet 3:16). This meaning must be determined by employing the literal-grammatical-historical method of interpretation through diligent study (2 Tim 2:15) and dependence on the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:12; 1 John 2:27). Any legitimate application of a passage of Scripture, of which there are many, must be based on the one correct interpretation.

Doctrine of God

Existence of God

The Scriptures clearly teach that there is but one true and living God (Deut 4:35; 6:4; Is 46:9; 1 Cor 8:4; Eph 4:6) who has eternally existed from before the foundation of the world (Gen 1:1; Ps 90:2; John 1:1). As a Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are same in substance (John 10:30) but distinct in subsistence (Is 48:16; Matt 3:16-17). God is the all-powerful creator of all things (Gen 1:1-31; Ps 89:11; Is 42:5; Acts 17:24) and the sovereign ruler over His entire creation (1 Chron 29:11; Ps 103; 19; 115:3). He consistently works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11) accomplishing what He has ordained in eternity past (Is 46:8-11) for the praise of His glory (Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Rom 11:36), even using the sin of men to accomplish His purposes (Gen 50:20).

Character of God

God is holy (Lev 19:2; Is 6:3), perfect (Matt 5:48), immutable (Mal 3:6), true (Num 23:19; Heb 6:18), gracious (Eph 2:8), loving (John 3:16; Rom 5:8), merciful (Rom 11:32), kind (Rom 2:4), patient (2 Pet 3:9), righteous (Ps 145:17; Hab 1:13), jealous (Ex 20:5), and just (Rom 1:18). He is also self-existent (John 5:26), omniscient (Ps 139:4-6; 147:5; Is 40:28), and omnipresent (Ps 139:7-10; Jer 23:24). Because God is glorious (Ps 24:10) and majestic (Ps 8:1, 9), He is worthy of worship (Ps 95:6), praise (Ps 150), and blessing (Ps 103:1, 2) and should be treasured (Ps 16:11) and delighted in (Ps 37:4) by His children.

Doctrine of Christ

Deity of Christ

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, possessing all the divine attributes and being coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (John 1:1; 10:30). Christ is omnipotent (Matt 28:18), omnipresent (Matt 28:20), omniscient (John 16:30), and immutable (Heb 13:8). Because all deity dwells in Christ (Col 2:9), He is the exact representation of God's nature (John 1:18; Heb 1:3), the One through whom God made and sustains all creation (John 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2), and the One through whom He will judge the world (John 5:22; Acts 17:31).

Humanity of Christ

As the God-man, He was born of a virgin, conceived in the womb of Mary by the supernatural, miraculous work of the Holy Spirit without a human father (Is 7:14; Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:35). In His incarnation, Christ willingly set aside the full expression of His divine attributes (Phil 2:5-8), but did not divest Himself of His divine essence. He possesses not only divine but also human attributes such as human growth (Luke 2:52), human emotions (Matt 9:36; John 11:35), and human functions (John 19:28). Despite very real temptations (Luke 4:1-13), Christ lived a sinless life (Heb 4:15).

Ministry of Christ

Jesus came to seek and save the lost and rescue fallen man from the curse of sin (Luke 19:10). He died on a cross as a substitute for the sins of men (1 Cor 15:3; 1 Pet 2:24; 2 Cor 5:21), receiving the full fury of God's wrath against the sin of mankind (Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Because death could not hold Him (Matt 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12), Christ rose again bodily from the dead (Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:17; 1 Pet 1:3). He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9; Phil 2:9) where He intercedes on behalf of His people (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:25; 9:24), and will return one day to rule and reign with all authority (Matt 25:31; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet 1:13; Rev 22:20).

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Deity of the Holy Spirit

As the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is a divine Person (John 14:26; 16:13), not merely a force, who has intellect (1 Cor 2:11), emotion (Eph 4:30), and will (1 Cor 12:11). He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matt 28:19; Acts 5:3-4) possessing omnipresence (Ps 139:7), omniscience (1 Cor 2:11), and eternity (Heb 9:14).

Ministry of the Holy Spirit

He was instrumental in the creation of the world (Gen 1:2) and the inspiration of the Word of God (2 Pet 1:21). Additionally, His ministry is to convict unbelievers of sin (John 16:8), regenerate the hearts of the elect (John 3:5; Titus 3:5), indwell believers once at the moment of conversion (1 Cor 3:6), incorporate them into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), seal them for a future inheritance (Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 1:22), fill them for daily obedience (Gal 5:22-25; Eph 5:18), teach them God's truth (1 Cor 2:12), guide them (Rom 8:14), pray for them (Rom 8:26), and bestow believers with spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7).

Doctrine of Man

Creation of Man

In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth and all it contains out of nothing (Gen 1:2; Heb 11:3) in six literal 24-hour days (Gen 1:1-31; Ex 20:11), not as the result of an evolutionary process involving chance and time. Mankind was created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) on the sixth day of creation (Gen 2:7) with both a material (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 15:44) and an immaterial (Ezek 18:4; Ps 51:10; Jer 17:9) aspect to his nature. In his original state, man was innocent, without sin, and holy (Gen 1:27, 31; 2:25). God's purpose in creating man was not because He was lonely and desiring fellowship, but rather to bring Himself glory (Is 43:7; Rom 11:36; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11).

Fall of Man

Despite this design, however, man rationally and volitionally chose to rebel against his Creator (Gen 3:6-7) by disobeying God's specific instructions (Gen 2:16-17). This act of rebellion plunged the human race into sin and death (Rom 5:12) resulting in mankind's separation from God (Is 59:2). Because of Adam's sin, he passed down a sin nature to his progeny (Rom 5:12, 17-19) that renders all men fallen sinners who naturally rebel against God's loving rule and authority in their life (Ps 14:1-3; Rom 3:10-12). All men (Rom 3:23) are born in sin (Ps 51:5) which causes them to be enslaved to their sin (Rom 6:17; Titus 3:3), spiritually blind (2 Cor 4:4), darkened in their understanding (Eph 4:18), alienated and hostile in mind (Col 1:21), and spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3). The natural man is totally depraved and incapable of producing works to commend him to God (Is 64:6). As a result, mankind is worthy of the wrath of God (Rom 1:18; 5:6; Col 3:6) and eternal death (Rom 6:23) and, therefore, hopelessly lost (Eph 2:12).

Doctrine of Sin

First John 3:4 defines sin as "lawlessness" which is any violation in thought, word, or deed of God's perfect moral standard. Because God embodies perfect holiness and righteousness, He cannot tolerate sin and must judge it (Hab 1:13; Heb 9:27). Although Scripture does not clearly indicate how Satan fell (although see Is 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17), it does teach that Satan is a fallen angel, the open and declared enemy of God and man (Matt 4:1-11; Eph 2:2; Rev 12:9-10), and the origin and source of sin and death (Gen 3:1-5; John 8:44). All men are shut up under sin (Gal 3:22) since all men are unrighteous (Rom 3:10) and all unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17). Sin renders all men hostile toward God (Rom 8:7) and results in death, both spiritual and eternal (Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:4; Rom 6:23).

Doctrine of Salvation

The Salvation of Believers

Man is in desperate need of salvation because of the sin nature within that alienates him from God (Is 59:2) and renders him spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3). Yet, as an act of grace and mercy, God lovingly offers salvation as a free gift (Rom 3:24) and not on the basis of works (Rom 3:28; Eph 2:9; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5). This offer is for all (Matt 11:28-29) and God desires all to be saved (1 Tim 2:4; 1 John 2:2).

The Election of Believers

Before the foundation of the world, God chose those whom He would save from sin (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-11; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10). This choice, not based on God looking down the corridors of time to see who would choose Him, was entirely unconditional (Rom 9:11; Eph 2:4-9) and designed to bring Him glory (Eph 1:5-6) as the One who graciously bestows mercy on whom He desires (Rom 9:14-24). The truth of election does not nullify man's responsibility to believe the Gospel and embrace Christ as Savior (John 3:16-18; 5:40), nor does it negate the church's responsibility to proclaim Christ and call sinners to repentance (Matt 28:18-20; 2 Cor 5:20).

The Redemption of Believers

The redemption of sinners is based on Christ's atonement for sin on the cross and His subsequent resurrection from the dead (Rom 5:6-11; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18). Christ's death satisfied God's wrath against sin (1 Thess 1:10), made it possible for that sin to be removed (Col 1:21-22), and serves as the basis for Christ's righteousness being granted to believers (2 Cor 5:21). Christ's death was sufficient to pay for the sins of the world, but becomes effective only for those who believe. All whom the Father draws to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive unto salvation (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48). Since the atonement will result in what God has determined, namely the salvation of a definite group of people, the faith and repentance necessary for salvation have been purchased by Christ's death and are granted as gifts to the elect (Acts 11:18; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 2:25).

The Regeneration of Believers

Because man is dead in sin (Eph 2:1-3) and not inclined to seek after God (Rom 3:11), God must break through the hard heart of man and overcome his resistance to the Gospel. This God does in the act of regeneration which is that instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit through the truth of the Word of God which enables persons to believe the Gospel (John 1:13; 3:3-8; Rom. 10:17; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23). Regeneration produces a new nature in the believer such that he is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and is no longer able to live in continual and unbroken patterns of sin (1 John 3:9; 5:18). Although it is not possible for him to completely eradicate sin in his life (1 John 1:8-10), his new nature results in a life characterized by righteousness and love (1 John 2:29; 4:7-8).

The Conversion of Believers

In order to be saved and possess eternal life, a person must repent of their sins and believe in Christ. Numerous elements are necessary for genuine conversion to take place: 1) Knowledge of the facts - Faith must be based on the facts of the Gospel found in the Word of God (Rom 10:17, 1 Cor 15:3-5, 2 Tim 3:15); 2) Assent to this knowledge - A person must agree that the facts of the Scriptures are true (Heb 11:6); 3) Repentance - Saving faith includes a turning from sin and turning towards God (Acts 2:38; 20:21; 26:20, 1 Thess 1:9); 4) Submission to Christ - True saving faith implicitly involves a subjection to the person and will of Christ with a desire and willingness to know, love and obey Him (Luke 6:46; John 3:36; 17:3; 20:28; Acts 2:36; Rom 10:9; Phil 2:9-11; James 2:14-26; Rev. 19:16).

The Justification of Believers

Justification is the legal act of God in which He declares the believing sinner to be righteous in His sight on the basis of Christ's work of redemption (Luke 18:14; Rom 3:21-4:9; Gal 2:16-21; Phil 3:7-11). Justification involves the imputation of the believer's sin to Christ (2 Cor 5:21; Col 2:14; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer (1 Cor 1:20; 2 Cor 5:21) and it results in a peace with God in which the believer no longer stands guilty and condemned by God (Rom 5:1; 8:1).

The Sanctification of Believers

Those whom God justifies He will also sanctify. Positional sanctification occurs at the moment of conversion when the believer is declared holy and perfect based on the finished work of Christ on the cross (Heb 10:14). Progressive sanctification refers to the Holy Spirit's ministry of progressively bringing the believer into conformity with the character of Christ (John 17:17, 19; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 5:26; Rom 8:29). As such, believers are to live holy and godly lives as evidence of their being new creations in Christ (1 Cor 6:20; 1 Pet 1:14-16).

The Security of Believers

Those who are truly redeemed are kept in the power of God and are therefore secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-44; 10:27-30; Rom 5:9-10; 8:1, 30-39; 1 Cor 1:4-8; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Tim 1:12; Heb 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24). It is therefore impossible for a genuine believer to forfeit his salvation. Those individuals who profess faith in Christ but later abandon the faith have not lost their salvation. Instead, they are demonstrating by their apostasy that they were never truly saved to begin with (Matt 7:21-23; 13:19-23; 1 John 2:19), for those who genuinely believe will persevere in the faith (Col 1:21-23; Heb 3:6, 14; John 8:31-32).

Doctrine of the Church

Identity of the Church

The church, the body of Christ (Eph 4:14-16), constitutes God's primary vehicle through which He works in this age. Christ anticipated the church age when He promised that He would build His church (Matt 16:18), a reality that was initiated on Pentecost (Acts 2). Every true believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion and placed into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). The church, therefore, is a unique, living, spiritual organism (Eph 2:11-3:6; 1 Pet 2:5) comprised of genuine believers who willingly submit to Christ as their head (Eph 5:24). Contrary to the teaching of covenant theology, the church is distinct from the nation of Israel (Rom 11:11-32).

Purpose of the Church

The church exists primarily for the purpose of displaying the glory of God by making known His manifold wisdom and greatness (Eph 1:3-14; 3:9-10; 1 Pet 4:10-11). Thus, everything that takes place in the body of Christ should be an act of worship to God (1 Pet 2:5). This takes place by faithfully preaching the Word (2 Tim 4:2), edifying the saints (Eph 4:11-16), and evangelizing the lost (Matt 28:19-20; 1 Pet 2:9). Since the establishment of local assemblies is clearly taught in Scripture (Acts 14:23; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1), believers are instructed to engage fully in the life of a local church (Heb 10:24-25). This is done for the purpose of loving (1 John 4:7), serving (Gal 5:13), and spurring one another (Heb 10:24-25) on toward maturity in Christ (Eph 4:15-16).

Gifts of the Church

Every believer (Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10) possesses an array of gifts given to him by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:11) for the purpose of edifying the body (1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10). All gifts are equally important to the building up of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-25) and believers are responsible to understand and exercise their

gifts to build up the body (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Pet 4:10). The attitude that must dominate when all the gifts are expressed is love (1 Cor 13).

Three categories of gifts are evident in the passages that describe spiritual gifts (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-31; 1 Pet 4:10-11): 1) Speaking gifts (teaching, prophecy, exhortation, etc.); 2) Serving gifts (service, giving, leading, mercy, etc.); and 3) Sign gifts (healing, miracles, tongues, etc.). While speaking gifts and serving gifts are still in operation today, the sign gifts have ceased and are no longer in operation within the church (1 Cor 13:8-10). The primary reason for this is that the sign gifts were foundational to the establishment of the church (Eph 2:20) but once the foundation was laid the need for the gifts ceased. While God still heals today, miraculous gifts of divine healing were given in the apostolic era for the purpose of authenticating the message of the apostles (2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3-4), but with the canon closed, Scripture is the sole test of truth and, thus, sign gifts are no longer necessary. Likewise, tongues functioned in the early church as a sign of judgment to unbelieving Israel (1 Cor 14:21-22), an authentication of God's work in establishing and expanding the early church (Acts 2:4, 11; 10:46; 19:6), and as a secondary means of revelation when accompanied by an interpreter (1 Cor 14:2-28). However, the gift of tongues was only temporary and has since ceased (1 Cor 13:8-10).

Organization of the Church

The one supreme authority over the church is Christ Himself who exists as head of the church (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18), the Chief Shepherd of His body (1 Pet 5:4). It is He to whom the whole body submits (Eph 5:24) and in whom the body grows (Eph 4:15) and is held together (Eph 4:16).

Under Christ's headship, elders and deacons comprise the two primary offices that God has prescribed for leading and shepherding the church. Regarding elders, the church is to be led by a plurality (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) of qualified men (1 Tim 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9) who unanimously, equally, and autonomously serve the local body of believers. The elders are to teach the Word (1 Tim 3:2; 4:11; 5:17; 2 Tim 4:2), guard the truth and protect the people from error (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9), exercise oversight (1 Pet 5:2), shepherd those entrusted to their care (Acts 20:28; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 3:4-5; 5:17; 1 Pet 5:2; Heb 13:17), equip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4:12; 2 Tim 2:2), devote themselves to the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4), and be examples for the flock to imitate (1 Tim 3:1-7; 4:12; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:3).

Regarding deacons, they must be those who are examples of godliness (1 Tim 3:8-13), who are tested before being entrusted with responsibilities (1 Tim 3:10), and who serve well (1 Tim 3:13). They are to administrate the affairs of the church in special areas of service so that the needs of the body do not go unmet and the elders are freed up to shepherd and oversee (Acts 6:1-4).

The congregation is to esteem, appreciate, obey, and joyfully submit to the elders (1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17) so their task is a joyful one.

Ordinances of the Church

Two ordinances have been committed to the church: baptism and the Lord's supper. Believer's baptism is necessary because Christ gave us the example (Mark 1:9) and because Christ commanded it (Matt 28:19-20). Baptism illustrates Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor 15:3-4) and is symbolic of what takes place in a person's life when they are saved (2 Cor 5:17). When a person goes under the water, it is symbolic of the washing away of their sin. When a person comes up out of the water, it is symbolic of their new life in Christ. Baptism is only for believers (Acts 2:41) and is to be practiced by immersion since Jesus was baptized that way and every baptism in the Bible was by immersion (Acts 8:38-39). All true believers in Christ should be baptized soon after conversion as a first step of obedience. Infant baptism is not a legitimate expression of baptism as outlined in Scripture.

The Lord's supper is to serve as a memorial of Christ's death and resurrection. Christ himself instituted this practice when he said, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19). It should be celebrated regularly (Acts

2:42) and always be preceded by a time of self examination (1 Cor 11:27-34). In observing this ordinance, the church is to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor 11:26), thereby remembering the sacrifice of Christ and celebrating His victory over sin and death.

Discipline of the Church

Believers who demonstrate patterns of unrepentant sin are to be lovingly disciplined (Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:1-13) for the purpose of restoring them to fellowship (Gal 6:1-2) and maintaining the purity of the bride of Christ (Acts 5:11; 1 Tim 5:20). Matthew 18:15-17 lays out a very specific process to follow when confronting a sinning brother or sister. An elder found to be in sin on the basis of two or three witness is to be publicly rebuked (1 Tim 5:19-20).

Giving to the Church

All believers are to regularly, purposefully, proportionally, individually and joyfully contribute financially to the work of the ministry. The New Testament does not specifically prescribe believers to give 10% to the Lord. Rather, it lays out principles for giving for believers: it should be regular (1 Cor 16:2), it should be sacrificial (Luke 21:1-4; 2 Cor 8:2-3; 9:6), and it should be cheerful (2 Cor 9:7).

Doctrine of the End Times

Death of Believers and Unbelievers

When people die, there is a separation of the material and immaterial aspects of the person, but no loss of the immaterial consciousness. For believers, their souls pass immediately into the presence of Christ upon death (Luke 23:43; Phil 1:21-24; 2 Cor 5:8) and remain there in joyful fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ forever. For unbelievers, their souls pass immediately into hell upon death (Job 3:11-19; Luke 16:19-26; Rev 20:13-15) and remain there in torment forever, cut off from the life of God (Dan 12:2; Matt 25:41-46; 2 Thess 1:7-9).

Rapture

The Rapture refers to the supernatural removal of the church out of this world. We believe that the Scriptures teach a pre-tribulational Rapture position which states that Christ will return at any moment prior to the Tribulation to take believers with Him (John 14:3). The dead in Christ will be raised first, followed by those believers who are still alive (1 Thess 4:13-17). As a result of this resurrection (Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29), bodies of believers will be reunited with their souls, completely transformed, and instantaneously brought into conformity to Christ (1 Cor 15:51-52; Phil 3:21). All those not raptured will remain on the earth and enter the Tribulation.

Judgment Seat of Christ

Following the rapture and in heaven, New Testament believers will stand before Christ to be judged, not to be condemned for sin (Rom 8:1), but for the quality of their works while on earth (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10). Works that stand this judgment will result in reward; works that do not will result in loss of reward (1 Cor 3:10-15).

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

At this joyous occasion, church-age believers, the bride, will be formally united with Christ, the bridegroom, forever as the complete union of Christ and His church will be established for eternity (Rev 19:7-9). When this occurs, the promises of John 14:3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17 will be fulfilled.

Tribulation

After the Rapture there will be a seven year period of great conflict and distress on the earth as an expression of God's wrath against sinful man known as the Tribulation. It is referred to as the day of the Lord (Is 30:23-25; 34:1-8; 35:1-10; Joel 2:28-32; 3:1-21; Zeph 3:8, 16-20; Zech 14:1-21; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10), the great tribulation (Deut 4:30; Matt 24:9, 21, 29; Rev 7:14), the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7), and the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan 9:24-27; Rev 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). During this time, the Antichrist (Dan 7:8-

26; 9:26-27; 11:36-45; 2 Thess 2:3-10; Rev 13:1-9; 17:8-14) will make and break a covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27). This will be a significant time of persecution for the whole world, but particularly for Israel (Matt 24:9-24; Rev 12:6, 13-17) for the primary purpose of turning their hearts back to the Lord and preparing the way for the return of Christ (Zech 12:10; 13:8-9).

Return of Christ

The Tribulation will end with the immediate and triumphant return of Christ in His Second Coming (1 Cor 1:7; 1 Thess 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; Rev 22:20). Although no man knows the timing of Christ's return (Matt 24:44; 25:13; Acts 1:6-7), it will be marked by supernatural displays (Matt 24:27-30) and he will come to make war with his enemies (Rev 19:11-16). The battle of Armageddon will occur (Rev 16:13-14, 16) and all those who assemble to make war with Christ will be executed (Rev 19:17-19). The Antichrist and false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20-21) and both Jews (Matt 25:1-30) and Gentiles (Matt 25:31-46) will be judged such that only believers enter the Millennium. The Jews will accept Christ as their Messiah (Zech 12:10; 13:9; Rom 11:26), Old Testament and Tribulation saints will be resurrected (Dan 12:2; Rev 20:4-6), Satan will be bound (Rev 20:1-3), and Christ's kingdom on earth will be established (Matt 24:36; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor 15:23-24; 2 Thess 1:7-10; Heb 9:28).

Millennium

Following these events, Christ will rule and reign on earth for a literal one thousand years (Rev 20:1-7) and glorified saints will rule and reign with him (Rev 5:10; 20:4). During this time, the promises God made to Israel will be fulfilled (Jer 31:31; 33:15; Ezek 36:24-28; 37:21-28). Also, because Christ will be reigning there (Is 24:23; Jer 23:5-6; Mic 4:7), Jerusalem will be the center of world worship (Is 2:3; 60:2-3; Mic 4:1-2) and there will be a reinstatement of temple worship and sacrifices (Is 56:6-8; Jer 33:15-18; Ezek 40-48). This will be a time of great blessing such as no war (Is 2:4; Mic 4:3), health and long life (Is 35:5-6; 65:20), peace among animals and humans (Is 11:6), and perfect justice executed by Christ (Is 11:3-4; Jer 23:5).

Final Rebellion and Judgment

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released from the abyss and will gather a large number of people who will rebel against Christ during the Millennium to make war against Christ (Rev 20:7-9). This rebellion will be short-lived and completely unsuccessful such that those who participate in it will be immediately killed and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). All unbelievers of all time will be resurrected (Dan 12:2; John 5:26-29; Rev 20:5) to face the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-13) and will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:14-15) where they will endure everlasting torment (Matt 25:46).

Eternal State

Following these events, the earthly millennial kingdom of Christ will merge with the eternal kingdom of God which will include a new heavens and earth (2 Pet 3:7, 10-13; Rev 20:11; 21:1-2) and a new heavenly city of Jerusalem (Rev 21:10-21). Believers will enjoy eternal, unhindered fellowship with God (Rev 21:3, 22; 22:4) and there will be no sorrow, death, or mourning (Rev 21:4) and no sin (Rev 21:27; 22:3).