

Beliefs for Living Stones Members

The Scriptures

We believe that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is fully inspired by God. The Scriptures are authoritative and sufficient to speak into the life of all believers in matters of faith and conduct. As the Bible is God-breathed it is without flaw or error. God used many human authors in their own style and vocabulary to bring the Bible to fruition, so it is accurate to say that the Scriptures are fully authored by both God and people. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Matthew 5:18, John 16:12-13)

God the Trinity

We believe that the universe was created by, is ruled by, and is held together by one God and that he is the only God that there is. We believe that this one God is triune; meaning that he eternally exists as three distinct persons, but that he is not three separate gods. The three persons of God are God the Father, God the Son who is Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit. While they perform distinct roles in creation, providence, redemption, and relationship, their roles are harmonious. The three persons of the Trinity are co-eternal in being, power, glory, nature, attributes, and perfections, and are equally worthy of worship, confidence, and obedience. God the Trinity is spirit and is a personal God. (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 12:29, John 1:14, Acts 5:3-4, 2 Corinthians 13:14, John 4:24, Deuteronomy 6:4)

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, a person of the Triune God. We believe that he is an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that the Father ordains the events of history, that he foreknows all that shall come to pass, that he concerns himself mercifully in the affairs of humankind, that he is the hearer and answerer of prayers, and that he is the one who sends his son Jesus to save humankind from sin and death through his own death on the cross. We believe that the Father is not only father to Jesus, but that he is The Heavenly Father to all of his children on earth who put their faith in Jesus for salvation. (Isaiah 53:10, Matthew 23:9, John 3:16, Matthew 6:9, Ephesians 1:3-6, Isaiah 41:21-29)

God the Son who is Jesus

We believe that Jesus, the unique and eternal son of God the Father, came to earth as a man without ceasing to be God. We believe that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a woman named Mary who became his earthly mother, and that she gave birth to Jesus as a virgin. We agree with Jesus' teachings and believe he lived a sinless life on earth, and that he performed miracles. We believe that when Jesus came to earth he was fully God while being fully man. We believe that Jesus received the wrath of God that was directed toward the sin of humans, and that Jesus died the death that humans deserve as a substitute in our place to atone for human rebellion against God. We believe that Jesus' death on a cross was a work that accomplishes redemption for all who receive his death as their substitute, and that Jesus' work is all that can make a person right with God. We believe that Jesus rose from the dead in a literal, bodily resurrection, that he ascended into heaven where he is exalted at the right hand of God, and that he now acts as an intercessor, high priest, and advocate for all who believe and trust in him. We believe that Jesus will return one day to earth to judge the living and the dead. (John 1:1 & 14, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 1:18-23, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 4:14-16, Luke 24:36-43, 1 John 2:1-2, Romans 3:23-25, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 Timothy 2:5, 1 Peter 4:5)

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that The Holy Spirit is a person, the third person of the Triune God, and that he came forth to humanity from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We believe that he is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, and indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. We believe that he is the divine teacher and helper who guides believers into truth and that it is the responsibility and privilege of all Christians to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit empowers Christians with supernatural gifts, or talents, to perform ministry to the church and to the world. (John 16:8-11, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 & 27-31, Romans 12:3-8, Romans 8:9, 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22-26)

Man in God's image

We believe that humankind, both male and female; have been directly created by God in his image and in his likeness. Although humans are not gods and fall short of God's glory, God made humans to be like him. Adam, the first human, rebelled against God and brought sin into the world, passing that sin onto all humans and tarnishing God's image in humankind. All humans save Jesus inherit a sinful nature, are born rebellious against God in both nature and practice, and are alienated from having a true relationship with God. Humans are completely unable to save themselves from their sin and lost condition, and are unable to make themselves right with God through any action or desire, because even one sin equals spiritual and physical death. Humans' inability to save themselves places them under the wrath, condemnation, and righteous judgment of God, meaning that a savior is needed to save humans from themselves. Through God's grace Jesus is sent by God as a savior of the souls of humans, and through a process called sanctification the Holy Spirit renews humans who believe upon Jesus to renew them unto the image and likeness of God. (Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:7 & 2:18-24 & 3:1-24, Romans 1:18, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 3:23 & 5:12 & 19, John 5:24)

Salvation

We believe that all humans are sinful and rebellious against God and are in need of salvation from that sin to be made right with God. Without salvation, no human can enter heaven or be apart of God's family. We believe that salvation is a free gift given to humans by God and that it is a gift that is only offered and acquired by God's grace. Salvation is neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any work or virtue of humans. Salvation is received by humans through them placing their faith in the person and work of Jesus as their Lord and substitute. We believe that upon receiving the gift of salvation that a person is given a new nature that enables them to live out their holy calling and relationship with God, as well as a new eternal life, which is the life of Jesus, which is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit of God indwelling and residing in the believer. Upon receiving the life of Jesus, the believer is made righteous by his righteousness, receives sonship in the family of God, receives deliverance from condemnation, and receives every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness. (1 John 5:11-13, John 1:12, Romans 3:22-24 & 6:23 & 8:1, Galatians 3:26, John 5:24, Ephesians 1:7 & 2:8-10, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:18-19)

The Church

We believe in the universal church, whose membership is made up of all regenerated persons on earth past, present, and future, and that those persons make up a living spiritual body of which Jesus Christ is the head. We believe that the universal church is made up of many local expressions, often called "local churches", which consist of believers in Jesus from a common region who are joined together by faith in Christ, worship of God, fellowship with God and with one another, and the work of the mission that God has given to the church, which includes delivering the truth about Jesus to a broken world. We believe that all Christians have a

responsibility to submit and belong to a local church, and that each believer must place themselves under the authority and leadership of that local church, including the local church's responsibility to discipline of unrepentant members. We believe in the autonomy of the local church, free from control from any except God himself. We believe that the local church has a responsibility to properly observe the God given ordinances of water baptism and communion. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:41-47, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 1 Peter 2:4-5, Hebrews 10:24-25 & 13:17)

Satan

We believe that there exists a spiritual being that is Satan, or the devil, which was once a holy being who enjoyed heavenly honors. Through pride and ambition Satan desired to be as God is, so he rebelled against God and drew many angels into his rebellion. Satan is now the unholy ruler of this world, he is humankind's greatest tempter, he is the enemy of God and of God's children, he is the author of false religions, and the author of the powers of darkness and evil. We believe that Satan is destined for a final defeat at the hands of Jesus Christ, as well as judgment and eternal punishment in hell. (Ezekiel 28:11-19, Isaiah 14:13-14, 1 Peter 5:8, Revelation 20:10 & 12:10, Ephesians 2:1-3)

The last things and the eternal state

We believe that Jesus Christ will physically return to earth one day to eradicate evil and judge the living and the dead. In his judgment Jesus will complete the salvation of God's children, granting them eternal peace from sin and suffering, and he will deliver eternal suffering in hell to the wicked. We believe that all Christians will be resurrected in bodily form and enter into what is called the glorified state. Any Christian who dies before this event is temporarily separated from the body and immediately enters into the presence of God in heaven, awaiting this bodily resurrection. (Matthew 16:27, John 14:3, Acts 1:11, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Titus 2:13, 1 Corinthians 4:5 & 15, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12, Revelation 20:4-6 & 11-15, Luke 16:19-26)