

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Inspiration of Scripture

We believe that the Bible is God's Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit in His exercising of divine influence over men of God, whereby they wrote the precise words that God intended. Inspiration extends to each individual word (verbal), in the whole of Scripture (plenary), and is therefore completely without error (inerrant) in the original autographa. God has preserved and will preserve His word in its totality. As His special revelation to mankind, God's Word is completely sufficient, clear, and profitable (Mt. 5:17-18; 24:35; Lk. 1:1-3; 16:29-31; Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; 2 Pe. 1:20-21).

The Godhead

- God the Father. We believe that God is one (Is. 45:5-6; 1 Tim. 2:5) in three distinct (Mt. 27:46; Jn. 14:26), coequal (Mt. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14) and eternal Persons (Jn. 1:18; 17:5). God the Father is a Spirit, characterized by absolute holiness (i.e., separateness) (Ex. 15:11; Is. 6:3; 57:15), yet is also a personal God (Gen. 1:26-28; Acts 15:8) with great love (John 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:8-10, 16). God is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, sovereign, and immutable (Dt. 33:27; Ps. 139:1-4, 7-10; Dan. 4:35; Mal. 3:6; Mt. 19:26). He is good, wise, pure, righteous, just, truthful, faithful, loving, merciful, gracious, and patient (Gen. 18:25; Lev. 11:44-45; Num. 23:19; Dt. 32:4; Rom. 2:4; 11:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; Tit. 1:2; 1 John 4:8-10)
- God the Son. We believe that Jesus, God's Son, is fully God (Is. 9:6; John 12:41; Col. 1:16; Mt. 28:17) and yet fully man (Acts 17:31; Lk. 2:7; 1 Tim. 2:5). He has existed eternally (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16). In the fulfillment of prophecy and the eternal plan of God, He became flesh (incarnation) through the miraculous virgin birth (Is. 7:14; Lk. 1:35) for the purpose of substitutionary atonement (Mark 10:45), willingly giving Himself as a perfect and sinless sacrifice to obtain propitiation (Rom. 3:25) and expiation (Heb. 10:18-22) of man's sin. Though he physically died upon the cross, He rose physically from the dead three days later (1 Cor. 15:3-5), and after 40 days ascended from earth to heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God (Mk. 16:19; 1 Tim. 2:5) He now serves as prophet (Jn. 1:18), priest (Heb. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:5) and King (Lk. 11:20). One day, He will return bodily to the earth (Acts 1:11), rule in the millennium (Rev. 20:6), judge the world (Acts 17:31), and reign for all eternity (Rev. 22:3).
- God the Spirit. We believe in the Spirit as a distinct Person of the Godhead, not an influence or force (Jn. 14:26). He is fully God (Acts 5:3-4; Heb. 9:14), and coequal with the other Members of the Godhead (Mt. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:2). He is responsible for conviction (Jn. 16:7-11), illumination (2 Cor. 3:14-17), indwelling (Rom. 8:9), assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:14-16), guidance (Acts 8:9), and sanctification (Gal. 5:22-23).

Creation

We believe that God, by speaking, created the entire universe out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) in six twenty-four hour days (Gen. 1, Heb. 11:3; Ex. 2:11). All three members of the Godhead had a part in creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6-9; Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:16). Creation, in the beginning, was perfect, sinless, and entirely good (Gen. 1:4, 31).

Sin

We believe that sin is any act of man that fails to conform to God's holy character (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 3:4; 5:17; Heb. 11:6). By the disobedience of Adam as mankind's representative, sin entered the race (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22), and the earth was cursed (Gen. 3:15, Eph. 1:22, Rom. 8:19-23). Thus, all men are born as sinners (Eph. 2:3), with every part of man's being corrupted by sin (total depravity) (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:18, 23). Furthermore, all men commit sin (Rom. 3:23; 5:12). Sin deserves death, which is spiritual death (Col. 2:13), physical death (Heb. 9:27), and eternal death in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-5). Mankind's sin also demands separation from God (Rom. 6:23; Gen. 2:17, 3:8). Only the saving grace of Jesus Christ can forgive mankind of his death-deserving sin.

Salvation

Regarding the concept of salvation as a whole, we believe that God's great goal is the triumph of His kingdom. He achieves this by means of salvation, which is for His own glory (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:6). Salvation is predicated upon God's election of those whom He chooses for salvation in His sovereign grace (Eph. 1:5, 11; Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2). This election is based upon God's predestination (Rom. 8:29-30) which is based upon God's foreknowledge (Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2).

- Atonement. We believe that salvation is only available through Christ's atonement. The atonement is a general term, referring to Jesus' death on the cross for sin. Atonement involves the satisfaction of God's wrath (propitiation), the driving away of sins (expiation), the substitution of Jesus in our place, the imputation of His righteousness to us, the justification of our sins, and the reconciliation of mankind to God (Rom. 5:11; 2 Pet. 2:1; Acts 16:31; 4:12; Eph. 2:8-9).
- Repentance. We believe that repentance is an active turning away from sin and turning unto God. Repentance is necessary for salvation (Heb. 6:1, 6). Repentance involves faith (Acts 20:21) and eventuates in works (Acts 26:20). However, it is a gift of God (2 Tim. 2:25) and at the same time, repentance is God's will for every man (2 Pet. 3:9).
- Faith. We believe that faith is necessary for salvation (Mt. 9:2 Rom. 10:14; Acts 16:31). Faith is also a part of effective prayer (Mt. 21:21; Mk. 5:34; Lk. 17:6). True saving faith involves the mental apprehension of the facts of the gospel (Rom. 10:14), the affections of the heart toward the truth of the gospel (John 20:30-31; Heb. 11:1), and the adherence of the will to the reality of the gospel (Jn. 1:12; Acts 16:31), involving the totality of one's person and individuality of the faith. Faith eventuates in good words (James 2:14-26).
- Justification. We believe that justification is the legal declaration of God, whereby He declares a sinner to be righteous (Rom. 4:5-8). God forgives all sin (Acts 2:38) and imputes Christ's righteousness (Rom. 5:17-19) based on the sacrificial, substitutionary death of Jesus (Mt. 3:13-15; Rom. 3:24-26). Because of justification, believers are exonerated from the very guilt or culpability for their sin (Rom. 8:1, 33-34). Justification is God's act, and man cannot merit nor accomplish justification for himself (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:8-9); it is a result of the gift of faith (Rom. 3:28-30; 5:1).
- Regeneration. We believe that regeneration is God's giving of a new life, His own eternal life, to the believer (Jn. 3:3; Eph. 2:1-6; 1 Jn. 3:9). Because mankind is dead in sin (Eph. 2:1), God, through the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:5; Tit. 3:5) and the Word of God (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), accomplishes this new birth (Jn. 3:3). The regeneration, or new birth, brings with it a total change in lifestyle (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Jn. 3:9).
- Adoption. We believe that adoption refers to the believer's position as being a Son of God (Gal. 4:5, Eph. 1:5), enjoying the rights and privileges attending thereto. The ultimate consummation of this sonship, occurs when Christ returns and believers are glorified (Rom. 8:23, Rom. 8:15). Thus, adoption is accomplished at glorification.
- Sanctification. We believe that sanctification is the believer's becoming more holy, i.e., more separate from sin and unto God. Sanctification is comprised of positional sanctification, which occurs at the moment of conversion (1 Cor. 1:2, Tit. 2:14) and progressive sanctification, which is a process that takes a lifetime (2 Cor. 3:18). Sanctification has a goal—Christlikeness (Rom. 8:29). Sanctification is complete when the believer is glorified and his sin nature eradicated (1 Thess. 3:13).
- Security of Believer. We believe that salvation is a certainty assured in the Scriptures, (Jn. 10:29; 2 Tim. 1:12) and affirmed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:3, 13-14). A true believer cannot lose his or her salvation. The Scripture's assurance of salvation extends only to those who manifest the marks of a changed life (Mt. 7:16; Rom. 8:5; 1 Jn. 1:6; Jas. 2:14-26; Heb. 4:11). Perseverance in the faith and assurance of salvation are works of grace, and are therefore from God—not a feeling, memory or action of the believer (Jn. 5:24; Rom. 8:14-16; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Church

- Nature of the church. We believe that Church is the present, invisible, and universal body of people who have been redeemed (Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 1:22-23). The Church was founded at Pentecost (Acts 2:33). The nature of the Church is described in the Bible as a body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 2:19), a bride (Eph. 5:22-33); a temple (1 Cor. 3:11) a priesthood (1 Pet. 2:4-10) and a pillar (1 Tim. 3:15). Church also defines local gatherings of believers for the purpose of worship, preaching, prayer, fellowship, and the practice of baptism and the Lord's supper (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:2; 15:9).
- Ordinances of the church. We believe that the Church today must practice the two ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's supper. Baptism is a symbol of the believer's union with Christ's death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5), and a public testimony of his or her faith in Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3-5, Col. 2:12; Acts 2:41, 8:12). Both the meaning of the Greek word, the symbolism of the ordinance, and the situational descriptions in the Bible lead us to practice the mode of baptism as immersion (Mk. 1:5; Rom. 6:3-5). Christ also instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper (Mt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Lk. 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25), which is regularly celebrated by the Church in order to remember Christ's sacrifice on our behalf and soon return to earth. The elements of the Lord's supper are symbolic of Christ's body and blood.

Angels

We believe that angels are a created order (Col. 1:16) of individually formed beings (Heb. 1:14). They are different from man, created before man (Job 38:4-7), and are varied in form and function (Is. 6:2, Ezek. 1:5-14). Angels are more powerful than man (Dan. 10:13; 1 Pet. 1:12), however, some day the redeemed will rule over angels (1 Cor. 6:3). Angels were created to serve and worship God (Acts 10:22). At least one-third of the angels are presently in service to Satan (Rev. 12:3-4).

Satan and Demons

We believe that Satan is consummately evil, and is committed to constant opposition to God and His sovereignty (Eph. 2:2; Mt. 13:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:13-15; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 Thess. 3:5). Nonetheless, God is ultimately in control, and will one day judge Satan for eternity (Mt. 25:41; Jn. 5:4; 1 Cor. 15:24; Rev. 20:10).

Heaven

We believe in the existence of a literal place called heaven. It is the dwelling place of God, a place of divine perfection, absolute splendor, unparalleled beauty, and perfect rest (Jn. 14:2; Dan 12:3; Heb. 4:9-11; Rev. 21:4). Heaven will be the eternal home for believers, a place of unmatched blessing, where they will serve and worship God (Rev. 19:1-4; Lk. 19:11-27; Mt. 22:30; Jn. 14:3).

Hell

We believe in the literal existence of an actual hell as a place of eternal punishment and actual fire (Lk. 16:23; Rev. 14:11; Rev. 20:15). Hell is a place intended for the punishment of Satan and fallen demons, as well as those who are not saved (Mt. 23:33; 25:41; Rev. 14:10-11; Rom. 2:5-9; Rev. 21:8).