

Doctrinal Statement
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The Bible

I believe that the Bible is God's inspired, infallible, inerrant, and immutable Word of God. Because of these definitions, we as Christians can take great faith in God's unchangeable record as being the only true way to salvation and revealing His perfect plan for the ages. I believe that about 40 different individuals wrote the Bible over a time period of about 1500 years, each of whom were rendered infallible and incapable of making any mistake as they wrote the original autographs.

Furthermore, I believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. Although there are portions that are not equally important, they are all equally inspired. There are also parts where the lies of a personality are quoted (such as Satan himself). Because of inspiration, we have an accurate record of what was said, although it may not be sanctioned by God. Verbal plenary inspiration also holds for accuracy in historical, scientific, and prophetic statements. Although the Bible is not intended to be used as a science or history textbook, it is authoritative and accurate when it speaks on matters related to science or history.

Definitions

- Inspired: literally meaning "God breathed"
- Infallible: incapable of being in error; without fault, flawless, impeccable, correct, perfect
- Inerrant: accurate, correct, trustworthy, dependable, reliable
- Immutable: constant, fixed, immovable, unalterable, unchangeable
- Verbal: the words themselves, as opposed to thoughts only
- Plenary: all, full

Scriptures: Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; John 6:63; I Peter 1:20, 25; 2 Peter 1:21; Hebrews 1:1; John 10:35; Matthew 5:18.

The Trinity

I believe that the Bible clearly reveals the Godhead in the form of the Trinity. Although the word itself is never found within the pages of Scripture, there is abundant evidence that there are three Persons, each eternal and coequal, being the same in substance, but distinct in their respective ministries. These three in the Trinity are made up of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three Persons are self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent, transcendent, immutable, sovereign, incomprehensible, and holy.

Concerning the Father, He is a Spirit but is also a Person. His personality stems from the fact that He has the powers of self-determination and self-consciousness. Self-determination deals with the fact of being to look into the future and prepare a course of action; self-consciousness refers to His ability to be aware of His self among others. His personality reflects His mind, will, and emotions.

Concerning the Son, I believe that the Bible clearly reveals the pre-existence and deity of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, Christ appeared in a theophany, a pre-incarnate form of His earthly body during His actual three-year ministry on earth.

Concerning His physical birth, I believe that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary without the aid of an earthly father, that He lived an absolutely perfect life on the earth in fulfillment of the Law in order to make atonement for our sins (His impeccability). When His time had come to be the sacrificial Lamb for us, He willingly took our place as a substitutionary atonement, since this was the only way that God would be pleased. I believe that Jesus actually died on the cross, that He was buried in a tomb, and was physically resurrected three days later. Later He physically appeared to over 500 witnesses who actually saw Him. After 40 days of post-resurrection ministry, He physically ascended back into Heaven, where He makes intercession for us to the Father. As He went into Heaven, He has also promised to return in like manner for His Church.

Concerning His humanity, Jesus looked like any other Jewish man of His day. He was 100% Man. He knew what it was like to be thirsty, to suffer hunger, and to be exhausted, among other physical attributes.

Concerning His deity, Jesus is all God. This is clearly shown in the Gospels, by His omnipotence over disease, demons, men, nature, sin, and death. His omniscience, omnipresence, and worship as being God are also clearly evident in the New Testament. Being God, He had power to raise people from the dead, the power to forgive sins, and the power to judge.

The union of these two distinct natures is called the Hypostatic Union: it is as if Jesus was as much man as if He was not God, and as much God as if He were not Man. These two natures were both distinct in Jesus, fully 100% God and fully 100% Man.

Concerning the Holy Spirit, I believe that the Holy Spirit is also a Person, as much as the Father and Son are also Persons. Because of this personality, the Holy Spirit experiences all the sinless elements involved within the Divine Godhead. I believe that the Holy Spirit is omnipresent, omnipotent, eternal, and is equal with God. At the moment of salvation, I believe that the Holy Spirit takes up residence within the believer as an earnest payment of the complete payment (our home in Heaven). I believe in the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit without which no one can come to the Father except the Holy Spirit draws him. I further believe that it is the Holy Spirit that enables a believer to live a victorious life over sin, and that He gives spiritual gifts for the perfecting of the local church in building up the Body of Christ.

Scriptures: John 4:24; Genesis. 1:1; 18:20; 19:24, 25; Psalm 104:27-30; I Peter 5:6, 7; John 3:16; Exodus 3:13, 14; Deuteronomy. 33:27; Psalm 102:11, 12; John 8:56, 57; Jeremiah 23:24; Psalm 139:7-12; Genesis. 18:14; Revelation 19:6; Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 40:13, 14; Hebrews 4:13; Matthew 10:29, 30; Acts 15:18; Hebrews 13:8; John 1:15; Matthew 5:17; Romans 5:8; Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20; Galatians 2:20;

Colossians 1:15-17; 2:9; I Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:17; I John 5:17; Revelation 1:18; 19:16; Psalm 139:7; Genesis. 1:2; Hebrews 9:14; Acts 5:3, 4; Matthew 3:16, 17; John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Romans 8:14.

Man, the Fall, and Sin

I believe that man was made on the sixth day of creation as the highest form of God's creation. Because of this belief, I stand in direct opposition to the theory of evolution, a false and unproven theory. Man possesses mind, will, and emotions; man is distinct from animals in that only he can enjoy fellowship with God and is capable of acting from a rational will. Animals act from instinct. I believe that man and woman are distinct in their roles on earth and that these sexes reflect God's divine approval. Man was originally created as a perfect being with a free will capable of either choosing to obey or disobey God. Because of this free will, man chose to fall into sin and thereby fell from God's grace.

Because of the Fall, mankind has a sin nature inherited from his father Adam. This sin nature results in physical death, and, for the unsaved soul, eternal death and separation from God in the Lake of Fire. Man's physical nature due to the Fall also resulted in suffering, weariness in labor, and separation from the Lord. This penalty from sin can only be removed by acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord.

Because of the unique aspect of man's position in the order of creation, life is sacred and is to be treated as such. I believe that man is fully human from the moment of conception and as such deserves the dignity of life that should be afforded to him. Furthermore, I believe that all races are worthy of Christian love, since they have been descended from our first father Adam.

Scriptures: Genesis. 1:26-31; 2:16-25; 3; 5:5; Psalm 90:10; Matthew 7:23; 25:41; Revelation 20:14, 15.

Salvation

I believe that salvation is freely offered to all who will acknowledge their sin before a holy and righteous God. I do not believe that all ways lead to Heaven; nor do I believe that it is sincerity that determines whether or not a person will be allowed to enter Heaven. Because of the Bible's exclusivity in declaring that Jesus is the only Way to God, salvation is not possible apart from Jesus Christ. Because of His perfect life on this earth and because of the fact that Jesus Christ is God, it is His sacrificial blood for us on the cross that enables man to have a restored relationship with the Divine Trinity. Jesus meets the perfect requirement of salvation in God's eyes because He is both able and willing to save. There are several aspects that happen at salvation.

Conversion deals with a two-fold turning from sin unto God. The first aspect of repentance, a voluntary and sincere change in the mind of the sinner that causes him to turn from his sin. The second is a trusting faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; this is a

voluntary and sincere change in the mind of the sinner, causing him to turn to Christ alone. When this occurs, regeneration, that work of God in the person's life causes him to become a new creation in Christ. This occurs through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. Both repentance and faith are a clear outworking of the salvation of grace.

Second, justification occurs when the person is declared righteous by God and is thus brought into a full relationship with the Divine Trinity. The sinner also experiences peace and favor with God. This person realizes that their sins have been forgiven and that the penalty of sin has been set aside.

Third, adoption into the family of God is granted, thus giving him his position as a child of God. Adoption occurs on the part of the Father, Who begins the actions, and an inheritance is granted to the one that previously had none. Further, adoption gives a new name.

Fourth, sanctification is the process whereby the new believer is set apart for God's holy and divine purposes. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit works in the person's life to direct him to greater maturity in Christ, as well as the conviction of sin and the subsequent lost fellowship.

Fifth, glorification results when we as believers are finally present with the Lord, forever free from the very presence of sin on our glorified bodies.

Scriptures: Hebrews 2:18; 7:25; 2 Timothy 1:12; I Timothy 2:3, 4; 2 Peter 3:9; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5; Isaiah. 1:18; Romans 8:17; I Peter 1:1-9; John 1:42; Revelation 2:17.

Satan, Demons, and Angels

I believe in the person of Satan. He is an actual person, not merely a force for evil, or simply an evil angel. The Bible clearly attests to his personality in seven Old Testament books: Genesis, I Chronicles, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.

He was originally created by God to serve in two specific roles; the anointed cherub, and the guardian cherub, a kind of special angelic being whose sole purpose was to protect God's holiness. His personality shows that he possesses intelligence, memory, a will, emotions, and organizational ability. There are many names ascribed to him and he is capable of great acts. Namely he imitates the works of God in his desire to be like God.

He is the accuser of the brethren, going about as a lion seeking whom he can devour. Because he is a liar and the father of it, he seeks to pervert and destroy the Word of God.

Because Satan is a created being with great but limited power, it is possible to be victorious over him, as he does not like to be resisted. Because Satan is a created being, he does not have the divine attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence as are present in the Trinity. His followers, in the form of demons, also have great power. They were originally created as angels but chose of their own free will to follow Satan in a great rebellion against God.

I believe that Satan and his demons will one day eternally be condemned to the Lake of Fire that has been prepared for them after leading a great rebellion against God and the Holy City.

Concerning the reality of angels as ministering spirits from the Lord, everywhere in the Old Testament the existence of angels is assumed. The creation of angels is referred to in Psalm 148:2, 5. They were present at the creation of the world, and were so filled with wonder and gladness that they “shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). Of their nature we are told nothing. In general they are simply regarded as embodiments of their mission. They are presumably the holiest of created beings.

As to their outward appearance, it is evident that they bore the human form, and could at times be mistaken for men (Ezekiel 9:2; Genesis 18:2, 16). There is no hint that they ever appeared in female form.

As above stated, angels are messengers and instruments of the Divine will. As a rule they exercise no influence in the physical sphere. In several instances, however, they are represented as destroying angels. Angels interpret God's will, showing man what is right for him (Job 33:23). The idea of angels as caring for men also appears (Psalm 91:11 ff), although the modern conception of the possession by each man of a special guardian angel is not found in Old Testament.

A belief in angels, if not indispensable to the faith of a Christian, has its place there. The visible activity of angels has come to an end, because their mediating work is done; Christ has founded the kingdom of the Spirit, and God's Spirit speaks directly to the spirit of man. They watch the lot of man, and rejoice in his salvation; still they join in the praise and adoration of God, the Lord of hosts, still can they be regarded as “ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation.”

Scriptures: Matthew 4:1; Mark 5:15; Luke 22:3; I John 3:5; Romans 16:20; I Peter 5:8; James 4:7; Jude 9; Revelation 13:2; 16:13; I Tim 4:1; Revelation 2:13; Luke 4:6; Revelation 13:4; Revelation 12:10; John 8:44; Genesis 3:1-4; John 16:33; I John 4:4; Revelation 12:4; 20:8-10.

The Church and Its Ordinances

I believe that a truly New Testament church, as intended by the Lord Jesus Christ, is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the Universal Church as the Body of Christ that includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

By virtue of this definition and working of a New Testament church, it is my firm belief that a conservative Southern Baptist church that adheres in totality to the 2000 Edition of The Baptist Faith and Message is the closest of any denomination in existence today in following what the Bible teaches.

Concerning ordinances, I believe that the only acceptable form of Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer completely in and under water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. Further, I do not believe nor accept as scriptural the idea of either infant baptism or sprinkling, since these are not clearly taught in the pages of Scripture. I believe that infant baptism is unscriptural because an infant is incapable of understanding sin and its consequences and cannot make a rational decision at the time when baptism is being performed. In addition, I reject sprinkling as an acceptable mode of baptism because it does not clearly portray the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the way in which He was baptized as an example to us.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. I do not believe that these ordinances grant any divine favor with respect to salvation or eternal life. I believe that these are best called ordinances in contrast to what some denominations call sacraments, which grant saving grace or favor to God.

Scriptures: Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12; Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2;

3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

End Times

I believe in the visible, personal, pretribulational and premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds for His Church. I believe that the Lord will come for His church before the man of sin, called the Antichrist, will be revealed to a lost world that has been left here on earth. It has been God's pattern through the ages to protect His saints from coming judgment, and to provide clear signs of impending judgment.

When He returns, the dead in Christ, those who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord alone and are in heaven awaiting the resurrection, will be raised bodily from their graves and receive their permanent glorified bodies and will meet the Lord in the air. Those who are still alive will also meet the Lord bodily in the air, and we will be with the Lord forever. At this point, I believe that we will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account to the Lord for how we lived here on earth.

For those left here on earth, there will be seven years of God's wrath known as the Tribulation. The Antichrist will be revealed; he will be possessed by Satan himself and will do his bidding. A peace treaty will be signed with Israel and will be broken approximately three and one-half years into the tribulation. This will start the period known as the Great Tribulation and many people will die during this time. At the end of the seven-year tribulation period, I believe that Jesus Christ will come and establish a literal 1000-year millennial kingdom here upon the earth. Satan will be locked up in the bottomless pit during this time, and the beast and false prophet will be forever cast into the Lake of Fire.

At the end of the 1000-year period, Satan will be loosed for a brief season to deceive the nations into a final rebellion against God. I believe the Bible clearly teaches that their efforts will be doomed. Satan will then be cast forever into the Lake of Fire, where the beast and false prophet have been for the last 1000 years, never again to be released.

I believe that the final White Throne Judgment that occurs will not be to determine salvation, but rather to determine the degree of punishment in the Lake of Fire. All souls that have died previously will be brought out of their temporary place of punishment, and will be reunited with their body and brought before the Lord Jesus to give an account of their lives on earth. Their works will be reviewed and an examination will be made of the Lamb's Book of Life to see if their names appear. They will then be cast body and soul into their eternal home in the Lake of Fire, never to be released, but to suffer to eternal, conscious punishment.

Scriptures: I Thessalonians. 4:13-18; 5:1-11; Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; I Corinthians 3:13-15; Revelation 6-20; Matthew 7:23; Mark 9:44, 46, 48; John 15:6.