

Statement of Faith

This Declaration of Faith is based upon our understanding of the teaching and commands of the Holy Bible.

The Bible

The Bible is the Word of God. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are His full and complete written revelation to us. While the existence, glory, and honor due to God are clearly observed in creation, God's plan of salvation is only made known to us through His Word (Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:19-23; 2 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 1:1).

The Bible is inspired by God, the Holy Spirit working through human authors to produce the totality of Scripture, with God as the ultimate author. As God is completely trustworthy, and can neither lie nor err, so the original manuscripts of the Bible were without error and completely true. As God knows all things, His Word contains all that is needed for our faith, life, and well-being. As God is Lord of all, submission to His Word as the authority by which one lives is the duty of all people; as He is perfectly good, this submission is the delight of every Christian (Numbers 23:19; Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 6:18; 2 Peter 1:3, 16-21).

While not all parts of the Bible are as easy to understand as others, the message of God's salvation in the Bible is clear. Though there are many externally verifiable facts that commend the truth, beauty, and power of Scripture, our full persuasion, assurance, and understanding of the Bible is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit testifying to and illuminating our hearts (Psalm 19:7; Psalm 119:130; 1 Corinthians 2:1-13; 2 Peter 3:16).

The Godhead

There is only one living and true God. He is all-sufficient, immutable, and the only source of all life and blessing, needing nothing from nor gaining anything by any creature. He is omnipresent, being spirit, invisible, infinite, and eternal. He is all-knowing, His knowledge being perfect, limitless, and independent of all things. He is all-powerful, exercising dominion over all things as He pleases, and is righteous in all His decisions, works, and commands. God is perfectly holy, just, wise, and sovereign; completely loving, gracious, patient, and good; the God of truth, peace, and blessedness. God is supremely glorious and beautiful, alone worthy of all worship, service, and obedience. (Exodus 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 6:4; Job 37:16; Psalm 135:6, 139:4, 8, 16; Isaiah 40:12-14, 46:9-10; Malachi 3:6)

The one living God is Triune, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three Persons are co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, each having the same perfections. While surpassing human understanding, God's Triune nature is affirmed by Scripture, and is the foundation of our communion with Him. (Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

God the Father

God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, decrees and directs all things according to the purpose of His will. As the author of creation, He creates and sustains all things through the Son and by the Spirit, and all things exist for Him. (Matt 3:16-17, 11:27; Acts 14:15, 17:28; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 12:9)

As the author of salvation, He graciously planned to save sinners from His righteous judgment. In eternity past, He determined to accomplish and apply this salvation through the Son and by the Spirit to those chosen by Him. In love He adopts all believers in Christ as His own, and is their spiritual Father. (Ps 103:13; Isa 63:16; John 1:12-13, 3:16; Eph 1:5; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 4:9)

Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is the only begotten Son of God. From eternity, He is of the same substance and glory as the Father. At the right time, without ceasing to be fully God, He became fully man, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. In His humanity, He is like us in every way, except without sin. In His person, His full deity and full humanity are inseparably united without mixture or confusion. (John 1:1-2, 3:16; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3; Luke 1:35; Heb 4:15; Col 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16)

Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises of God: the seed of Adam, the offspring of Abraham, the son of David, the Messiah of Israel. By the indivisible union of His two natures, divine and human, He is the one Christ, the only mediator between God and humanity. (Gen 3:15; 22:18; 2 Sam 7:12; Dan 9:25; 1 Sam 2:25; Heb 4:14-16)

Jesus became man in order that He might reveal God, redeem sinful humanity, and rule over God's kingdom. Being without sin and having perfectly fulfilled the Law, He suffered and died on the cross as the representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice sufficient for all humanity. After three days, He rose bodily from the dead. His atoning work effectively secures the eternal redemption and justification of all who trust in Him, reconciling them to God. (Isa 9:6-7; John 1:18; Isa 53:4-12; 1 Pet 3:18; Matt 28:6; 1 Cor 15:17-22; Rom 5:10)

The Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God. He alone is the Head of His body, the Church. As our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. He will return in glory to judge humanity and gather His people into His eternal kingdom to worship and enjoy Him forever. (Luke 24:50; 1 Pet 3:22; Eph 1:22-23; Rom 8:34; Heb 9:24; Acts 1:11; Matt 13:40-42)

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, proceeds from both the Father and the Son, possessing the same divine substance and perfections. He is a person, not a force or power, demonstrated by His thought, will, speech, and emotion. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, of Glory, and of Grace. (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Acts 28:25-26; Ephesians 4:30; Philippians 1:19; John 14:17; 1 Peter 4:14; Hebrews 10:29)

The Holy Spirit accomplishes the divine will in the world. His sovereign work is displayed in such acts as creation, Christ's incarnation, and the inspiration of the Scriptures. He continuously works among all people by convicting the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by glorifying Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:6; Genesis 1:2; Matthew 1:18; 2 Peter 1:20-21; John 16:8-11, 14)

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus by applying the work of Christ to believers. He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ and indwelling them from the moment of conversion. He progressively transforms believers into the image of Christ by instructing them through His Word and empowering them for service, while also comforting them through life's trials and tribulations. He is the believer's guarantee of eternal life, sealing them for the Day of Redemption. (Titus 3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 2:20, 27; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:14-17; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14)

The Holy Spirit works to complete the building up of the Body of Christ. He sovereignly gives spiritual gifts to the Church, some for validating the gospel message and establishing the Church, others for the ongoing edification, unity, and perfecting of believers. It is the privilege and duty of all who are born of the Spirit to walk by the Spirit. (Acts 1:8; John 16:13-14; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:3-4; Galatians 5:16, 25)

Humanity

We believe God directly created the first man and first woman, Adam and Eve, in His own image and free from sin. God created human beings as immortal, rational, and morally responsible individuals. Humanity has been given the purpose to glorify God, enjoy His fellowship and accomplish His will on earth (Genesis 1:26-31; 2:7; Matthew 19:4).

We believe Adam sinned, and as a result, all people are sinners by nature and choice, and are spiritually dead in their relationship to God. Because sin is rooted in the core of their being, they are totally incapable of being reconciled to God apart from divine grace (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:1-10).

We believe all people stand in need of the Savior, who alone can address their spiritually dead condition. We believe those who repent of sin and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and reconciled to God. We believe genuine saving faith should, and will, be evidenced by a life of faith expressed through

obedience to the Word and righteous living, good works, genuine love and proper social concern (John 14:1-6; Romans 1:16-17; Titus 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

We believe in the sanctity of human life (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-15), which has value in God's sight from the beginning, at conception, until death, when our spirit returns to God who gave it (Psalm 51; Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 2:8-10, 1:7; John 1:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We believe that before the foundation of the world God freely and graciously chose those individuals whom He would save. He did this based upon His own sovereign choice and not based upon any foresight or anticipation of an individual's decision. The grace of God encompasses the gift of salvation and the means of receiving the gift. All and only those whom the Father draws will come in faith, and all and only those who come in faith will be received by the Father (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:1-2; John 6:37, 40, 44; Acts 13:48).

We believe that God's sovereign choice does not contradict or negate man's responsibility for his actions in any way. Man is completely responsible for his decisions and should be honestly called upon to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:18-19, 36, 5:40; Acts 2:38-39; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Psalm 62:12; Romans 2:5-6; Revelation 20:13).

We believe that justification is an act of God whereby He declares righteous those who have faith in Christ alone. This righteousness is completely independent of any virtue, merit, or good work of man, but is based upon faith alone. Justification involves both an imputation of the believer's sin to Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer. In this way Paul can say that God is both "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:20; 4:6; 8:33, 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26).

The Preservation and Assurance of Believers

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5).

Sanctification

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore both declared holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous, and does not speak to righteous acts or character in the life of a believer (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).

We believe that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, there is also a progressive sanctification by which the believer's character and lifestyle are brought in line with the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 4; 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

We believe, because of the undeserved grace of God which has resulted in our positional and progressive sanctification, all the saved should live in such a manner as to bring glory and not reproach upon their Savior and Lord. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2, 14:13; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:11).

The Standard for Sexuality

We believe that God has instituted the marriage union, made up of one man and one woman, and that any intimate sexual activity outside of that union is sin. We believe that any form of homosexual or lesbian practices, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's holy standard (Genesis 2:24, 19:5-13; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

The Church

By His victorious work of atonement, Jesus obtained for Himself His bride, the Church, which is composed of all those who through saving faith have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and so are united to Christ. The Church's purpose is to glorify Christ by worshipping Him as its all-supplying, all-sustaining, and all-authoritative Head. (Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 19:6-7; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:10; Romans 11:36)

The universal Church is expressed through every time and place in local churches where Christians are directed to associate themselves for corporate worship, instruction, evangelism, and service. The local church tangibly reflects

the reality that the Church is the family of God, with each believer united to God as Father and each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. As members of God's household, each believer has equal access to God in Christ and has been gifted and entrusted with the responsibility to offer themselves up as living sacrifices to the praise of God and the benefit of the Church. (Hebrews 10:25; James 1:27; John 5:18; Romans 16:14; Hebrews 12:13-14)

For the benefit of the local church, Jesus has designed the leadership of local churches to be administered by pastor-elders and deacons. The role of Pastor is to be filled by biblically qualified men, and the role of Deacon by both biblically qualified women and men. The leadership of the church is accountable first to Christ as the Chief Shepherd, then to the congregation as brothers and sisters, serving in love and humility. (1 Timothy 3:1-12; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 Timothy 5:17)

For the encouragement and exhortation of His disciples, Jesus provided two ordinances for His Church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism by immersion following conversion is a sign and testimony of each believer's faith in Christ as Savior; union with Him in His death and resurrection, and belonging to the body of Christ, the Church. The Lord's Supper is observed by Christ's Church through the eating of bread, which signifies Christ's body given for His people, and the drinking of the cup, which signifies the New Covenant in Christ's blood. The Supper is designed to commemorate His death, confirm the faith of believers, and be a real and unique means of worship and fellowship with Jesus. (Matthew 28:19, Acts 19:3-5, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus commissioned His Church to proclaim the gospel throughout the whole world. It is the joyful obligation and privilege of every Christian to witness, by life and by word, to the truths of Holy Scripture, seeking to proclaim the gospel to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. To this end, local churches have the responsibility of partnering with other local churches in order to build up the Church where it may be weak, coming alongside the Church where gifts and resources may benefit, and working to establish local churches where they do not already exist. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:7-8; John 10:15; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Romans 10:14)

The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the original Fall, that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man, and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11, 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Last Things

We believe a person's eternal destiny is forever sealed by his or her acceptance or rejection, in this lifetime, of Christ and His work on the cross. Believers will experience eternity in the presence of God in Heaven. Unbelievers will be in Hell, a place of suffering and loss, eternally separated from the presence of God (Luke 16:19-31; John 3:16, 14:1-3; Matthew 10:28).

We believe in the personal return of Jesus Christ for His Church and in the pre-millennial coming of Jesus Christ to the earth with His saints to establish His kingdom on earth. After this, Christ will establish his eternal kingdom, where believers will live with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:1-2, 21:1-4).