

Statement of Faith

Bibliology – The Bible

I BELIEVE that only the sixty-six books of the Bible are the inspired, and therefore inerrant, Word of God. It is the final authority for all we believe and how we are to live. The Scripture claims that these things are true and those claims are justified on the basis that their reality is self-evident. Scripture is what it claims it is because it does what it claims to do. God's directing voice heard today will always agree with His written Word. Matthew 5:18; Luke 7:20-23; John 10:35; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Rev 22:18-19.

Theology Proper – God and His Character

I BELIEVE that the one true God exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that these, being one God, are equal in deity, power, and glory. Here the word "persons" is used in an unconventional way; defining God with a term that merely describes His image. The "personal" nature of the three members of the Godhead is beyond human understanding and only known in as much that the three "persons" are distinct from each other, eternal, yet one in each other, simultaneously. "Persons" is not a Biblical term in this regard; it is a best attempt at understanding and explaining Scripture to distinguish truth from condemned heresy. I believe that God not only created the world but also now upholds, sustains, governs, and providentially directs all that exists and that He will bring all things to their proper consummation in Christ Jesus to the glory of His name. Psalm 104; Psalm 139; Isaiah 55:8; Matthew 10:29-31; 28:19; Acts 17:24-28; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 1:9-12; 4:4-6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6.

Anthropology – Humanity

I BELIEVE that Adam was originally created in the image of God, righteous and without sin. In consequence of his disobedience, Adam's posterity are born subject to both imputed and inherent sin, and are therefore by nature and choice the children of wrath, justly condemned in the sight of God, wholly unable to save themselves or to contribute in any way to their acceptance with God. And, while fallen, humanity still bears the image of God, so mankind is neither totally depraved of anything intrinsically good, nor capable of being devoid of everything evil. Genesis 1-3; Psalm 51:5; Isaiah 53:5; Romans 3:9-18; 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3.

Christology – Christ Himself

I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, that He was conceived and born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and offered Himself as a penal, substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. By the blood of His cross He obtained for us eternal redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting. He was raised bodily on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father, there to make intercession for the saints. Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:1-18; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:1-28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-14; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-23; Hebrews 7:25; 9:13-15; 10:19; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 2:1-2.

Soteriology – The Work of Christ

I BELIEVE that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. No ordinance, ritual, work, or any other activity on the part of man is required in order to be saved. This saving grace of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, also sanctifies us by enabling us to do what is pleasing in God's sight in order that we might be progressively conformed to the image of Christ. John 1:12-13; 6:37-44; 10:25-30; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 16:30-31; Romans 3-4; 8:1-17,31-39; 10:8-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:3-7; 1 John 1:7,9.

Ecclesiology – The Assembly of Christians

I BELIEVE that the collective body of Christians is God's primary instrument through which He is fulfilling His redemptive purposes in the earth. To equip the saints for the work of ministry, God has called apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors. I also affirm the priesthood of all believers and the importance of every Christian being joined with and actively involved in a local community of the saints. I believe that women, no less than men, are called and gifted to proclaim the gospel and do all the works of the kingdom. Matthew 16:17-19; Acts 2:17-18, 42; Ephesians 3:14-21; 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Peter 2:4,5,9-10.

Sacraments – Water Baptism and Communion

I BELIEVE that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of the Church to be observed until the time of Christ's return. They are not a means of salvation but are channels of God's sanctifying grace and blessing to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Matthew 26:26-29; 28:19; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 1 Peter 3:21.

Pneumatology – The Holy Spirit

I BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ baptizes believers in His Holy Spirit. In Him all Christians are sealed for the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit regenerates, forever indwells, and graciously equips all Christians for godly living and service. Subsequent to the Holy Spirit's baptism the Spirit desires to daily-fill, empower, and anoint believers for ministry and witness. I believe that baptism of the Holy Spirit, signs and wonders and prophesy, as well as all the gifts of the Spirit, including both a spiritual and an earthly language each referred to in Scripture as "tongues", each remain as a testimony to the coming of God's kingdom until Jesus consummates it at His return. Spiritual gifts are designed to empower and edify the assembly of saints to fulfill its calling and mission until we see God face-to-face. While tongues and other signs are evident in some capacity after baptism in the Holy Spirit, their validating nature is of Christ's testimony, not of the baptism itself. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit's baptism and gifts are always given through either laying on of hands by someone previously baptized in the same or in a radical demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power and is preceded by intensive surrender in worship of Him. In all cases, the Holy Spirit gives His power to us on His own terms, in our surrender to Him; this is neither from the will of humankind nor against the will of the individual. For healthy believers, discussion on such things is ultimately eclipsed by love for each other and their mighty God. Jeremiah 31:33-34; Matthew 3:11, 28:18-20; John 1:12-13; 3:1-15; Acts 2:4-6; 4:29-30; 8:15, 16, 17; 18:25-19:6; Romans 8:9; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 12:3; 12-13; 13:1-13; 14:2; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 3:1-5; Ephesians 1:13 -14; 5:18; 1 Tm 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6, 14; Hebrews 6:1-2; Revelation 21:1-4.

Evangelism – Spreading the Good News of Christ

I BELIEVE that God has called His body of Christians to preach the gospel to all nations, and to remember the poor and to minister to their needs through sacrificial giving and practical service. This ministry is an expression of the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ and is an essential part of the kingdom of God. Isaiah 58:6-12; 61:1; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 4:18; 21:1-4; Galatians 2:10; 1 Timothy 6:8.

Satanology – Satan

I BELIEVE that Satan, the accuser of the saints, originally a great and good angel, rebelled against God, taking a multitude of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and is at work with his demonic hosts to establish his counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth. Satan was judged and defeated at the cross of Christ and will, at the end of the age, be cast forever into the lake of fire which has been prepared for him and his angels. Matthew 12:25-29; 25:41; John 12:31; 16:11; Ephesians 6:10-20; Colossians 2:15; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9, 10; 20:10.

Eschatology – End Times

I BELIEVE in the literal second coming of Christ at the end of the present age when He will return to the earth personally and visibly to consummate His kingdom, thus beginning the millennium of His earthly reign. At the end of Christ's thousand year reign, Satan will be released, thus beginning the last battle followed by in the consummation of all things under Christ's rule for eternity, at which time the eternal punishment of Satan and non-believers in the lake of fire will begin. I also believe in and am praying for a great end-time harvest of souls and the emergence of a victorious Body of Christ that will experience an unprecedented unity, purity, and power in the Holy Spirit. Psalms 2:7-9; 22:27-28; John 14:12; 17:20-26; Romans 11:25-32; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-58; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12; Revelation 7:9-14; 19:11-20:15.

Aioniology – Eternity

I BELIEVE that when the Christian dies he/she passes immediately into the blessed presence of Christ, there to enjoy conscious fellowship with the Savior until the day of the resurrection and glorious transformation of the body. The saved will then forever dwell in conscious, blissful fellowship with their great Triune God. I also believe that when the unbeliever dies he/she is consigned to hell, there to await the Day of Judgment after Christ's millennial reign at the Great White Throne when he/she shall be consciously punished with eternal separation from the presence of God in the lake of fire. For the Believer, Eternal Life begins as the moment of Christian conversion via faith, continues after physical death, and expands in one's own life and to others through actions. Joshua 1:8; Philippians; Matthew 5:16; 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:25-29; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 1:6, 19-26; 2:12-13; 3:20-21; Colossians 1:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; 2 Timothy 3:17; Hebrews 10:24; James 1:23; 2:14-26; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-22:15.