

I. The Scriptures

We believe that the Bible, consisting of a total of sixty-six books in the Old and New Testaments is without error in the autographs (Num. 23:19; Ps. 12:6; John 17:17). These sixty-six books make up the completed canon of Scripture so that no further revelation is needed (Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19). The author of the Bible was God the Holy Spirit who guided the human authors in such a way that the writings they produced were also the very words of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). The writings of the Old and New Testaments have been providentially preserved by God through the totality of manuscripts so that we have the authentic Word of God today in reliable translations, e.g. NASB, KJV, NKJV, ESV (Ps. 119:152, 160). Because the Bible is the inspired Word of God it is also the sole authority for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-17). The Bible is necessary for justification (Rom. 10:13-17) and sanctification (Matt. 4:4), clear to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help (John 16:12-15; Deut. 6:6-7) and is sufficient for every spiritual need (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:23).

II. God the Trinity

We believe that within the one Being that is God (Deut. 6:4), there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely the Father (John 17:1-26), the Son (John 1:1; 20:28), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). There are not three Gods (tri-theism), neither is there one God who reveals Himself in three different modes (Modalism). The three persons of the Trinity are ontologically equal (Matt. 28:19-20), but economically the three persons have their unique roles (John 3:16; John 6:38; John 14:26).

A. God the Father

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is eternal (Ps. 90:2), infinite (1 Kings 8:27), immaterial (John 4:24), invisible (John 1:18), omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-10), immutable (Mal. 3:6), omniscient (1 John 3:20), incomprehensible (Isa. 55:9), omnipotent (Gen. 17:1), all-wise (Rom. 11:33), perfect (Matt. 5:48), holy (Isa. 6:3), love (1 John 4:8), good (Luke 18:19), and righteous (Deut. 32:4). God the Father plans, orders, and administrates all things according to His gracious purpose (Eph. 1:11-12) which is ultimately to bring Him maximum glory (Rev. 4:11). Within the context of the economic Trinity the Father directs the work of the Son (John 7:28-29) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26) to accomplish his plan and bring about His glory (Rom. 11:33-36).

B. God the Son

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is the eternal Son of God (Heb. 1:1-2). All things were created by Him (John 1:1-3) and He sustains all things (Col. 1:16-17). At His incarnation, he was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14/Matt. 1:23), and took on the nature of a man (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-9) becoming the God-Man. He is both 100% God and 100% man (John 1:1; Luke 2:52). He lived a sinless life (Heb. 4:15) which enables believers to have the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21), was crucified, buried, and resurrected on the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4) which enables believers to have forgiveness of sins (1 Pet. 2:24) and a personal resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23). After He ascended to His Father (Acts 1:9-10), He was exalted (Acts 2:33; Phil. 2:9), seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 12:2), made head of the church (Col.

1:18), and intercedes for believers as a Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16). He will return to gather the church to Himself (John 14:2-3; 1 Thess. 4:14-17) and seven years later will return to earth at His second coming to judge the earth (Rev. 19:11-21) and set up His kingdom where He will rule for 1,000 years from David's throne in Jerusalem (Rev. 20:1-6).

C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is God (Acts 5:3-4) and a Person (John 16:13-14; 1 Cor. 2:10-11). He participated in creation (Gen. 1:2), and was active in the affairs of men and Israel (Gen. 6:3; Num. 11:17; Judg. 6:34; 1 Sam. 16:13). He revealed the words and will of God to humanity through both prophets and the human authors of Scripture (2 Sam. 23:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). His current works include conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11), regeneration or imparting spiritual life to the spiritually dead (Titus 3:5), indwelling believers (Rom. 8:9), baptizing believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13), anointing (1 John 2:20, 27), sealing (Eph. 4:30), giving gifts to the church (1 Cor. 12:7-11), filling (Eph. 5:18), teaching (John 16:12-15), and producing fruit (Gal. 5:22-23).

We believe in partial cessationism, that is, although the Holy Spirit is still actively gifting the church, some specific gifts including the office of Apostle, as well as the gifts of prophecy, miracle working, healing, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues were given primarily as a sign to the unbelieving Jews as well as an aid to and authentication of the church during its beginning stages in the first century (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 13:8-13).

III. Creation

We believe that God created the universe and everything that is in it in six literal, 24-hour days (Gen. 1:1-2:3; Exo. 20:11). The creation is young (approximately 6,000-10,000 years old), because there was no gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, the six days of creation week were literal 24-hour days as specified by the use of the words "evening and morning" (Gen. 1:5; Exo. 20:11), there were no gaps of time in between any of the seven days of creation (Exo. 20:11), the creation narrative in Genesis 1:1-2:3 is historical prose and not merely a literary framework that can accommodate deep time (14.5 billion years and/or 4.5 billion years), and the genealogies found in Genesis 5 and 11, although possibly containing some gaps, cannot be stretched whatsoever to accommodate deep time.

We believe that all life reproduces according to definite genetic laws, and although speciation among the Biblical kinds is a reality, no life form can ever cross the genetic boundaries of the Biblical kind God set up during creation week (Gen. 1:11-12, 21-22, 24-25). We believe the original creation was good, without sin and death (Gen. 1:31), but was subjected to futility and bondage because of the sin of the first humans Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:14-19; Rom. 8:20-22).

IV. Angelic Beings

A. Angels

We believe that angels were created by God (Col. 1:16). The Bible does not clearly reveal the exact time of their creation, however Job 38:4-7 indicates that they witnessed at least some if not all of the creation week, and we believe that their creation was sometime before Genesis 1:10.

They minister to God by worshipping Him and by being in awe of God's activities (Isa. 6:1-4; Rev. 5:8-14). They also minister to man by announcing important events (Luke 1:34-35), acting as guardians (Matt. 18:10), and ministering to the needs of Christians (Heb. 1:14).

B. Satan

We believe that Satan was created by God as an anointed cherub to minister to God around His throne (Eze. 28:11-15). He was perfect and beautiful until he became proud and rebelled against God (Isa. 14:12-15). He now roams the earth as a defeated enemy of Christ (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 4:1-11; John 12:31) seeking to destroy people (1 Pet. 5:8; Job 1:6-7; Rev. 12:10; 2 Cor. 4:4). At the second coming of Christ he will be bound and thrown into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). After his release he will deceive the nations once more and be thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever (Rev. 20:7-10).

C. Demons

We believe that demons were created by God (Col. 1:16). They were originally good angels but followed Satan in his rebellion and became demons (2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:4). They roam the earth seeking to possess unbelievers (Matt. 17:18), oppress believers (Eph. 6:10-18), and twist the truth (1 Tim. 4:1). They will be judged with Satan and thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:7-10).

V. Man

We believe that God created Adam and Eve as two literal humans in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27), which makes them totally separate and unique from all animals (Gen. 1:26-30), and in no way were they fashioned from previously existing animal species (Gen. 2:7, 18-24). We believe that Adam and Eve were created in a sinless state (Eccl. 7:29), but that they succumbed to the temptation of Satan and chose to sin against God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:1-7). This sinful action resulted in a curse upon the entire creation (Rom. 8:20-22), the human race to be totally depraved (Rom. 3:10, 23; Eph. 2:3), physical death (Rom. 5:12), and the just condemnation of God (Rom. 5:18-19). This condemnation of God results in all sinful humans deserving hell and the lake of fire as just punishment for their sins (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:11-15).

VI. Sin

We believe that Satan was a perfect being until "iniquity was found in" him (Ezek. 28:14-19). Satan then tempted Eve causing Adam and Eve to sin bringing sin into the human race (Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12). We believe that because of Adam's sin all people are totally depraved. This means that sin has penetrated and affected the whole of man's being (Rom. 3:23), the unsaved have no possible means of salvation or recovery within themselves (Isa. 64:6), and the unsaved are under condemnation and spiritually dead (John 3:36).

VII. Salvation

We believe that salvation is available to all through the Gospel (John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). Salvation is comprehensive in scope involving God's deliverance of one from the penalty of sin (justification, Rom. 5:1), the power of sin (sanctification, 2 Cor. 3:18), and the presence of sin (glorification, 1 Cor. 15:54-56). This threefold process is initiated by God's election of individuals for salvation (Eph. 1:3-6). Salvation is by grace through faith apart from any human works or merit (Eph. 2:8-10), however it is man's responsibility to repent and believe the Gospel (Luke 24:45-47; Acts 16:31).

A. Justification

Upon placing one's personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, one is justified, that is, declared righteous. Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he forgives one's sins and imputes to him the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:20-5:1).

B. Sanctification

Sanctification is when God sets apart the believer for Himself. This is accomplished in three stages: 1) Positional sanctification when God sets apart the believer upon his initial salvation as a member of God's family (1 Cor. 6:11), 2) Progressive sanctification when God continually makes the believer throughout his earthly life to become more like Christ (2 Cor. 3:18), and 3) Ultimate sanctification when God takes us to heaven to be completely and eternally set apart to Him in holiness and righteousness (Eph. 5:26-27; Jude 24).

We believe that the Holy Spirit will cause a believer to grow in godliness throughout his life. This godliness will manifest as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-26) as well as personal separation from sinful practices (2 Cor. 7:1), worldly associations (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Cor. 6:14-18), people who can hinder the believer's spiritual growth (1 Cor. 5:6-13), and false teachers/false doctrine (Rom. 16:17-18).

C. Glorification

Glorification is the final step in salvation when God transforms both living and dead (1 Thess. 4:13-17) believers' physical, corruptible/mortal bodies into physical, incorruptible/immortal bodies at the resurrection to life (1 Cor. 15:42-43, 51-54).

D. Eternal Security

We believe that the person who is justified is eternally secure, because God guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be reversed (John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:31-39; Eph. 1:13-14).

VIII. The Church

A. The Universal Church

We believe that the universal, invisible church is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. Believers become members of the universal, invisible church by Spirit Baptism (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Spirit Baptism began at Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5, 11:16) and will end at the Rapture (2 Thess. 2:6). Spirit Baptism is what makes the church distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32).

B. The Local Church

We believe that the universal, invisible church is manifested in local churches. A local church is an assembly of professing, immersed believers, who are organized to teach and preach the Word of God, fellowship, observe the ordinances, worship God, continue in corporate prayer, practice church discipline, give to those in need, and evangelize the lost (Acts 2:41-47).

C. The Officers of the Church

We believe that the Scriptural officers of the local church are elders and deacons. The titles pastor, elder, and overseer are all synonymous and refer to the same leadership role in the church (Acts 20:17, 28). The qualifications for the elder are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The qualifications for the deacon are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

D. The Ordinances of the Church

We believe that the ordinances of the local church are credo-baptism by immersion in water (Matt. 28:19-20) and communion which is a memorial of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as well as a reminder of the second coming (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

E. The Separation of the Church

We believe that a local church should seek to maintain its own purity by separating from other churches, associations, conventions, fellowships, councils, schools, colleges, universities, seminaries, and any other organization that is apostate, worldly, liberal in doctrine and practice, or ecumenical (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Tim. 4:1-7, 16; 2 Tim. 2:14-19; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 John 9-11).

F. The Relationship between the Church and Civil Government

We believe that the state is a divinely ordained institute of God (Rom. 13:1-7). The church is to pray for leaders of the state (1 Tim. 2:1-2), and to obey rules of the state unless to do so would be a clear violation of Scripture (Acts 4:18-20). Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23-24), and the Bible is the final authority of the church in matters of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Neither the church nor the state have authority over each other, and should operate separately and in harmony if at all possible within their own spheres of authority.

IX. Future Events

A. General

We believe that the next event in the plan of God is the imminent rapture/resurrection of the church (Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:20-21, 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Soon after this event the Antichrist will be revealed when he signs the agreement with Israel. This event will begin the Day of the Lord (Thess. 2:1-3; Dan. 9:27), as well as the seven-year Tribulation period (Rev. 6-19:10; Matt. 24:4-15; Dan. 9:27). The Tribulation period will be brought to an end by the second coming of Christ (Rev. 19:11-16), when He will vanquish His enemies at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:17-21), bind Satan for 1,000 years in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3), separate the sheep from the goats (Rev. 20:4-6; Matt. 25:31-46), and commence His Millennial Reign of unprecedented peace and prosperity over all the earth (Rev. 20:4-6). At the end of the 1,000 year period Satan will be released from the bottomless pit and will gather all unbelievers to himself to make one last stand against Christ, but they and Satan will be soundly defeated, judged at the Great White Throne Judgment, and thrown alive into the lake of fire where they will remain forever in conscious punishment (Rev. 20:7-15). Then God will create the New Heaven and New Earth where believers will dwell forever in the blessed presence and fellowship of God (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

B. Personal

1. Heaven

We believe that heaven is a literal place that is the location of God's throne (Isa. 6:1-7; Rev. 4:1-2). Jesus has prepared a dwelling place there for all believers (John 14:1-2). Heaven is a place that has no sin, sinners, death, sorrow, crying, or pain in it (Rev. 21:4, 27), and is an unfathomably beautiful place (Rev. 21:9-22:5).

2. Hell

We believe that hell is a literal place of eternal conscious punishment for unbelievers (Matt. 25:41, 46; Luke 16:22-24). Passages of Scripture that refer to the destruction of the unbeliever do not refer to annihilationism/cessation of existence, but to the harmful and destructive effects of final judgment on the unbeliever (Phil. 3:19; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9). We believe that the punishment of the unbeliever must be eternal conscious punishment because that is the punishment that corresponds to sinning against an eternal, holy God (Mark 9:43; Rev. 20:10, 22:11). We believe that all unbelievers in hell will one day be cast into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).