

# The Doctrinal Statement of

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## What I Believe

### 1. About God

I believe that there is but one God, creator and sustainer of all (Isa 37:16; Gen 1:1; Jer 32:17; Ps 147:15-18; 1 Chron 29:11; Ex 20:11; Ps 104) . He does not learn, nor change, for He is eternally perfect and complete in all of His attributes (Isa 40:13; Mal 3:6; Jam 1:17) . He is the self-existent source of all power and authority (Isa 26:4; Rom 1:20; Ps 62:1). God exists eternally in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35; Mat 3:16-17; Heb 9:13-14; Matt 28:19).

#### a. The Trinity

The Godhead exists in a trinity. This trinity is hinted at in the Old Testament and taught explicitly in the New Testament.

#### i. God the Father

God the Father is the first person in the trinity. He is the sovereign ruler of the universe (Ex 15:18). All things which exist and occur are in accord with His divine purpose and will, because He has first ordained them so to be (Job 23:13; Ps 115:3; Rom 9:17-18). All things exist ultimately to give praise to the glory of God (Rom 9:22-23; Eph 1:11; Dan 4:35; Rev 4:11; Rom 11:36).

God is absolutely sovereign yet His absolute sovereignty does not make him the author of sin (Hab 1:13), nor does it negate man's responsibility for his own sinfulness (Acts 17:30-31).

The fatherhood of God is universal in regard to creation, but special in regard to salvation. By creation God is the father of all men (Eph 4:6), through salvation

He is spiritual Father to all who believe by faith (John 1:12; Rom 4:11; Gal 4:4-5).

ii. God the Son

Jesus Christ is the son of God (Matt 14:33; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 1:34; 9:35-37). He is the second person in the Trinity and as such shares all divine attributes, undiminished (Col 2:8-9, 1:15; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).

All of God the Father's creative and sustaining work has been and is being done through the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3; Col 1:15-17).

Jesus Christ condescended to men by taking on human flesh, via the virgin birth, making himself susceptible to all the frailties of humanity including death (Heb 2:9, 2:14; Luke 1:31-32; Isa 7:14,9:6; John 1:14) . Although He appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, he did not partake of sin (Heb 4:15; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 John 3:5; 1 Pet 1:19; 1 Pet 2:22; Heb 7:26). He possessed all divine attributes while in human flesh but chose, at times, not to exercise them. His incarnation did not diminish his deity, nor did his deity diminish his humanity (Col 2:9; Php 2:5-8).

God has for the purpose of the redemptive plan, ordained that all fullness should dwell in Christ. Upon the defeat of death, sin and Satan, and the final redemption of all believers, Christ himself will also be subject to the Father (1 Cor 15:24-28; Col 2:9).

Jesus Christ willingly offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, in order to atone for the sins of the world. He was crucified, and upon the cross, bore God's full judgment toward our sin. (Gal 1:3-4; Eph 5:2; Tit 2:14; Heb 9:26; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 3:16; Rev 1:5; John 10:17-18; 1 Pet 2:24). He thus provided redemption from sin, freedom from the wrath of God, and an eternal inheritance for all whom the Father has given him (1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 1 Th 1:10; John 3:36; Rom 5:9; 1 Th 5:9; Acts 26:18; 1 Pet 1:3-4; Eph 1:11,14; John 6:37). God affirmed his satisfaction with Christ's propitiatory sacrifice and affirmed his deity by raising him from the dead (Rom 1:4; Rom 6:9-10)

Since his death and resurrection, Christ's mediatorial and high priestly work

continues on behalf of all believers (1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb 2:18; Heb 4:15-16).

It is through his Spirit and his Word that he reveals the riches of salvation to all believers, and produces his own character qualities in their lives according to the measure of their obedience (1 John 2:27; 1 Cor 2:12; Eph 3:14-19; Gal 5:22-25; Gal 4:19;

### iii. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead and as such shares all divine attributes, undiminished (2 Cor 13:14; Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 2:10-11; Ps 139:7-10; Heb 9:14).

The Holy Spirit was active in the creation of all things (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4), in the incarnation (Mat 1:18; Luke 1:35), in the authorship of scripture (2 Pet 1:21), and is active in salvation (John 3:5-7).

The Holy Spirit empowered men and women of the Old Testament for specific tasks at specific times and dwelt with them. After Christ's ascension, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent to earth by God the Father and Jesus Christ to dwell in men (Num 11:25; Num 24:2; Judges 3:10; 1 Sam 16:13; John 14:16-17; 1 Cor 3:16; Rom 8:9).

The Holy Spirit seals all believers until the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit's ministry within the believer includes instruction, sanctification and empowerment (Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30; John 14:26; 1 John 2:27; Rom 15:16; Acts 1:8). The indwelling Holy Spirit is the down payment of the believer's full inheritance which he will receive in Heaven (Eph 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit acts as a restraining force against sin in this present world (2 Th 2:7; John 16:7-8).

The Holy Spirit does not operate or lead men in ways which are contrary to God's revealed will in scripture. He does not speak of himself, but has a sole

purpose of glorifying Jesus Christ and God the Father (John 16:13-15; Gal 4:6).

The Holy Spirit empowered the Apostles and early believers with supernatural gifts for the purpose of confirming His message. These miraculous gifts ceased to be necessary after the completion of scripture and the death of the Apostles (Heb 2:3-4; 2 Cor 12:12).

## **2. About God's Word**

God has first revealed himself to us via creation and man's conscience. These witnesses testify of God's creative and moral nature but remain limited to the same (Rom 1:20; Ps 19:1; Rom 2:14-15). God has chosen to reveal himself and his redemptive plan through the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15; John 5:39; James 1:21; 1 Pet 1:23-25).

The Holy Scriptures consist of the 66 books of the Canon. Each of the 66 being given to us via the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The authors of scripture were moved by the Holy Spirit of God and penned their autographs without error. Although the Holy Spirit is the source of the Scriptures content, God did use the vocabularies and writing styles of men in the authorship of his Word. God has preserved his inerrant, inspired word for all generations. There is no other authoritative rule of faith and practice outside of the Holy Scriptures. (2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25)

Ever since the originals were penned, God has allowed his word to be subject to translation. Translations, though varied in their quality, do serve as God's means of preservation. It is my practice to use the King James version of the scriptures for study, preaching, memorization and meditation.

## **3. About Man**

Man was created by God on day six of the creation week for the purpose of fellowship with God, obedience to God, and the glorification of God in all that he does (Gen 2:7; Deu 13:4; Ecc 12:13; 1 Cor 10:31). Man was made in the image and likeness of God with intellect, emotion and will. The first man and first woman were created holy and without sin, having God's law written in their hearts. Although created perfect, the first man Adam and the first woman Eve had the ability to choose obedience or disobedience toward God's revealed will (Gen 1:26; Gen 2:15-25;

James 3:9).

Upon Adam's disobedience he lost his innoceny, died spiritually and became subject to God's wrath (Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; Gen 3:8; Gen 3:24; Rom 5:18). Having died spiritually, he was rendered wholly unable to please God except by the merciful provision of God's grace. Further, his spiritual death rendered him incapable of receiving spiritual truth, and unable to return to his state of spirituality except by the merciful provision of God's grace. As the common ancestor of all men, Adam passed his corrupt, spiritually dead nature on to all men, so that all of humankind are now innately sinful and spiritually dead. All men are sinners by birth, and having no nature but the inherited, corrupt and sinful nature passed by Adam, can choose no behaviour except that which is sinful (1 Cor 2:14; Rom 8:7-8; John 6:44; John 5:21; Rom 5:12; Rom 3:9-12; Rom 3:23; Eph 2:1-2; Col 2:13 ). Jesus Christ, via the virgin birth being the only man ever to be exempt from this depraved condition (Heb 4:15; Heb 7:26; 1 John 3:5).

#### **4. About Salvation**

Salvation is wholly a gift of God's grace on the basis of Jesus Christ's sacrificial atonement for the sins of man and is not earned or contributed to in anyway by the works of man (Eph 2:5-9; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5; Acts 15:11; Rom 3:25-26; Rom 5:15; Eph 4:32).

##### **a. Regeneration**

Man's fallen nature, and spiritual deadness necessitates spiritual regeneration before he can be reconciled to God (John 3:5-8; John 1:12-13; 2 Cor 5:17; Tit 3:5-6). Regeneration is the impartation of the divine nature and the giving of spiritual life. The Holy Spirit regenerates man when he, by God's enabling, responds in faith to the salvation plan. (2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 5:1; 2 Thes 2:13; Col 3:9-10; Col 2:11-13; Eph 2:1)

Regeneration is an actual and instantaneous change within man and as such produces real, practical evidences of change. Although good works are not a requirement for salvation, they are the evidence of regeneration (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 2:10; Eze 36:26; Eph 4:24). The regenerate man, having undergone a total spiritual transformation will display fruit indicative of repentance (Matt 3:7-8; Acts 26:20; 1 Thes 1:9; Gal 5:22-25; John 15:2).

At the moment of regeneration God begins the work of conforming the believer to the image of Christ (Php 1:6; Rom 8:29; Gal 4:19). This conformation is a process which can be helped or hindered by the obedience or rebellion of the believer (Rom 6:11-14; Eph 4:30). The continual lack of clear evidence of regeneration is not the normal state of the Christian and should result in diligent self examination to determine whether or not he is indeed in the faith (Matt 7:17-20; John 15:16; Rom 7:4; 1 John 1:6; 1 John 2:3; 1 John 2:15; 2 Cor 13:5). All regenerate men will ultimately be found in the perfect likeness of Christ upon their glorification in Heaven (1 John 3:2; Php 3:21; 1 Cor 15:49).

b. Justification

Justification is the judicial decree by which God the Father - the righteous judge, upon the believers repentance of sins and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 11:18; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 4:5; Php 2:11; Rom 3:26), declares the believer righteous (Rom 4:6-25; Rom 8:33). This declaration is made solely on the grounds of Christ's fulfillment of the law, and his righteousness, and is in no way based upon the believers work or his merit (Rom 4:6; Rom 3:20).

There are two, inseparable yet distinct elements of Justification. First God imputes the sins of the believer on Christ and declares the believer forgiven (1 Pet 2:24; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 4:32). Secondly, he imputes the righteousness of Christ to the account of the believer and declares the believer righteous (Php 3:9; Gal 3:6-7; Rom 5:1; Rom 4:4-8 Php 3:9) . Because Christ's obedience is imputed to the believer, the believer no longer stands under the condemnation of God, nor will he ever be subject to the wrath of God (Rom 5:8-10; 1 Thes 5:9; John 5:24) .

In regard to righteousness, justification is strictly a judicial act and speaks of our standing before God the Father and does not speak of our actual state. We are not made righteous by justification, but are declared righteous. As such, the believer though declared absolutely righteous, will fall short of this declaration in actual obedience (1 John 1:8-10; Rom 7:14-25; Eph 4:21-32). As one who is justified, the believer's disobedience will not be met with God's condemnation or his wrath, but with his fatherly displeasure and chastisement (Heb 12:5-10; Rev 3:19; 1 Cor 11:32).

c. Sanctification

Whereas Justification is the judicial decree of our positional holiness on the basis of Christ's own righteousness, Sanctification is the real and progressive production of Christ's righteousness in us (Rom 8:3-4; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21). Sanctification begins at salvation but does not end until our glorification in heaven. In sanctification, the Holy Spirit reveals God's will to the believer via the word of God, as the believer yields to God's revealed will he becomes increasingly sanctified (set apart unto holiness) (Eph 5:25-27; John 17:17; Ps 119:9-11; Rom 15:16). This yielding will be manifest by the increasing abstention from sin and the development of the character qualities of Christ in the believer (Gal 5:22-25; Eph 4:22; Col 2:11; Heb 12:1; 1 Pet 2:11).

This cleansing process continues throughout the life of the believer and can be helped or hindered by the level of obedience he exercises toward God. The believer being sanctified in the Spirit yet existing in his sinful flesh will experience a continual battle between flesh and Spirit (Rom 7:14-25; Mat 26:41). Progressive sanctification by the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, will never result in the eradication of sin, but provides for the daily victory over sin (1 John 1:8-10; 1 John 5:4). All believers will be completely sanctified (like Christ) instantaneously when they are glorified by God in heaven (1 John 3:2; Php 3:21; 1 Cor 15:49).

d. Security

All truly regenerate men and women are kept in their regenerate state by the power of God forever (John 5:24; John 6:37-40; John 10:28-29; Rom 8:1; 1 Pet 1:3-5; 2 Tim 1:12-13). Although the believer can never lose his salvation, he will at times commit sins which grieve the Holy Spirit and harm his fellowship with God the Father. The believer who continues in sin for a time, without repentance, will experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the chastisement of the Father (Eph 4:30; Heb 12:6-8). God's means to reconcile the errant believer will not fail, but the truly regenerate will repent and continue in the faith, until his final glorification in heaven (1 John 2:19; John 8:31; Heb 3:16,14; Acts 14:22; Rom 8:35-39) .

The believer can be assured of his salvation on the basis of Christ's finished work (John 19:30; Heb 1:3), the promise of God the Father (Acts 2:38-39; Tit 1:1-2; Heb 10:23), the testimony of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the evidence of His working (Rom 8:16; Gal

4:6; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13; Gal 5:22-25).

Although the believer can be assured of his salvation, God has forbidden him from using this liberty as an opportunity to indulge in sin (Rom 6:15-22; Rom 13:13-14; Gal 5:13, Gal 5:25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

e. Separation

While leaving believers in the midst of an unbelieving world, God has also commanded them to abstain from sin and ungodliness, so that it can be said “Christians are in the world, but not of the world”. All believers are to be separate from ungodliness and sin and are to be distinct from this world in their pursuit of holiness. This separation does not contribute to their salvation in anyway but is the outworking of a heart of love, responding to the unmerited grace which God has bestowed upon believers by saving them (Rom 12:1-2, 1 Cor 5:9-13; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

f. Glorification

All believers will be finally glorified by God, in body and spirit, immediately following death, at which time they will be made “like Christ” (1 John 3:2; Php 3:21; 1 Cor 15:49).

## 5. About the Church

a. It's Form and Membership

All those who accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour by faith are immediately placed into the body of Christ – the Church (1 Cor 12:13; Acts 2:46-47). The church is universal in nature but God has ordained that the church at large organize itself into local assemblies (Gal 1:2; Php 1:1; 1 Th 1:1; Heb 10:24-25).

Membership in the universal body of Christ and membership in the local church are two distinct matters and should not be confused. Membership in the universal church is immediate upon ones acceptance by faith, of Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Requirements for membership into the local church are determined by the governing elders of each particular church.

Church members are mutually submitted and spiritually accountable to one another (James 5:16; 1 Pet 5:5; Eph 5:21; Mat 18:15-22).

b. It's Leadership

God has provided gifted men to the church for the purpose of governing, edifying, maturing and ministering (Eph 4:10-13). These elders (bishops, pastors, teachers) are to meet the qualifications found in the pastoral epistles and to submit to Christ as their supreme head (1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

Church members are to be subject to the spiritual leadership of their governing elders as they submit themselves to Jesus Christ as their supreme and authoritative head (Heb 13:17; 1 Cor 16:15-16)

c. It's Purpose

The primary purpose of the local church is to glorify God (Eph 3:21; 1 Cor 10:31; 1 Pet 4:11). God is glorified as men are converted, as believers grow in the faith, as they share their faith, as they love one another and as they obey Him (Eph 4:13-16; Php 2:9-11; Php 1:11; John 15:8; Matt 28:19; 2 Tim 2:15; Rom 15:5-6). The church ought to measure all of its ministries and programs according to their ability to accomplish these ends. The church is not primarily a place for unbelievers and should not orient itself to cater to the unregenerate.

d. It's Giftedness

Every believer is gifted by God, through the Holy Spirit, with certain abilities or characteristics for the spiritual profit of the entire church body (1 Cor 12:4-11; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 14:12, 26; ).

God gave the early church both miraculous and ministerial gifts. Miraculous gifts were for the purpose of validating the divine message and the authority of the Apostles (Acts 2,10,19; 2 Cor 12:12; Mark 16:20; Heb 2:3-4). Ministerial gifts were for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ (Eph 4:8-12). Since the death of the Apostles and the completion of God's divine revelation in scripture, the need for miraculous gifts has ceased, whereas ministerial gifts continue.

e. It's Ordinances

God has ordained that the church observe two ordinances – baptism and the Lord's supper.

i. Baptism

Baptism by immersion in water is the outward testimony of one's repentance and faith toward Jesus Christ. As such, baptism should not be administered to any one, including children, who have not received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:47; Acts 13:24; Acts 18:8; Mat 28:19).

Water baptism pictures the believers spiritual baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through baptism the believer expresses his identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and his intention to walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:1-14)

ii. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's supper is a memorial of Christ's death wherein believers partake of bread signifying Christ's broken flesh and drink of the cup of the Lord which signifies His shed blood. Although the frequency of observation is not stated in scripture, the church is to partake of the Lord's supper faithfully and consistently until his coming (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 11:23-33).

## 6. About Last Things

a. Death & Resurrection

When the believer dies his fleshly body is returned to the earth where it sees corruption (1 Cor 15:35-36), whereas his soul immediately enters into the presence of Christ (2 Cor 5:6-8; Luke 23:43; Php 1:23). This separation of soul and body continues for the dead-in-Christ until the rapture of the church (1 Th 4:16). In the meantime, the saved dead continue in the presence and fellowship of Christ.

All men, saved and unsaved will be resurrected. The saved to everlasting life in the

presence of God and the unsaved to judgment and eternal torment in Hell (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15). The unsaved dead are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Rev 20:13) . The second resurrection follows Christ's thousand year reign on earth with his saints. At the second resurrection the soul and body of the unsaved will be reunited and they will stand before Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment. At the Great White Throne Judgment, the unsaved will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer torment and separation from God for eternity as a just punishment for their sin (Rev 20:5-15; Mat 25:41-46).

b. Rapture of the Church

The church looks forward to the bodily return of Jesus Christ to earth before the seven years of tribulation on earth (1 Thess 4:16; Tit 2:13). At his return he will resurrect the bodies of the dead in Christ, translating their mortal corrupt bodies into immortal glorified bodies. Those who are alive and remain will experience an instantaneous translation of both their body and soul and will immediately enter into the presence of the Lord (1 The 4:16-18; 1 Cor 15:51-55; John 14:1-3).

At some point following the rapture of the church and preceding Christ's return to earth with his saints, all believers will receive rewards from Christ in Heaven for those things done in his body (1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor 5:10).

c. Tribulation

Following the rapture of the church God will pour out his wrath upon the unbelieving world (Rev 16; 2 The 2:7-12). This time of judgment will climax with the victorious return of Christ and his saints (Mat 24:27-31; Mat 25:31-46; 2 The 2:7-12). At this time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged. Following these events, Christ's one thousand year reign on earth commences (Rev 20:4-6).

d. The Millennial Reign

Jesus Christ will rule and reign on this earth for one thousand years (Rev 20:4-6). Following the millennial reign, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire with death and Hell and all those who are not found written in the Lambs Book of Life (Rev 20:7-15).

The eternal state begins after the millennial reign of Christ. God will destroy heaven and

earth and make all things new. He will prepare the heavenly city of Jerusalem for his saints. All unrighteousness will be cast out and believers will enjoy eternal fellowship with God (Rev 21-22; 2 Pet 3:11-13).

Upon Christ's final completion of the redemptive plan, he will deliver all things to God the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15:20-28).