

## Doctrinal Statement

### Bibliology

I believe that God has revealed himself to mankind. The ways he does this can be organized into general and special revelation. General revelation broadcasts to us through creation the power and deity of God (Psalm 19; Romans 1:20), but it does not tell us the way of salvation or what God is doing in the world. General revelation, however is sufficient to render unbelief inexcusable (Romans 1:20). I believe that all revelation culminates in the person of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1) and thus the ministry of Christ and His apostles marks the end of special revelation.

Special revelation has come in the form of speech, visions, or writing. I believe the only form of special revelation we have access to today is writing. God's written revelation is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16) in the original autographs. This verbal (John 10:34-35), plenary inspiration is inerrant (John 17:17), authoritative (1 Kings 13:1-32), and completely sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:19).

I believe that God's Word is contained in the 66 books of our Bible. I do not accept apocryphal books as being a part of inspired Scripture. The Old Testament books were recognized and organized by the Jews (Ezra, Josephus) and quoted by the New Testament authors (Matthew 12:3-5; 19:4; 1 Corinthians 9:9; 1 Peter 1:16). The NT books were widely read (Colossians 4:16) and recognized through a process of self-authentication. This refers to the fact that certain writings have a supernatural character that is unlike other books and is recognized by God's people. This process seems to have begun very early (2 Peter 3:16). There are even times when the apostles seem to demonstrate a consciousness of writing Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 14:37-38; Revelation 22:19). There is no authority outside of Scripture itself, including the church, to determine what is or is not a part of the canon.

I believe that Scripture is preserved in the totality of textual evidence remaining. I do not believe that the Bible explicitly teaches miraculous or providential written preservation although the latter does seem to be implied (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 17:18-19; Revelation 22:18-19). Any translation may be considered the Word of God to the extent that it accurately reflects the original manuscripts. Jesus authenticated the use of translations when He quoted from the LXX

(Mark 12:30) – a Greek translation that is inconsistent at best. The apostles also quoted from this translation (Acts 15:17). I prefer the NASB for personal reading, but I make use of dozens of Spanish and English translations for study.

I believe the Bible is to be interpreted following a grammatical/historical literal approach. I am mildly dispensational in that I do not equate Israel with the church, but I also see a lot more continuity than discontinuity in the work of God through the ages.

## Theology

### Person

I believe in one God (1 Timothy 2:5) whose name is Yahweh (I AM of Exodus 3:14, 15). He is referred to as “God” (אלהים, θεος) and “Lord” (יהוה, κυριος) throughout Scripture. I believe that His one being is revealed in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who are each identified as God (Matthew 3:3, 16-17; 18:19; John 5:18 – more on this under Christology and Pneumatology). While co-equal in being and glory, the Son (I Corinthians 11:3) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) submit themselves to the Father.

I believe that God is a spirit (John 4:24), holy (Isaiah 6:3), wise (Romans 11:33), eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27), sovereign (Daniel 4:35), omnipotent (Matthew 19:26), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscient (Psalm 139:1-4), and immutable (Malachi 3:6). The holiness of God is held up as the central characteristic of who He is (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3). He is also described as loving (1 John 4:16), just and righteous (Deuteronomy 32:4), compassionate and gracious (Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8), true (Titus 1:2), and faithful (Psalm 89:1-8).

### Work

I believe God created the world in six, 24-hr days with His word (Genesis 1) and sustains it through His preservation (Colossians 1:17). In His providence He moves all things to their intended goal (Acts 2:23). He normally works through means (James 5:14-15) to accomplish His will but also performs miraculous works when He desires (John 11:43 – more on this under Pneumatology). All that He does is right (Deuteronomy 32:4) and good (Deuteronomy 34:6).

I believe that God is sovereign over evil in the world (Genesis 50:20; Amos 3:6). Yet Scripture repeatedly asserts that God is not to be blamed for the evil in the world (James 1:13). Adam is named in Scripture as being responsible for bringing sin and death into creation

(Romans 5:20). Scripture does not address the question of why God allowed evil to exist or why He created Adam knowing he would sin.

## Christology

### Person

I believe that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. The Scriptures call Him “God” in several passages including John 1:1, 1:18 and 20:28. He also accepted people’s worship (Matthew 14:33; 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52) – something that no man (Acts 10:25-26; 14:15) or angel ever does (Revelation 22:8-9). In several New Testament passages He is identified as Yahweh of the Old Testament (Matthew 3:3, John 12:41; Hebrews 1:10). Jesus referred to Himself by divine names (John 8:58; Luke 22:69) and did works that only God could do. He demonstrated power over the natural world (Matthew 8:26-27) as well as the supernatural (Mark 1:34) and claimed to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-7).

The Scriptures also speak of Jesus as a man (Genesis 3:15; Romans 5:15; 1 Timothy 2:5). He has a human genealogy laid out for us in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 that traces his physical and legal ancestry back to King David, Abraham, and Adam. The people who lived with Jesus and knew Him called Him a man (Matthew 12:23; 26:71; Luke 5:21). He was born of a woman (Luke 2:7). He had normal human experiences – eating (Luke 24:43), drinking (John 4:7), becoming tired (John 4:6), sleeping (Matthew 8:24), and crying (John 11:35). He died (Mark 15:44, 45). The union of His human nature with His divine nature is referred to as the “hypostatic union.”

I believe that prior to this hypostatic union, Jesus existed eternally as the second person of the Godhead, the Son (Psalm 2:12). At the time of His incarnation Jesus laid aside the glory of deity and became like one of His creatures (Philippians 2:6-8) in the miraculous conception by the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:20-26) as prophesied in Isaiah 7. Having taken on a human body He retains it in a glorified condition presently (John 20:25-27) and forever.

### Work

I believe that Christ is the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). I believe He fulfills this role in three offices. As a Prophet He reveals God to us most fully (John 14:9; Hebrews 1:1-2). As a Priest He offers Himself for our sins (Hebrews 7:27; 9:14) and intercedes

on our behalf (Hebrews 7:25). As a King He rules presently in the hearts of His followers and in the future over all creation (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 11:15).

I believe that Jesus was active at Creation (Genesis 1:26; Colossians 1:16). He appeared at various times in the history of redemption as an angel (Genesis 18, 32; Joshua 5). On the earth He lived a sinless life and died an atoning death as our substitute (Mark 10:45). His atoning death was vicarious – He suffered the punishment for our sins (Romans 8:32). He propitiated the wrath of God by bearing our sins (Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10). I believe His redemption brings us forgiveness of sin (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14) and delivers us from bondage (Romans 6:6: 8:2). His work reconciles us to the Father (Romans 5:11; Colossians 1:20-22). I believe Christ's atonement was made for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2) but it is only applied to those who turn from sin in repentance (Acts 2:38, 3:19; 17:30) and to God in faith (Romans 1:17; 5:1).

I believe Jesus was raised bodily on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-8) to confirm His place as God's Messiah (Romans 1:4; Acts 17:31). His resurrection assures ours (1 Corinthians 15:16-20). I believe that when He arose, He ascended to the Father (Acts 1:9) and is presently seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Acts 7:55, 56; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22) where He intercedes for us (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25) and from where He will return bodily (Acts 1:11) for His Church (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17) and eventually to judge the world (John 5:22; Revelation).

## Pneumatology

### Person

I believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine (Matthew 3:16, 17) person (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11; Ephesians 4:30). Scripture repeatedly speaks of Him having all the characteristics of a person. He can teach (Luke 12:12), be lied to (Acts 5:3), and be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). In Acts 15:28, James puts the Holy Spirit in parallel to everyone else at the Jerusalem council. The divinity of the Holy Spirit is apparent by His works (John 3:8), His association with the Father and Son (Matthew 28:29) and by clear statement (Acts 5:4).

### Work

I believe the Holy Spirit was active in Creation (Genesis 1:2) and in the Old Testament. He inspired Scripture (Mark 12:36; 1 Peter 1:21) and converted sinners (John 3:5). He also came

upon certain people for specific tasks (Exodus 31:2, 3; Numbers 11:17; 1 Samuel 11:6). In the life of Christ, the Spirit was part of the miraculous conception by Mary (Matthew 1:20). He was poured out on Christ to enable ministry (Matthew 3:16, 12:18;). Jesus also depended on the Spirit for guidance and help (Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:14).

I believe that in the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit's work is much more visible than in the Old (Jeremiah 31:33-34). He works in people's lives to convict them of sin (John 16:7) and illumine their minds (1 Corinthians 2:9-14). He is the agent of regeneration (John 3:5-8). Upon conversion we are baptized in the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8) who continues to live in us (Romans 8:9). He is the down payment of our final deliverance (Ephesians 1:13, 14). Walking in the Spirit, or being filled with the Spirit, is the central activity of our sanctification (Galatians 5:16, 25; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16 – See more under Soteriology). The Spirit gives gifts to individual members of the church for the building up of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7). Because miraculous gifts such as healing (Acts 3:1-7), raising the dead (Acts 9:36-43), and speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14) were given to authenticate special revelation, they are not currently in use (Hebrews 2:3, 4).

## Angelology

I believe there are fallen and unfallen angels. These spirits (Hebrews 1:14) have personality (Luke 1:19; 1 Peter 1:12) and power (Isaiah 37:36). They were created good by God (Colossians 1:16) and their number is far beyond human ability to count (Daniel 7:10; Revelation 5:11).

I believe most angels are unfallen (Revelation 5:11, 12). These messengers do the will of God (Psalm 103:20) and worship Him constantly (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 5:11). There are ranks among angels (Daniel 10:13; Jude 1:9) and perhaps different kinds (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:18; Isaiah 6:2, 6). At least some of these unfallen angels have names (Luke 1:19, 26; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7). They are seen to provide certain ministries to believers. They bring answers to prayer (Daniel 10:12; Luke 11:13; Acts 10:3; 12:5), they protect from enemies (2 Kings 6:8-18), and they encourage or help (Daniel 10:15-18; Matthew 4:11; Hebrews 1:14).

I believe some angels are fallen (Revelation 12:3, 4) and are commonly called demons (Matthew 8:31). They inspire and empower idolatry (Psalm 106:37; 1 Corinthians 10:20). They also torment and destroy God's image bearers (Matthew 17:15-18; Mark 5:9; Luke 13:11-16).

Nevertheless, they are still under the ultimate authority of God (1 Samuel 16:14). While ranks and names are given of unfallen angels, it stands to reason that these things would be true for fallen angels as well. There may be an allusion to hierarchy in Ephesians 6:12 and on one occasion a demon claimed to have a name, even if it was not a personal name (Mark 5:9).

I believe the chief of fallen angels is Satan (Ephesians 2:2). He is also called the Devil (Matthew 4:1; Revelation 20:10), Beelzebub (Mark 3:22), and Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15), the tempter (Matthew 4:3), the serpent (Genesis 3:1), and the dragon (Revelation 20:2). It was he who engineered the entrance of sin into God's perfect world (Genesis 3:1-6). I believe that Satan is currently in the created world engaging Christians in warfare (1 Peter 5:8) that is sometimes physical (Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 12:7) but especially spiritual (Ephesians 6:12). He tempts people to doubt God's Word (Genesis 3:1), to twist God's words (Luke 4:1-13), and to lie to God and others (Acts 5:3). He snatches away gospel truth when it is presented (Mark 4:15), blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4), and guides the world in rebellion to her Maker (Ephesians 4:1). Ultimately, he cannot win (Romans 8:38, 39) and can be defeated experientially through Christ (James 4:6, 7).

## **Anthropology**

I believe that God created the human race male and female in His own image (Genesis 1:27). This means that they resemble and represent Him in certain ways (Genesis 1:26; James 3:9). I believe that man's first responsibility was to rule over the earth in God's place – developing it and maximizing its usefulness (Genesis 1:28). I believe this responsibility, though complicated by the Fall, is still in effect today (Genesis 9:1-7). I believe that humans are both material and immaterial (Matthew 10:28) and will exist that way eternally in heaven (1 Corinthians 5:3) or in hell (Revelation 20:15). I believe the human race fell into sin by Adam's choice (Genesis 3) and since that time everyone is born as a slave to sin (Romans 5:12-20). I believe that humans are sinful in every aspect of their being, including mind (Ephesians 4:18), will (Psalm 2), and emotions (Jeremiah 17:9 – more on this under Hamartiology).

I believe that marriage was created by God as a covenantal (Malachi 2:14) monogamous (Matthew 19:5-9) relationship between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24) till death (Romans 7:1-2). The husband is the head of the wife (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23) and the wife is to be a helper to her husband (Genesis 2:18). Together their marriage is to picture the

relationship of loving headship and submission between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). While divorce or separation may be necessary in some situations for the safety of certain individuals, remarriage is forbidden while the spouse remains alive (Romans 7:1-2). I would not participate in a remarriage ceremony if the spouse remained alive.

I believe that sexuality was designed by God as something good (Genesis 1:28; 2:24) but it is reserved exclusively (Hebrews 13:4) for the marriage relationship (Exodus 20:14). Fornication (Deuteronomy 5:18), homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27), bestiality (Leviticus 18:23; 20:15) or any other deviation from God's design is sin (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

I believe there are universal principles of masculinity and femininity (Genesis 1:28; 2:15, 18; 1 Corinthians 11:2; 1 Timothy 5:14) that are culturally defined. It is a believer's job in any given culture to identify the distinctives and act in ways that communicate he has embraced God's design.

## Hamartiology

I believe that sin is failing to do what God commands (ἁμαρτανω – Romans 3:23; James 4:17) or doing what God forbids (ἄνομια – 2 Peter 2:16; 1 John 3:4). It describes not only our actions but also our condition (Psalm 51:5). Adam brought sin and death into the world (Genesis 2:17; 3:1-8). Because of our union with Adam, all people are born sinners (Romans 5:12) and because the consequences of sin are death (Romans 6:23), all people die. The punishment includes both physical (Genesis 2:16-17) and eternal (Revelation 20:11-15) death.

I believe that because of sin, man is born depraved in every aspect of his being. This does not mean that he is as bad as he possibly could be, only that every part of his being is twisted by the fall. This includes his mind (Ephesians 4:18), will (Psalm 2), and emotions (Jeremiah 17:9). He is dead spiritually (Ephesians 2:1) and cannot come to God unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). I reject the idea that man is born morally neutral or with just enough grace to cooperate with God in salvation. Even after regeneration we continue to have a sin nature, the flesh, that wars against our new nature (Romans 8). Christians can have victory over sin by walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 25).

I believe that in one sense, all sin is the same (Romans 3:23). But the Bible is also plain that there are degrees of sin. Christ speaks of the "weightier matters of the Law" (Matthew

22:23). And throughout the Bible God gives out different punishments based on differing culpability (Leviticus 4:2; Numbers 15:28-30; Luke 12:47, 48). There are sins that seem to result in death for believers (1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 John 5:16). The Bible also speaks of a sin against the Holy Spirit that will not be forgiven (Matthew 12:31) which I would take to be the expression of a hardened heart (Hebrews 10:26-29).

I believe that God does extend saving mercy to those who die before they are able to understand their moral accountability before God such as infants or the mentally handicapped. I deny that God is obliged to do this by some concept of ‘fairness,’ but it does seem to be the indication of several passages about the innocence of babies (Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 7:14-15; Jonah 4:11) as well as King David’s statement in 2 Samuel 12:19-24.

## Soteriology

I believe that God chose to save some of fallen mankind because of His great love (John 3:16) and for His own glory (Romans 11:36). This election is based on His foreknowledge (1 Peter 1:2). Those whom He foreknew, He predestined both to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29) and to adoption – full legal status as a son (Ephesians 1:5). Those who are predestined are called at a point in time. This is sometimes termed the “effectual call.” When someone responds they are declared righteous, or justified, by God (Romans 8:30). This justification is an act of God’s grace (Romans 3:24) because of a man’s faith (John 3:16-18, 36). In this transaction, the righteousness of Christ is now credited to our account (Romans 10:4-10; Philippians 3:9) and our sins are laid on Him (Isaiah 53:4, 5; 2 Corinthians 5:21). God has called all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). I believe a sinner is responsible to respond to the invitation of God with repentance (Acts 3:19) and faith (John 3:16). The believing sinner is born again (John 3:3, 7), indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9), placed into Christ (Romans 8:1; 1 Corinthians 1:30), and given freedom from sin (Romans 6:1-14). The child of God (1 John 3:1-2) is sanctified progressively (2 Corinthians 3:18) until taken up to meet the Lord where he receives his inheritance (Ephesians 1:5, 11) and is glorified eternally (Romans 8:30; 1 John 3:2).

I believe that the “gospel” is the news that the Christ has come and died for sin and rose again the third day as prophesied in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). This is good news because in our natural condition we are the enemies of God (Romans 5:10; 8:7), under His wrath (John 3:36), and condemned to eternal death (Romans 5:18; 8:1). Jesus’ death on our behalf

(Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:24) removes God's wrath toward us (Romans 5:9; propitiation – Romans 3:25) and brings us into fellowship with Him (Romans 5:1, 10).

I believe that sanctification is the process that God undertakes to transform sinful creatures into the image of His Son (Romans 8:28). When we are converted, we are sanctified positionally. Paul frequently refers to believers as “holy ones” (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; etc.). Nevertheless, we still have evil present in us (Romans 7:21) which is called our flesh (Romans 7:25). Throughout our life, God uses His Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and His Holy Word (Colossians 3:16) to transform us (2 Corinthians 3:18).

While I do believe that God's gift of salvation cannot be earned, only received (Ephesians 2:8, 9), I reject the idea that one can receive Jesus as Savior but not as Lord (Romans 10:9-13). I believe that true faith produces certain works (James 2:17-19) particularly repentance (Acts 26:20) and that unless one repents, he cannot be saved (Luke 13:1-5).

I believe that someone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:5-8) cannot die or lose that life but will persevere to eternal life (John 10:27-30). Because of the possibility of self-deception, Scripture repeatedly calls us to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5-7) and evaluate our works (Hebrews 10:26-31; Titus 1:16) to see if they match our profession. Whatever our claim or our experience, if we turn away from Christ we are not of God (1 John 2:19). I cannot give anyone assurance of salvation. They must look to the Holy Spirit for that assurance (Romans 8:6; Galatians 4:6-7). I can only point them to God and His Word.

## **Ecclesiology**

I believe that the church is made up of all true believers. She is a temple for the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:21-22) and the body (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:24) of Christ who is her head (Ephesians 4:15, 16). The church is a mystery only revealed under the New Covenant (Ephesians 5:32) that puts God's wisdom on display for heavenly creatures (Ephesians 3:10). The church is not a spiritual incarnation of Old Testament Israel.

I believe the church glorifies God by making disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20) and equipping them to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16). Church members should join themselves together (Matthew 18:17; 1 Timothy 5:9-11) in local congregations and meet regularly (Hebrews 10:25) for mutual edification and encouragement (Hebrews 3:13). The

Holy Spirit gifts each member of the body for this very purpose (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:16).

I believe the church is best governed by the congregation (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:1-6) and led by a plurality of elders/pastors/overseers (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). I believe the office of deacon is to assist with the material needs of a church (Acts 6:1-6) that the elders might devote themselves to prayer and the Word (Acts 6:3-4). There are two ordinances in the church: baptism (Matthew 28:19) and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-25). I believe the church is responsible to exercise discipline on disobedient brethren within the church for the purpose of restoration (Matthew 18; Galatians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15; Titus 3:10). As a church it is also sometimes necessary to apply these passages in a more general way to disobedient organizations, groups, or churches.

I believe that the church organization also reflects God's design for men and women in society (1 Corinthians 11:3). I believe that men bear the responsibility for leadership in a local assembly and are the only ones qualified to serve as elders/pastors/overseers (1 Timothy 3:2). I believe that women should participate verbally and publicly in gatherings (1 Corinthians 11:5) but should not take charge among the members (1 Timothy 2:12). I would not be opposed to women serving as deaconesses provided it did not undermine the established paradigm of male leadership.

With relation to civil government, I believe the church should instruct people to honor their leaders (1 Peter 2:17), pray for their leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2), and submit to them (Matthew 22:17-21; Romans 13:1-3) insofar as they do not command disobedience to God (Acts 5:29). While government is a creational good, it has a distinct purpose (Romans 13:3-7) that is different from the church. Christian people can and should glorify God in civil government without combining the church and the civil government.

## Eschatology

I believe that when an individual dies his body and soul are separated. His body decomposes in the grave (שׂוֹאָה) and his soul enters an intermediate state. It either goes to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8) or in a place of torment (Luke 16:23; Revelation 20:13). There is no Scriptural evidence for a place of purification after death (i.e. purgatory). The place of torment (αδης) is eventually emptied into the lake of fire (γέεννα), the final judgment when people

experience the second death (Revelation 20:14). Christian people must give an account of themselves at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Those who went to be with the Lord will finally enter the new heavens and new earth (2 Peter 3:7). I reject the idea that a soul goes into some kind of sleep at death or is simply annihilated.

I believe that prior to the end of all things that Jesus will rapture His church from the earth (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:2). I believe this event is followed by a seven-year period of global judgment (Revelation 6-19; cf. Daniel 9:27) known as the Tribulation. I believe the Tribulation ends in a climactic battle on the plain of Megiddo to defeat Christ's enemies (Isaiah 14; Revelation 16:13-16) and is followed by a literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth (Revelation 20:1-6). During this 1,000 years Satan will be bound (Revelation 20:1-3) and Israel will be regathered and settled in her land and enjoy rest (Isaiah 11:1-10). I believe at the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be loosed one final time to deceive the nations (Revelation 20:7-9). He will be defeated and all that is his will be cast into a literal lake of fire (γέεννα -Revelation 20:7-10) which is a place of eternal, conscious torment (Revelation 14:10). I believe there is a Great White Throne judgment and all unbelievers will appear there in their resurrected bodies (Revelation 20:11-15). Any not found in the book of life are also thrown into the lake of fire (γέεννα – Revelation 20:15). Then God will make a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21, 22) where all His people will enjoy His presence forever more (1 Thessalonians 4:17).