

# Doctrinal Statement

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## **Introduction**

The study of God is as much perilous as it is essential. It is essential to study God because God is the creator of man and because man was made in God's image. A man must know God to truly know himself, to know his relationship with God, to know his place in the creation, and to know his place in history. The study of God is a perilous endeavor because one could never know all of God. The scope of God's power, presence, wisdom, love and other attributes are far too vast for finite minds to comprehend. Even if a man were to devote every minute of his life to the study of God, time would limit the examination to a mere introduction. It would be like a man discovering a gigantic iceberg drifting in the ocean. He would only be able to experience the portion above the water. In studying God, the finite dances with the knowledge of the divine in hopes to know himself and the God who created him.

## **The Doctrine of the Word of God**

By the "Word of God," I am referring to the written words of God. These written words comprise our canon of Scripture including all the books that belong in the Bible. This written "Word" will be my subject of focus notwithstanding the equally important words of God: the Word of God as the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."), the Word of God as speech by God, or the Word of God as speech through human lips.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God and, in its original writings, is the inerrant, complete, and final authority for faith and life. God gave the revelation of the Scripture through man and through His own writing, as with the Ten Commandments. God used men, under the inspiration of His Spirit, to pen the Scriptures as explained in II Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Furthermore, the canon of the Scriptures is complete and closed to any further additions (Revelation 22:18).

## **The Doctrine of the Trinity**

There is one God existing in three persons. Although this is a mystery and hard to explain, let it be said that there is only one God. C.C. Ryrie writes, "There is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance, but distinct in subsistence." Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one." Again it says in Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...'" The Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God. This co-existence is demonstrated clearly in works such as the creation and the baptism of Christ.

### **The Doctrine of God**

God is the first person of the Trinity. God is spirit and the creator of all things, the Father of Jesus and all believers. God is the Supreme Being with none higher or mightier in any way. He, along with Christ and the Holy Spirit, has the attributes of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. He has the incommunicable attributes, those attributes not shared with the creation, of independence and unchangeableness. He has always existed from eternity past and will always exist in eternity future as the Alpha and the Omega. God sees the past, present and future as equally vivid whereas our human minds remember the past dimly and do not know the future. God has shared some of His attributes with humans. These are called communicable attributes. Of course, His attributes are complete whereas they are only partial and corrupted by sin in mankind. These communicable attributes include but are not limited to mercy, love, knowledge, justice, wisdom and so forth. God explained Himself most completely in His answer to Moses's question about God's name. God said to Moses in Exodus 3:14, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

### **The Doctrine of the Son**

Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Trinity. Jesus is God who became man, lived a sinless life, was crucified and rose again for the atonement of sin in man. He is the creator of all things. He is prophet, priest and king for mankind. He is prophet in that He represents God before man and gives man an example of holiness by which to live. He is priest in that He represents man before God and died as a perfect, substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of man (Hebrews 9 & 10). Isaiah 53:5-6 says, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." As priest, He became the mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5). He is king in that He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords from the tribe of Judah and the seed of David. Philippians 2:10-11 says, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

### **The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. He indwells all believers at the point of salvation and empowers them for service (John 14:16 & Acts 1:8). In His ministry to man, He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates (Titus 3:5), baptizes (I Corinthians 12:13), indwells, seals (Ephesians 1:13) and fills each believer. The Holy Spirit intercedes for the believer and gives illumination on spiritual matters (Romans 8:26-27 & I Corinthians 2:14). He applies the work of Christ and God to the Christian in every way.

### **The Doctrine of Man**

Man was created in the image of God to glorify God and to have dominion over the earth. Sin and death entered the world through Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Man is totally depraved and, therefore, unable to save himself (Genesis 1:26-27;

Romans 3:23, 5:12-21; and Ephesians 2:12). Both just and unjust mankind will ultimately be bodily resurrected either to life with God or to judgment in the Lake of Fire.

### **The Doctrine of the Church**

The church is the universal body of regenerated believers in Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of the church as the husband is the head of the wife. The church's primary tasks are to gather for worship and scatter for evangelism. God will visibly return for His church in the last days to establish His Kingdom, glorifying her and being with her for all eternity (Titus 2:13 & Philippians 3:20).

### **The Doctrine of the Ordinances & Spiritual Gifts**

God has given the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper to the church. Water baptism is the believer's public identification with God and His church. It symbolizes what Christ did for that person, being crucified and resurrected for the atonement of sins. It also symbolizes that person's death to his sinfulness and new life in Christ (Romans 6). The Lord's Supper commemorates Jesus' life and death for the church whenever it is taken. Christians should beware of taking the Lord's Supper unworthily (I Corinthians 11:27-32).

Holding to sound hermeneutical interpretation of the Scriptures (authorial intention, taking Scriptures literally unless impossible to do so, contextualization, grammatical structure, word study, Scriptural unity and so on), I cannot legitimately say that God has eliminated the sign gifts such as speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues and healing. It is, however, clear from Scripture that these gifts are for the edification of the church and have their proper use within the worship service if the church chooses to use them (I Corinthians 12 & 14). It is also clear from Scripture that these gifts are not intended for every believer and should not be construed as part of the normal Christian life. God's gift of salvation is evident in believers through righteous living and is not evidenced through the outward manifestations of the gifts of the spirit. It would not be appropriate for me to persuade Christians to seek the sign gifts nor to wish the gifts away. God decides which gifts to give to particular believers for whatever occasions He deems worthy.

### **The Doctrine of the Satan and the demons**

Satan is a created being that fell into sin because of his pride. He was a guardian cherub, perfect in beauty and masterfully crafted with precious stones by God (Ezekiel 28:11-19). The King James Version of the Bible translates his name before sin as "Lucifer," which means "bearer of light." God brought judgment upon Lucifer, changing his name to Satan, consuming him with fire and casting him to the earth (Isaiah 14:12-15). Satan convinced one third of the angels to join him in his rebellion against God and became what we know as demons (Revelation 12:3). Satan and his demons lost his war with God at the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ and will find his end in the Lake of Fire for all eternity as recorded in Revelation 20:10, "And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

### **The Doctrine of the Salvation**

The angels long to look into our salvation so they can understand God's mercy, forgiveness and grace. This understanding distinguishes our worship from theirs. To understand these things would compel immediate and meaningful worship to God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16. Mankind's need for salvation is apparent in his inability to save himself. Ephesians 2:1-5 says, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved." Dead people cannot make decisions. Man is a slave to sin (John 8:34 & Romans 7:14). Humankind would always choose to reject God unless God first grants the unbelieving soul grace to free him from sin. It is this grace that draws a sinner to repentance as stated in John 6:44, "No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws him." Salvation is given to those who turn to God in repentance and faith in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Christ's work on the cross affords atonement for sin whereby God cancels the debt of all sin, appeasing God's holy wrath against the sinner. I John 4:10 says, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." This salvation through Jesus Christ satisfies God's justice while expressing His love to us.

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