

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

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This statement is a declaration of my beliefs in areas of doctrine which most Christians consider to be important, if not essential. This document is not meant to be an exhaustive theological apologetic for each topic listed below, therefore I have simply tried to provide a brief, succinct credal statement with an adequate biblical explanation of why I believe what I believe. The topics listed below are not in any specific order and the order in which they appear should in no way be construed as an ascending or descending order of magnitude or importance.

### I. Scripture

I believe that all the Holy Scriptures (both Old and New Testaments, the 66 books of the Bible without Apocrypha) were given by the inspiration of God, verbally and plenary, in the original manuscripts (1Cor 2.10). I believe that God superintended the writing of Scripture by moving men to write the exact words He desired to communicate to man, yet without superseding the personalities of the human authors (2Pet 1.20-21).

I believe that God promised to preserve the inspired words of Scripture (Ps 12.6-7).

I believe that Scripture is the inspired Word and words of God (2Tim 3.16-17). I believe it is reasonable that what God inspired He also preserved (Mat 24.35). Because God has preserved His inspired Scripture, I believe:

- Inspired Scripture can be held in one's hand and read (Mat 21.42; Mar 12.10; Acts 8.32-35).
- Inspired Scripture can be ignored, and therefore can be known (Mat 22.29; Mar 12.24).
- Inspired Scripture can be searched—examined, studied, investigated (John 5.39; Acts 17.11).
- Inspired Scripture can be opened, explained, and taught systematically (Acts 17.3; 18.28).

Therefore, I believe that just as the copies (and possibly translations) of the first century were Scripture (the inspired Word and words of God; 2Tim 3.15-17), so inspired Scripture exists today in copies and translations because God promised to preserve the words He inspired (Ps 12.6-7). I believe the Scriptures today are just as inspired (perfect and inerrant, without contradiction—the very words God desires to communicate to man) as when God inspired the original manuscripts even though they have been copied, transmitted, and translated down through the centuries.

Because God has both inspired and preserved the Holy Scriptures, I accept said Scriptures as my final authority. I believe that the Holy Scripture in the English language is the King James Bible, also referred to as the Authorized Version, and I therefore accept the King James Bible as the perfect and infallible Word (and words) of God, my final authority.

I believe God's preserved words for Spanish speakers can be found in the Reina-Valera Bible, specifically the Revision of 1960.

## **II. Dispensations**

I believe that the Bible is to be carefully and studiously interpreted according to its own internal system and structure of dispensations. I believe the Bible, to be understood in its right context, must be “rightly divided” by noting doctrinal differences that exist between the various ages during which God has worked (2Tim 2.15).

I believe in a biblical system of dispensations similar to that of C.I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer (moderate dispensationalism). I reject the errors of the hyper-dispensationalists who “over divide” Scripture and who refuse to acknowledge the “overlap” which commonly occurs when history moves from one dispensation into the next.

I believe that moderate dispensationalism is the only way to legitimately interpret the Scripture and explain the many supposed discrepancies and contradictions in the Bible which, if not understood in their dispensational context, lead to a mixture of truth and error, and which often lead God's people into bad doctrine.

## **III. God**

I believe in the Trinity—one God who is three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit (1Jn 5.7; Mat 3.16-17; 28.19).

## **IV. Jesus Christ, the Son of God**

I believe Jesus Christ is 100% man and 100% God (commonly referred to as the hypostatic union of the two natures: human and divine). Jesus is God in the flesh (1Tim 3.16).

I believe that Jesus Christ was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1.35), born of the virgin Mary and thereby received His human body (Isa 7.14).

I believe that Jesus Christ was in all points tempted like as we are, yet He never sinned, not in thought, in word, or in deed (Heb 4.15).

I believe that Jesus Christ gave Himself to be crucified, to suffer the wrath of God on the cross, and to die in my place and stead. He thus became the unique, innocent, penal substitute and propitiation for the sins of all men and women (Rom 3.25; 5.12-21; 1Jn 2.2).

I believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead literally and physically after three days in the tomb, and that He appeared to over 500 eye-witnesses during the 40 days after His resurrection (1Cor 15.3-6).

I believe that Jesus Christ is now seated on the right hand of the Father in heaven awaiting His return for the rapture of the Church and His ultimate revelation in the second coming when He comes back to this earth to establish His 1000-year reign, called the Millennium (Col 3.1; 1Thess 4.13-18; Rev 19.11-20.6).

## **V. Holy Spirit**

I believe that the Holy Spirit is God and that He is as much a Person as the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (the Holy Spirit is not simply a “spiritual force,” He is the Lord; 1Cor 3.16; 2Cor 3.17).

I believe that, during the present age, the Holy Spirit dwells in all true believers (1Cor 12.13) and that He regenerates them (Titus 3.5), giving them new spiritual life at the moment of their conversion to Christ (John 3.3-8). The Holy Spirit seals believers (Eph 1.13-14), guarantees their salvation (Eph 4.30), teaches them the Scriptures (1Cor 2.13; John 14.26), comforts them through the Scriptures (John 16.7, 12-15), guides them in life decisions by means of the Scriptures (2Tim 3.15-4.5), and thus uses the Scriptures to conform all believers to the image of Christ (commonly referred to as sanctification; Rom 8.29; Gal 4.19; Gal 5.22-23).

I believe that the Holy Spirit gives to all born-again believers gifts and abilities that enable them to do the work to which God has called them (1Cor 12-14). However, I also believe that the five “sign gifts” (or “signs of an apostle”; 2Cor 12.12)—the gifts of tongues, healing, casting out devils, taking up serpents, and drinking deadly things without harm—were given specifically by God for the confirmation of the New Testament (Mark 16.15-20). Upon the completion of the canon of Scripture (after the age of the Apostles, around AD 100), those miraculous sign gifts ceased. I believe the manifestations of these gifts today are counterfeits—they are fleshly, carnal, and, in some cases, demonic (2Tim 3.8).

## **VI. Satan**

I believe Satan (the devil) is a real, historical being that once was a cherub (Ezek 28.16) who fell in sin because of pride (Isa 14.12-14). When Satan fell, he rebelled against God with one-third of the angels of heaven (who are now referred to as devils or demons; Rev 12.4).

I believe that Satan was defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ through His work on the cross and in His subsequent resurrection (Heb 2.14).

I believe that Satan still exists and that he lives and moves in the world today trying, with the aid of his devils, to thwart the plans of God (1Thes 2.18). I believe one of Satan's primary fields of activity is that of religion: a counterfeit form of Christianity (2Cor 11.12-15). I believe that Satan's primary strategy among God's people is to cause them to question the certainty of the words of truth (the Word and words of God) and to thereby lead them to usurp the final authority of God's Word and words with their own personal opinions and decisions (Gen 3.1).

I believe Satan's final destiny will be the lake of fire (Rev 20.10).

## **VII. Genesis**

I believe that the story of creation in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis is fact and not allegory (it is true history, not a fable). I believe in a young earth (an earth that is probably no more than 8,000 years old).

I believe that Adam and Eve were real, historic people who were created directly by a unique act of God. Adam chose to sin by his own freewill that God had given him and and by so doing brought death, destruction, judgment, and condemnation upon all his descendants—upon all mankind (Rom 5.12; 6.23).

## VIII. Salvation

I believe that salvation in this age (the Church Age) is by grace through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and in the resurrection, not by any works of merit that man could do (Eph 2.8-9).

I believe that believing on Jesus Christ for salvation includes both repentance (a turning from sin; Luke 13.3, 5; Rom 2.5-6) and faith (a turning to Christ in total dependence on and trust in Him for salvation; Rom 3.21-22). Without both repentance and faith there is no salvation because there is no conversion (Acts 20.20-21; 1Thes 1.9). God will save those who turn from sin to Him in faith (it is not the conversion of the sinner that saves him, but rather the conversion of the sinner places him at the mercy of God who, based on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, will forgive the sinner of his sins and regenerate him by the Spirit).

I believe that sinful, natural man is totally depraved (Rom 3.10-18) and yet able in his unregenerate state to respond to God's call to repentance and faith when confronted biblically with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 10.9-17). I believe in an unlimited atonement, meaning that Jesus Christ died for all sinners (not just the “elect” or “predestined,” which are terms often misunderstood and misapplied; 1Jn 2.2). I believe that God desires that all men be saved (1Tim 2.3-4) through repentance and faith in Christ (2Pet 3.9), and because of that desire He is working in all sinners everywhere to bring them to saving faith in Christ (John 12.32; 16.8). I believe that many sinners resist the grace of God given to them through the working of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 7.51). Thus believing, I reject the Reformed Theology of John Calvin and Calvinism as it relates to soteriology (the theology of salvation) and the *ordo salutis*—the order of salvation (John 1.12-13; 3.16).

I believe that a born-again believer is eternally secure in his salvation; he did nothing to earn his salvation (Christ did it all) and therefore he can do nothing to lose it (Christ does it all). This eternally secure condition of the saved sinner in the present age is secured by the numerous irreversible promises of God and works of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8.31-39).

I believe that genuine salvation will normally be evidenced by a changed lifestyle, a lifestyle of holiness—of growing in spiritual maturity and becoming more and more like Jesus Christ in both character and conduct (Gal 4.19; 5.22-23; Rom 8.29). If such evidence (spiritual growth and maturity) is not visible in the life of a professed believer, I believe it is healthy for that person to examine his salvation to be sure that he is in the faith (Mat 7.13-23; 1Cor 15.1-2; 2Cor 13.5).

I believe that God's principal method of saving sinners is through the preaching of the message of the cross—the gospel (1Cor 1.18, 21; Rom 10.13-17). Therefore, I believe in the intentional, active, and vigorous pursuit of lost sinners through efforts such as personal witnessing, open-air preaching, literature distribution, door-to-door witnessing, and any other reasonable and appropriate method of communicating the message of the gospel to the lost (Mat 28.19-20; 2Cor 5.18-21).

I believe that biblical evangelism must include the lawful use of God's moral law to bring about a knowledge of sin and a fear of God and judgment before the good news of the gospel is presented (1Tim 1.8-11).

## **IX. The Church**

I believe in the universal and invisible Church (Eph 3.6, 21) which is the Body (Eph 1.22-23) and Bride of Christ (Eph 5.23-33; 2Cor 11.2-3; Rev 19.7; 21.9) and into which the sinner is placed at the moment of his salvation (1Cor 12.13). All born-again believers since Acts 2 and until the rapture of the Church form part of this Church, the Body and Bride of Christ.

Although all true, born-again believers form part of the universal Church, the great majority of references to “church” in the New Testament are to local assemblies (Acts 14.23). I believe that in this present age all believers are expected by the Lord to congregate weekly, upon the first day of the week (Sunday), with other believers in a local assembly—a local church (1Cor 16.1-2; Heb 10.24-25). The local church has been given the authority to administer the two ordinances give by the Lord, namely baptism (Mat 28.19-20; Acts 16.33) and the Lord's Supper (1Cor 11.17-34). The local church is also God's ordained structure by and through which He is carrying out His plan in the present age to evangelize the lost and edify believers (Eph 4.11-16).

I believe in the ordinance of believers' baptism, that believers should be immersed in water as their first step of obedience after salvation (Acts 8.35-38). I do not believe in pedo-baptism (the baptism of infants and young children) but rather in credo-baptism (the baptism of believers). Therefore I believe it is biblical to baptize only those who have shown sufficient maturity to be able to discern good from evil, to understand the gravity of their sinful state before a Holy God, to repent of their sins, and to turn to Christ only for salvation.

I believe in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper which is a memorial and not a means of grace (1Cor 11.20-34).

## **X. The Rapture and Second Coming**

I believe in the pre-Tribulation rapture of the Church (all the saints from Acts 2 until the moment of the rapture; 1Cor 15.51-58; 1Thes 4.13-18) and in the pre-Millennial (post-Tribulation) return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth to establish His kingdom and rule among men for one-thousand years (Rev 19.11-20.6).

## **XI. Eternity**

I believe that all men are eternal beings, having a beginning (conception in the womb) and yet having no end. All men, therefore, will spend all of eternity either with Christ or separated from Him.

I believe that lost sinners that die go immediately to hell (a place of conscious torment in flames; Luke 16.16.19-31) where they wait until the day of their final judgment. They will be brought up from hell, judged by God for every thought, word, and deed, and then cast for all eternity into the lake of fire where their torment will never cease (Rev 20.11-15; 21.8).

I believe that those sinners that God has saved will live with Him for all eternity in a new creation which will be free of sin, suffering, and death (Rev 21.1; 22.1-5).