

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

of

Jacob T. Allen

Prepared for the Ordination Council

as called by

Falls Baptist Church

Menomonee Falls, WI

Dr. Wayne Van Gelderen Jr., Pastor

November 4, 2022

Contents

Bibliology.....	2
Theology Proper.....	4
Christology	6
Pneumatology.....	8
Anthropology.....	10
Angelology.....	11
Soteriology.....	12
Ecclesiology.....	15
Baptist Distinctives.....	16
Eschatology	18
Practical Considerations.....	20



PDF of Verses

Bibliology – The Doctrine of the Word of God

I believe that the Bible is the verbal, plenary, inspired Word of God. Every word in the sixty-six books of the Bible is intentional and every part of the Bible is equally inspired. The Bible does not only contain the words of God, but it is in its entirety the Word of God. The Bible is without error and provides our sole authority for what we believe and how we live. (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

Revelation

God has chosen to reveal Himself to man. He reveals Himself in a general way through creation and the conscience He has created man with. He has specifically revealed Himself to us through the sixty-six books of the Bible, the central theme being the person and work of Jesus. The Bible reveals everything God needed us to know about Him. The Word of God is complete. Any addition or subtraction is error. (Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:18-20, 2:14-15; Revelation 22:18-19).

Inspiration

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16–17). All scripture was breathed by God and all scripture is profitable.

The Bible was written down by men of God as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was God who inspired each word to be written and therefore they are complete and without error. (2 Peter 1:21).

Inerrancy

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: And in keeping of them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:7-11).

I believe God’s Word is perfect and without error. I believe every part of the Bible is without error including references to history and science. The Bible always tells the truth. That is not only limited to faith and practice, but to every subject the Bible speaks of. (Matthew 5:17-18; John 10:35).

Interpretation

I believe in a normal/literal interpretation of the scriptures. Unclear passages should be compared with clearer passages; scripture is to be compared to scripture. I support the quotation of Dr. Cooper,

“When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.”¹

Preservation

God has miraculously preserved His Word in the original languages. The Bible promises several different places that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word will not. God has and will continue to preserve His Word.

I only use the KJV for preaching and teaching to English speakers. In Hungary I plan to use the Hungarian Károli which is derived from the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus. All the current Independent Baptists in Hungary use this Hungarian translation to my knowledge. I praise the Lord that both English and Hungarian have translations of God’s Word. (Psalm 12:6-7, 33:11, 100:5, 119:89, 119:152; Isaiah 30:8, 40:8, 59:21; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; 1 Peter 1:23-25).

Application

The Word of God has been preserved and we have the infallible, inerrant, inspired, profitable Word of God. Having the Bible is amazing, but it must be mixed with faith-filled obedience. The book of James warns of only hearing the Word and not being doers of it. I believe the Word of God is worthy of acceptance and obedience. (Hebrews 4:2; James 1:22).

¹ Dr. David L. Cooper (1886-1965)

Theology Proper – Truth about God

I believe that God exists eternally in three persons – The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit – and that these three are one God, having the same nature, perfections, essence, and attributes. God is the creator of everything and everyone. In God we live, and move, and have our being. God is all powerful, all knowing, and always present everywhere. God’s ways and thoughts are much higher than ours. He is sovereign over all and in complete control. (Gal. 1:1; Titus 1:4; Philippians 2:6; 1 Timothy 3:16; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Acts 17:24-28; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37; Psalm 137:5; Jeremiah 32:27; 1 John 3:20; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:24, Acts 17:27; Isaiah 55:8-9; Job 42:2; Ephesians 1:11-12; Romans 8:28).

Attributes of God

God is holy, loving, just, always good, merciful, gracious, compassionate, righteous, majestic, caring, transcendent, faithful, immutable, infinite, eternal, the beginning, and the end. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33) These are only some of the attributes of God. He is worthy of our love and adoration. (Psalms 99:9; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:39; Ephesians 2:4; Job 8:3; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 34:8, 100:5, 135:3, 145:9; Nahum 1:7; Psalms 37:26, 103:8, 116:5; Exodus 22:27; Nehemiah 9:31; Psalms 111:4, 112:4, 145:8; 1 Peter 2:3; Psalms 78:38, 86:15; Micah 7:19; Matthew 9:36; Daniel 9:14; Ezra 9:15; Psalms 96:6, 145:5, 12; 2 Peter 1:16; Jude 1:25; 1 Peter 5:7; Isaiah 57:15; Psalms 36:5, 119:90; Isaiah 25:1; Lamentations 3:23; Ecclesiastes 3:14; Malachi 3:6; Psalms 147:5; Deuteronomy 33:27; Revelation 21:6, 22:13).

Nature of God

“In the beginning God...” The Word of God begins with the natural assumption of the existence of God. God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. We are told that God made man in His own image, so in some ways we are made like God. However, it is still a wonder that God would interact with us as He is so far superior. This makes the incarnation even more special, that Jesus became His own creation. We see that God is not merely a force or a power but a personality with emotion, reason, and a will. (Genesis 1:1; John 4:24; Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 55:8-9; John 1:14; Isaiah 43:4; Psalm 103:13; John 3:16; Isaiah 1:18; Ephesians 1:9; Hebrews 10:9).

Works of God

I believe God created the world by His word in six literal days and rested on the seventh. I reject the belief that God used the evolutionary process as part of His creation. God created everything and He keeps everything functioning in order. (Genesis 1:31-2:2; Hebrews 1:3).

God is unlimited in his knowledge and sovereignty. God is so powerful and sovereign that He allows man to have freedom of choice while maintaining His sovereignty. God receives glory from man choosing a relationship with Him. God is in complete control. (Colossians 1:16; Proverbs 16:9; Genesis 2:16-17, 50:20).

God knew before the beginning of the universe that man would sin, and God had His perfect plan to offer redemption. God has constantly been at work to redeem mankind back to a relationship with Him. (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 13:8; Ephesians 1:4-10).

Christology – The Doctrine of Jesus Christ

I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). I believe that He is fully God and fully man (Colossians 2:8-9; Acts 2:22; 1 Timothy 2:5). He is the creator of all things, yet He humbled Himself to become one of His own creation (Colossians 1:16-17; Philippians 2:6-8). He was born of a virgin, lived a perfect sinless life, and bore our sin in His own body on the cross (Matthew 1:23; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:24). Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. Many saw Him personally after His resurrection, and countless have been blessed to believe in Him even though they have not seen Him (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; John 20:29). Jesus ascended to heaven taking His rightful place seated at the right hand of God. Jesus is coming back, and it will be fully evident that He is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. (Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 17:14, 19:16).

Eternality of Christ

I believe that Jesus has always been and will forever be. He was present in creation, and there was nothing made without Him. Jesus has been referred to as the everlasting Father. Here on earth Jesus made the claim that “Before Abraham was, I am.” In Revelation 1:8 Jesus said, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Isaiah 9:6; John 8:58-59; Revelation 1:8, 21:6-7; Colossians 1:16-17).

First Advent of Christ

I believe that in accordance with the plan of God and at the perfect time Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born a virgin, Mary. Many prophecies were made concerning the coming of the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled all those prophecies. Jesus, the second member of the Trinity, was born as a human baby. He was born with the sinless nature of God, thus allowing Him to be The Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Galatians:4:4; Hebrews 4:15).

Person of Christ

I believe that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. He did not become “less” God when He became a man, neither is He “less” a man now that He is seated at the right hand of God. This dual nature is now permanent. The fact that Jesus humbled himself to become human and ultimately subjected Himself to die is absolutely astounding. (Hebrews 1:3, 10:12; Philippians 2:6-11).

Atonement of Christ

I believe that by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, He accomplished everything needed to be our sufficient substitute (Romans 4:24-25). Through the sin of one man (Adam) all were under sin and judgement, and through one man (Jesus) we are justified and made righteous by His free gift of grace through faith. (Romans 5:1-21). An exchange was made where Jesus took the sin of all mankind and offers righteous standing with God in exchange (2 Corinthians 5:21). While we justly deserve the wrath of God to be poured out on us throughout an eternity in hell, Jesus took our place. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). Jesus was our substitute and now the wrath of God is satisfied.

Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

I believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus on the third day after His death. Many witnesses saw Jesus after His resurrection. Over five hundred people at the same time witnessed Him alive after His death and resurrection. This cannot be construed as hallucinations by His disciples. He is alive indeed. The resurrection of Jesus is core to the importance to our faith. Without the resurrection of Jesus there would be no salvation and our preaching and faith would be vain. (1 Corinthians 15:1-21; Romans 4:24-25; 1 Peter 1:3-5).

Forty days after His resurrection He ascended into heaven. In the same manner that He ascended, Jesus will come again (Acts 1:3, 9-11).

Offices of Christ

Jesus fills three main offices as Messiah. Before Him, the same man never filled these offices. He is Prophet, Priest, and King. (Acts 3:22, 7:37; John 8:42; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:24-26; Philippians 2:9-11; Luke 1:32; Revelation 19:16).

Pneumatology – The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

I believe in The Holy Spirit of God as the third member of the triune God. He is not merely a force, but a divine person. The Holy Spirit participated in Creation and is actively involved in Redemption. He gifts and fills believers to exalt and glorify Jesus.

Deity Of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit manifests the attributes of God including eternity, omnipotence, and omniscience. He performed the works of God including creation, the virgin birth, and moving men to write the scriptures. He is equal with the other members of the trinity. He is the Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is referred to explicitly as God in several passages. (Genesis 1:2; Hebrews 9:14; Isaiah 40:13; I Corinthians 2:12; Psalm 139:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30; II Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 1:19; I Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:15-17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 3:7-9; Acts 5:3-4; II Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter. 1:21).

Personality of The Holy Spirit

Although divine and invisible to us, I believe The Holy Spirit is a person with a personality. He is described as having intelligence, emotion, and a will. He can be grieved, lied to, resisted, and obeyed. He is the comforter, a convincer, a guide, an intercessor for the saints, and someone we can have communion with. (John. 14:26; Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Acts 16:6-11; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 5:3-4, 7:51, 10:19-21; John 15:26, 16:8, 13; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

The Holy Spirit in the Past

I believe that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and from Jesus. In the Old Testament The Holy Spirit came upon people at certain types for various purposes, but there was no permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit breathed God's message over centuries and moved men to pen all the completed Word of God. (Exodus 31:1; Judges 6:34, 14:6, 16:20; 1 Samuel 16:13,14; Psalm 51:11; John 14:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:21).

The Holy Spirit Today

The Holy Spirit has an active role in convincing the lost of sin, righteousness, and judgement. We as believers are privileged to work together with God in planting and watering while God gives the increase. The Holy Spirit comforts and guides into all truth. If believers are taken before officials for proclaiming truth, The Holy Spirit will teach them what to say in the moment without need of premeditation. (1 Corinthians 3:9; John 16:13, 18; Luke 12:11-12).

The Holy Spirit today (continued)

At the moment of conversion, The Holy Spirit regenerates a person, baptizes them into Christ's body, permanently indwells them, and seals them unto the day of redemption. I reject the idea of a baptism of the Spirit as a second blessing for greater usefulness. The Holy Spirit fills and uses believers as they allow Him to by faith. (Titus 3:5; John 14:16-21, 23, 26; 1 Corinthians 6:17, 12:13; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Romans 6:3-4; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18).

The Holy Spirit gifts believers for the work of the ministry and the edification of the believers. While God can still do miracles today, the sign gifts, including speaking in tongues and miracles, are no longer needed as the Word of God is complete. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:8-13; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

I reject the teachings of the charismatic movement requiring speaking in tongues as evidence of true salvation. The Spirit of God will never guide anyone contrary to the Word of God. He is the Spirit of truth. I believe The Holy Spirit empowers active obedience of the Word of God. A person passively waiting for an experience opens themselves to counterfeit emotional perceptions or demonic encounters. (John 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:13; Matthew 7:22-23; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15).

Man's Origen

Man was created by God on the sixth day of creation. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:27). When God formed man from the dust of the ground He breathed into His nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. God did not need to create man, but man was created to bring glory and pleasure to Him. God created man to have a relationship with Him. God created Eve from the rib of Adam who was created for companionship and as fitting helper for Him. Adam and Eve were created perfect in God's image and enjoyed open fellowship with God. They were given the command to procreate and have dominion over the entirety of God's creation. God created them with a free will that could obey or disobey God. (Genesis 1:26-2:25).

Man's Sin

Although we do not know how much time transpired after the creation of Adam and Eve, we know that they fell into sin. The serpent tempted Eve, she was deceived and ate of the forbidden fruit. Adam was with her and ate of it also. We know Adam was not deceived, and God held Adam responsible for the choice to rebel against the command of God. Their eyes were opened after their sin. Their innocence was lost, and they sought to cover their nakedness. Their sweet fellowship with God was broken and they hid from God when they heard Him approaching. As a result of sin, the ground was cursed. Woman was made subject to her husband and given much pain in childbirth. The first promise of the coming of Jesus as Messiah is found in Genesis 3:15. Jesus is referred to as the second Adam who is a life-giving Spirit. (Genesis 3; 1 Timothy 2:14; 1 Corinthians 15:45).

Man's Depravity

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Man is totally depraved as a result of sin. There are none that seek after God. No one has any hope apart from what Jesus did to save us. I do not believe that in man's total depravity he is unable to exercise faith. Faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God. Romans 4:5 clearly contrasts faith against works for salvation. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Man is absolutely hopeless without Christ. Thankfully, we do have Jesus, and He made a promise. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:32-33). (Romans 3:10-12).

Angelology – The Doctrine of Angels

Nature and Purpose of Angels

I believe in the existence of angels as seen throughout the Bible. Angels were created by God as immortal spiritual beings possessing a free will. They were created as holy, but we know that many of them have fallen through their rebellion. (Hebrews 1:13-14; Luke 20:36; Genesis 1:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6).

Angels were created to praise and worship God, and they serve before God continually. There are different rankings and abilities among the angelic beings (Ephesians 6:12). In the past angels have been a part of giving the mosaic law and at the birth of Jesus (Galatians 3:19; Matthew 1:20). Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation (Matthew 4:11). Presently angels function as ministering spirits to help and protect believers on earth (Hebrews 1:14; Matthew 18:10). In the future angels will be active in the conducting of judgements and works in the end times and will come with Christ at His second coming. (Ephesians 3:10; Isaiah 6:2-3; Revelation 5:8-13; Psalm 103:20; Revelation 7:1; Galatians 3:19; Matthew 1:20; Acts 12:5-11; Matthew 13:39-40; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Fall of Angels

I believe in the existence of Satan. Lucifer was created by God as one of His chief angels. It was pride in believing he could be like God that led him to rebel (Isaiah 14:12-15). As a result of his rebellion, he was banished from heaven and his final destination is an eternity hell (Isaiah 14:15; Revelation 20:10). I believe Satan is the originator of sin (John 8:44). Although Satan's final destination is hell, he has been allowed to work evil on earth right now and has been called the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:1-2). He is also referred to as the tempter, the devil, a deceiver, and accuser of the brethren (1 Thessalonians 3:5; Genesis 3; Matthew 4; Revelation 12:10). He has been officially defeated after Jesus' death and resurrection, but he is doing all he can to deceive people and turn them against God (Hebrews 2:14-15). He is looking for opportunities to destroy God's people as well which the Bible warns us to be sober and vigilant so we can resist him in faith (1 Peter 5:8). Satan is more powerful than us, but "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" 1 John 4:4b). We are told that Satan will be bound for one-thousand years during the millennial reign. He will be released again for a brief time before his eternal sentence to the lake of fire where he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:1-3, 7-8, 10).

Demons, or unclean spirits, are seen in the Bible. Some are currently in confinement, yet many afflict and deceive people on earth. They work for Satan and will all justly be cast into hell with him to suffer eternally. In Ephesians believers are reminded that we do not wrestle against people, but against the powers of evil. There is a real spiritual battle Christians are in and we need to be equipped with every piece of God's armor to stand. We are to be always praying and making sure we are alert. (Luke 10:17-20; Matthew 12:43; Mark 9:25; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6; Matthew 25:41).

Plan for Salvation

I believe that God planned salvation before He created the world. God knew that man would rebel against Him, and His love was so strong that He had a plan to offer salvation. God's plan of salvation provided His Son Jesus to be a perfect substitute for sinful man. It is only by God's grace that man can be saved through faith in Jesus. (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9).

Election

God chose us to be in Him before the foundation of the World. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:29-31).

The Bible teaches us that God elected us to be saved according to His perfect will. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (Thessalonians 2:13-15).

Jesus is the foundation of our election. Jesus is the chosen of God, elect, and precious. He is the chief cornerstone, and all who believe on Jesus are part of His chosen generation; called out of darkness into His marvelous light to declare His praises (1 Peter 2:3-10).

I reject double predestination.

"Election is not the cause of anyone going to hell, for election is unto salvation. Neither is non-election responsible for the damnation of sinners. Sin is what sends men to hell, and all men are sinners by nature and practice. It does not follow that because election is unto salvation, that non-election is unto damnation. SIN is the cause of damnation; Election, therefore, harms no one but brings salvation to many."²

I reject Hyper-Calvinism. It is error and folly to conclude that because God is sovereign over all and because He has elected men to be saved that we can forgo clear commands to pray and to preach the gospel. It is God's will for all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. He is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. Jesus invites everyone to come and drink of the water of life freely. The apostle Paul said He endured all things for the elect's sake so they would obtain salvation in Christ. To equate fatalism with God's plan is wrong and unbiblical. (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 22:17; 2 Timothy 2:10.)

² Ernest C. Reisinger <https://founders.org/library/reis1/a-southern-baptist-looks-at-the-biblical-doctrine-of-election-2/>

This doctrine of election is in the Bible, yet it creates for us an antinomy. Merriam Webster defines antinomy as: “A contradiction between two apparently equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles.” The antinomy here would be between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Both are Bible truths, yet an attempt to reconcile these things is impossible for our human minds to accomplish. We need to follow what the Bible says above our desire to systematize things perfectly according to our limited ability to reason. I thank God for planning to provide salvation. We have the privilege of being called as Jesus’ ambassadors to preach this message of Salvation to the world (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Need for Salvation

Sin separates man from God as He is unable to look on iniquity (Habakkuk 1:13). By the failure of one man (Adam) all people have inherited the sinful nature at birth. Being born dead in trespasses and sins, man is spiritually dead and depraved of spiritual life or desire. Man is born with the nature of sin but will be held accountable for the sins they have personally committed. (Romans 5:1-21).

In this condition man is already condemned and on a fast inevitable track to suffer the wrath of God for sin, an eternity in the lake of fire created for the devil and his angels. Man is unable to do anything to change his condition on his own and would be permanently doomed apart from the intervention of God to provide a way for salvation. (Romans 6:23; John 3:18).

Means of Salvation

I believe the only way for a person to be saved is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The Bible makes it very clear that man’s works have nothing to do with salvation. By Jesus’ atoning work from His incarnation, to His perfect life, through the humiliating obedience of Jesus to His Father’s will even to the death of the cross, to His substitutionary death for us upon that cross including the shedding of His precious blood, to His burial, to His miraculous resurrection and ascension to heaven, Jesus paid everything necessary for salvation demonstrated in His final words of “It is finished.” (John 3:16-18, 36; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; John 1:14; Hebrews 4:15; Philippians 2:6-11; Romans 3:23-28; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 1 John 2:2, 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6; Acts 1:9-11; John 19:30).

The gospel message is according to the scriptures, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. He was seen of many witnesses after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). Salvation is a work of God alone, and He calls for men to repent and believe the gospel (Ephesians 2:8-9; Mark 1:15). Repentance and faith go hand in hand. A person must repent, (change their mind) about God, their sinful state, and their impending condemnation, and believe (have faith in, trust in) in Jesus, that He died for our sins, rose again and is their only hope for salvation. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine

heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10). Salvation is simple enough for a child to receive it in faith and its results are amazing and eternal. (Matthew 18:3; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Mark 1:15, 2:17; Luke 5:32, 24:47; John 1:7, 12, 3:16-18; Acts 3:19, 20:21).

Results of Salvation

Salvation results in being born again or regenerated. This regeneration is done by God alone bringing to life and fellowship one who was dead in trespasses and sins. Everything has changed for a person who has been saved. They are moved from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. They are a new creature; old things are past, and all are made new. No longer are they in the place of condemned already, but they have eternal life and a new open relationship with God. (Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 2:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Acts 26:18; John 3:18; John 17:3).

Justification is another powerful reality of what has resulted because of salvation. To be justified means to be declared righteous. Not only were our sins forgiven, but God also views us as just and holy as Jesus since He took our place. His substitutionary sacrifice satisfied God’s wrath (propitiation) as He had poured out His wrath on His own Son. God has now adopted us as His own children. We have been reconciled to God and given eternal life. (Romans 3:24-28, 5:1,9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:7; 1 John 2:2, 4:10; John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:21; Romans 6:23).

Sanctification has happened positionally at the moment of conversion. We are set apart from sin unto holiness. Sanctification is a process we participate in by faith. We are to be conformed increasingly to the image of Christ. Sanctification will not be completed in this life, but it will be completed at the moment of glorification when we see Jesus and become like Him, for we will see Him just as He really is. (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 John 3:2).

The Nature of the Church

The church is the body of Christ, a called-out assembly consisting of members who have been saved and baptized by immersion. Jesus originated the church, is the head of the church, and is the one who builds His church. The church is called Jesus's bride and He loves her perfectly. Every member in the church body has a purpose, though each have distinct functions (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31). All gentiles in the past were alienated from Israel's blessings and were without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12). Jesus has broken down that division and allowed everyone to partake of the blessings of God through the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 2:13-19). Although Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ, Israel and the church are not the same thing, the church has not replaced Israel, and God's futuristic promises to the people of Israel will still be literally fulfilled. (Colossians 1:18, 24; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-32; 2 Corinthians 11:2; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 20 Matthew 16:18; Galatians 3:28-29; Ephesians 2:12-18).

The assembled members of local congregations are God's plan for this age (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Corinthians 11:8). The universal church exists (all saved people) but is only known by God and will not be realized by us until the future. (1 Corinthians 12:28; 15:9; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 5:9).

The Function of the Church

The church functions as the pillar and ground of the truth. Everything that the church does should glorify God and be according to the Word of God. The Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. The church must be willing to speak the truth in love and earnestly contend for the faith. They must combat false doctrine and effectively point people to the Word of God as the answer. There are reasons the Bible says church members are to be disciplined out of membership if they will not repent of their unbiblical behavior. (1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Ephesians 4:15; Jude; Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13).

The Great Commission is a vital part of a church's function in bringing glory to God. A Biblical church should be looking to evangelize and disciple people in all groups listed in Acts 1:8. They must be faithful in sharing Christ in their own region (Jerusalem). Churches should be aware of the need for the gospel in nearby places and look to start churches where there is a need. A local church can reach even the uttermost parts of the world by going on missions trips themselves and supporting missionaries to preach Jesus in places they cannot be themselves. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

The Baptist Distinctives

I am a Baptist by conviction as I believe the doctrine is the closest to the Word of God. I believe strongly that the Baptist distinctives are biblical and should be fleshed out in every Bible believing church.

Biblical Authority

The Bible is our sole and final authority for faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:15–17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

Autonomy of the Local Church

Every local church is independent and self-governing. No religious hierarchy outside the local church may dictate a church's beliefs or practices. Autonomous local churches who are similar in faith and practice can and should fellowship with each other, but they hold no authority in the decisions of the churches or members not within their local body. (2 Corinthians 8:1–5, 19, 23–24).

Priesthood of Every Believer

There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Every saved individual has direct access to God themselves. There is no need to go through a pastor, priest, etc. to access God, and confession of sin is to God alone, not any human authority. (1 Timothy 2:5 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 5:9–10).

Two Ordinances

Baptism and The Lord's supper are the two ordinances of the church. Neither impart grace, as grace is by faith alone in Christ alone, but they are commanded by God.

Baptism by full immersion in water after salvation serves as a step of obedience and is a picture of our spiritual baptism into Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. New believers should be baptized as soon as possible after salvation by immersion in water. (Romans 6:3–5; Colossians 2:12; Mark. 1:9–10, 16:14–16; Acts 2:41, 8:37–39).

Jesus commanded that the Lord's supper be taken as a constant reminder of Jesus' broken body for us (the bread), and the New Testament provided through His blood (the cup). These are only symbolic and hold no mystical occurrence, but they remind us of incredible miraculous truths. The Lord's supper is to be taken only by believers who are living in obedience to the Word of God. It is not to be taken lightly, but we are to examine ourselves before partaking. (Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, 11:23–34).

Individual Soul Liberty

Every individual, whether a saved or unsaved, has the liberty to choose what he believes is right in the religious realm. No one should be forced to assent to any belief against his will. Baptists oppose religious persecution.

Believers are not to judge each other as we will all give account of our lives before God. Today standards of personal separation vary greatly. Believers should be fully persuaded in their own minds about their choices, however, graciousness and forbearance for different views are needed (especially concerning issues the Bible is not explicitly clear about). Liberty of choice must be allowed, and every man will be responsible for his actions before God. (Romans 14:5, 10-13; 2 Corinthians 4:2; Titus 1:9).

Saved and Baptized Church Membership

All members of a church must have a satisfactory testimony of salvation and have been baptized by immersion following their salvation.

Two Offices

There are only two offices given for the church, the pastor, and the deacon. The titles Bishop, Elder, Overseer, Pastor are all the same office. Qualifications are given for those who would fill either of these offices. (Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

Separation

Of Church and State

“God established both the church and the civil government, and He gave each its own distinct sphere of operation. The government’s purposes are outlined in Romans 13:1-7 and the church’s purposes in Matthew 28:19 and 20. Neither should control the other, nor should there be an alliance between the two. Christians in a free society can properly influence government toward righteousness, which is not the same as a denomination or group of churches controlling the government.”³

Ecclesiastical separation must be practiced. As the pillar and ground of the truth churches must be willing to confront error and contend for the faith. The ecumenical movement is a dangerous blending of truth with error. Acts 20:28-30; 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 John 9-11; Jude 1:3-23).

Personal separation from the world is important. Christians should not be in love with the world’s system or participating in unfruitful works of darkness. (1 John 2:15-17; Ephesians 5:10-17; John 17:14-17).

³ Matt Sherro <https://exploringthetruth.org/baptist-distinctives/>

The Rapture

I believe that the rapture of the church will happen before the beginning of the tribulational period and before the millennial reign of Christ on the earth. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven, there will be a shout, the dead in Christ and all living believers will be caught up together in the sky (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This will happen instantaneously, in the twinkling of an eye. The finality of victory over death will be realized as our mortal and corrupt bodies will become immortal and incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:50-58). So shall we ever be with the Lord. This is the blessed hope we look for (Titus 2:13-14). Jesus could return for us at any time. We need to be living in expectancy of His return. Sometime after the rapture will be the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9-15). Here we will face no condemnation (Romans 8:1), but we will be rewarded or suffer a lack of reward. The imminent return of Jesus and the judgment seat of Christ should motivate us to be faithful to Him. It should also motivate us to share Jesus with unbelievers before it is too late.

The Tribulation

The tribulation will be a seven-year period beginning after the ratification of a treaty between Israel and the Antichrist. The second half of this period known as the time of Jacob's trouble will yield 3 ½ years of horror. It will be for the people of Israel, but it will affect the entire world. There will be 144,000 Jewish witnesses who will likely work to evangelize the world during this time. The Antichrist as the beast will be a real live supervillain that everyone will be pushed to worship as a god. The entire world will be in awe of him, and many will be deceived. He will speak many blasphemies and turn people against God. He is given power for forty-two months. The second beast with him (false prophet) will have many supernatural abilities to display as he also points to the Antichrist as the one to be worshipped. There will be no superhero to save the day as unthinkable horrors happen to the world. People will be forced to receive the mark of the beast to be able to do business. Some will wear it boldly and others reluctantly, but anyone who takes the mark of the beast has sealed their fate. Anyone who does not receive the mark will be hunted down to be killed. The tribulation time culminates with the war of Armageddon where there will be a horrific amount of bloodshed. Jesus will ride out with His saints and end all the rebellion in an instant with only the need for His Word. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. The beast and false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire, and Satan will be bound for one-thousand years. (Revelation 13, 7:4, 17:14, 19:15, 20-21, 20:1-3; Daniel 9:26-27; Matthew 24:15-22; Philippians 2:9-12).

Looking at the horrible time in the Bible is very sobering. God will pour out His wrath against sinners. The thought of people we know being alive during this time can cause you to shudder. The reality of the horrendous future ahead should motivate us to share Jesus more fervently and pray for God to grant repentance to those we know. Every knee will bow to Jesus as Lord. If they

bow to Him now, they will receive so great a salvation, if they do not, they will still bow to Him, but their end will be damnation. (2 Timothy 2:25-26; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 20:14-15).

The Millennium

I believe Jesus will establish a literal earthly kingdom for one-thousand years following the tribulation. During that time things will be remarkable. Jesus will reign perfectly, bringing true justice and equity. Isaiah describes a wolf lying by a lamb and little children playing with snakes. There is no harm on earth with Jesus. There will be global peace, and great prosperity. (Isaiah 11:1-10; Revelation 20:1-10).

Satan will be loosed for a brief time and allowed to deceive some. God meets their rebellion with fire, and Satan is finally thrown into the lake of fire forever. (Revelation 20:1-10).

The Eternal State

After the devil is cast into the lake of fire forever, God will resurrect all of mankind, and the unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. Every person there will be judged according to his works. Whoever was not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire. (Daniel 12:2 Revelation 20:11-15).

There will be a new heaven and a new earth as the old were destroyed by God. Those who are saved will live with God forever in perfect harmony as His sons and daughters. It truly will be glorious. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21-22).

Divorce and Remarriage

God created marriage to be a permanent union between one man and one woman. Divorce is something that God clearly hates. Jesus stated that the reason divorce was permitted in the mosaic law was because of their hardness of heart. I believe that divorce is not something Jesus is pleased with. I will not remarry someone who has been divorced. “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (Luke 16:18). (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:3-10).

Alcohol

Alcohol has caused so much harm and damage in people’s lives. My own father and his family suffered with the addiction of this poison. Drinking is a big problem in Hungary and heavy binge drinking is over 61% among its youth population. Even if you could justify social drinking or drinking in moderation, the chance of being a stumbling block to just one person would not be worth it. I do not drink and would never advocate for someone to drink alcohol. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1).

Gender Dysphoria

The problem and concern

Gender Dysphoria is a problem that is growing at unfortunate rates. The issue of homosexuality and LGBTQ used to be something churches could choose to ignore or preach about it rarely with everyone in hardy agreement. The culture of the world concerning these matters has declined rapidly and it is not a subject that churches can or should ignore. These are some statistics and quotations from a source more empathetic with the LGBTQ identity.

In the 1990s a study by Kinsey conducted a survey finding just 2.8% of men and 1.4% of women identified as gay or bisexual in this survey. A poll from the Gallup Organization found approximately 6% of Americans identified as LGBTQ in 2020. This figure is about twice as high compared to polling results from a decade ago.

“In Generation Z, 1 in 6 Adults Identify as LGBTQ

The overall statistics obscure a really important finding in the polling, however: there are massive generational differences in LGBTQ identification. Specifically, the Gallup data find that among Generation Z adults (persons born between 1997-2002), 15.9% identify as LGBTQ. By contrast, for Millennials (those born between 1981-1996), the number is 9.1%, and for the oldest Americans (those born before 1946), the number is just 1.3%. Those born between 1946 and 1980 registered between 2-4%.”⁴

⁴ <https://astroglide.com/blog/what-percentage-of-the-population-is-lgbtq>

The response of the church

There have been different responses to the growth of popularity of the LGBTQ movement among churches. The two extremes I see are: On one hand liberal churches are putting the rainbow flag on their church signs and working to reinterpret the Bible to be accepting of homosexuality within the church age. On the other hand, Christians have such a hatred and distain for the sin, that they carry that hatred to the people living in that sin or to those supporting it by wearing rainbow colors etc.

I am not an expert on this subject, but I do think every pastor and church needs to work through this issue and their attitude towards the people in the LGBTQ movement whom Jesus shed His blood for. There may seem to be little we can do for those engrossed in this lifestyle where it seems God has given them over (Romans 1:18-32). We should still love them and share the gospel with them if possible. But for the grace of God, we could be given over to a reprobate mind ourselves. The propitiation of Jesus satisfies God's wrath for every person in the world, and some of these individuals have found freedom in Jesus. Remember that not everyone in the LGBTQ world has made angry rebellious choices against God. We are all born dead in trespasses and sins and our culture today teaches young people that they are special and celebrated for being outside the biblical binary norms. There is so much genuine confusion today, and I believe we need special grace from God to love these people to Jesus.

Churches and Christians must defend and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:14-16). God created people male and female (Genesis 1:27). Going back to God's created order for gender, sexuality, and marriage is critical. Such teaching today is considered hate speech by many, and we will suffer for teaching these fundamental truths. However, we cannot conform to the world, and we cannot compromise on what the Bible teaches (Romans 12:2). Although we will receive hatred at times for our beliefs, we must not retaliate in slander, we must not return the hate. We need the love of God to flow through us to,

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ... For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” (Matthew 5:44, 46).

“And the servant of the Lord **must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;** if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” (2 Timothy 2:24-26 Emphasis added).

Christian leaders should be compassionate with what others are genuinely experiencing and gently instruct those who are hurting themselves and others.

This is not a simple course to navigate. Truth must be upheld; love needs to be demonstrated. I believe that if only one person would repent and believe in Christ, that would be worth letting the Savior live through us even through discomfort or ridicule. (1 John 4:7-11, 17-19; Galatians 2:20).