

A BRIEF DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The word of God is light for our path.¹ It is truth.² It is inspired by God for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.³ Therein—the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament—is revealed the mind of God for the benefit of mankind.⁴ Scripture leads us to the God of creation, the Christ of salvation,⁵ and the Holy Spirit of glorification.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.⁶ God sustains his creation through his providential care, his holy wisdom, and his divine power. God works to redeem his fallen creation through his son, Jesus of Nazareth, and through his people—Israel (of the former covenant) and the church (of the new covenant). Ultimately, God will bring a new order of existence into being, a new heaven and a new earth, when all things are consummated at the end of time.⁷

In the beginning the Word existed with God as God. This Word became flesh and dwelt among us.⁸ This mystery of godliness is indeed great, but the facts of the incarnation of Christ

¹ Psalm 119:105

² Psalm 119:160; John 17:17

³ 2 Timothy 3:16

⁴ 1 Peter 1:10-12

⁵ John 5:39-40; 20:21

⁶ Genesis 1:1

⁷ Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1

⁸ John 1:1, 14

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are to be preached and believed as true—“he appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”⁹ Or, in the words of an old statement of faith, “I believe in Christ Jesus, his only son, our Lord, born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, buried, risen again the third day, ascended into heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, from where he will come again to judge the living and the dead.” This is the good news of salvation preached by the apostles and the early disciples, namely, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁰ This is the heart of the gospel. It is of primary importance for Christian faith. On these important truths we take our stand, and by them we are saved.

In the beginning the Spirit of God brought forth order out of chaos and gave life to that which did not previously exist.¹¹ Afterwards, God’s Spirit sustains and renews the created order. In our fallen world, the Holy Spirit works redemptively to build a new creation of God (e.g. the church). Historically, God’s Spirit raised up a remnant in Israel to bring “a horn of salvation” (e.g. the Son of God) into the world.¹² God so acted in order to erect “living stones” for a “spiritual house” and a “holy temple” in which his Spirit might dwell.¹³ On a personal level, this redemptive work of God’s Spirit pervades the entire life of the believer. We begin our Christian

⁹ 1 Timothy 3:16

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

¹¹ Genesis 1:2ff.; Psalm 104:30; Job 33:4

¹² See Ezekiel 37:1-14; Luke 1:35, 69

¹³ Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5

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life at baptism with the Spirit.¹⁴ We continue our journey in faith, prayer and holiness with the help of the Spirit. We will end our pilgrimage with the Spirit who will give life to our mortal bodies at the resurrection.¹⁵ Again, from an ancient expression of faith, “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.” This work of the Spirit on earth will continue until Christ returns, the end comes, and God is “all in all”.¹⁶

Until the consummation of all things, God’s people carry forth the work of the Lord by discipling, baptizing, and teaching in his name.¹⁷ They function as “salt” and “light” in the world by striving to keep the Lord’s challenging ethical demands.¹⁸ As a community of believers, the Lord’s followers celebrate each first day of the week with prayers and praises, thanksgivings and offerings, a supper or communion to remember the Lord’s death, and the sharing of good news.¹⁹ Individually, believers are encouraged to assist those in need, to keep themselves pure, and to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.²⁰

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:13

¹⁵ Romans 8:9, 11

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

¹⁷ Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁸ Matthew, chapters 5–7

¹⁹ Acts 2:42; 20:7

²⁰ James 1:27; Philippians 2:12