



The River
Biblical Equipping Center

A Biblical Equipping Center for the Body of Christ in the Upstate.

Doctrinal Statement

The Christian Gospel is a unique message of “Good News” in a complex world of religious alternatives and lifestyle options. This uniqueness is anchored in the truth that God has revealed Himself in a specific, clear, and infallible way—in the Bible.

Therefore, sound doctrine begins with the Bible, and builds upon this sure foundation. What one thinks of the Bible and how it is to be understood is of fundamental concern.

The Bible

The Bible (or the Scriptures), composed of both the Old and New Testaments, is fully inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). God Himself breathed it out. This message was not mechanically dictated to men, but the Spirit of God carried the writers of the Scriptures along so that in God’s superintendent grace they wrote in human language what God desired to have communicated (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Because of its inspired nature the Bible—except for copyists’ mistakes or mistranslations in vernacular versions—is completely without error and is completely trustworthy in all areas in which it speaks (Psalm 119:89, 96, 160; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; 2 Timothy 2:15). It is a human document only in as much as it was written in human language and utilizes human conventions of speech (Luke 1:1-4) but it is a divine document in that it flawlessly communicates the very words of God to us (Matthew 1:22; 4:4; 19:4-5; Hebrews 1:1-2).

Thus, the Scriptures are the full revelation of God’s person and will to man and, as such, are the final authority for all Christian belief and practice (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12).

God

Concerning the things of which the Scriptures speak, of prime importance is what they tell us of God Himself. And, this self-revelation of God is clear.

There is but one true and living God (Isaiah 43:10; 44:6). He is the Creator of all that is created (Psalm 33:6; Isaiah 42:5; 45:24) and is Himself almighty (Jeremiah 32:17; Ephesians 1:11; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 3:20; Revelation 1:8), infinitely perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 1:7-10; Psalm 18:30; 50:2; 90:2; 145:3; Matthew 5:48), holy (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3; 57:15), eternally existent (Psalm 33:11; 102:25-27; 115:3) and without equal (2 Samuel 7:22; Isaiah 40:13-25; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Habakkuk 3:6; 1 Timothy 1:17). Although there is a limited revelation of the truth about God in His creation (Romans 1:18-23), it is only in the Scriptures that people have a full and accurate picture of the Only Wise God.

As revealed in the Bible, God is a personal being—having mind, will, emotions, and freedom. Yet, He is personal without any of the limitations which men see when they think in terms of human personality. As the almighty God, free to do as He pleases; He is the absolute sovereign over all (Ephesians 1:11).

The Scriptures also declare, as part of God's self-revelation, that He exists eternally as a tri-unity—within the being of the one true God there eternally co-exist three distinct divine persons (John 17:11; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2): the Father (Deuteronomy 32:6; Matthew 6:6; Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 8:6), the Son (Matthew 3:17; John 1:14; 3:16; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:5), and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Romans 8:9, 26; Galatians 4:6). This fundamental truth about the nature of God is implied throughout the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 1:26, 27; 16:7-13; Isaiah 9:6-7; 48:12-16) and is clearly seen in the relationships that exist between the Son and the Father (e.g., John 14:16) and the Spirit and the Son (e.g., Mark 1:10-12; Matthew 12:28). Thus, the one True God consists of three self-conscious, co-equal and co-eternal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, who alone of those who have walked this earth was perfect (Romans 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15), is both true God and true man; the Second Person of the Trinity incarnate in human flesh (John 1:1-3, 14; Philippians 2:1-6; Colossians 1:16-19; 2:9; 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2). He is Israel's promised Messiah (Genesis 3:14-20; 12:1-3; 49:8-12; 2 Samuel 7:11-16; Matthew 1:1, 17; Luke 4:16-22; 24:25-27).

As the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), Jesus died on a wooden cross on the hill called Calvary as a God-ordained atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind (Ephesians 2:4-9; Hebrews 9:11, 12; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:1-2). He arose bodily from the dead (Matthew 28:1-10; Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-22), ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-11; 2:32-36) and is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on High where He serves as High Priest and Advocate for all who put their trust in Him (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

As our substitute (Mark 10:45; Hebrews 2:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18) Jesus shed His blood on the cross (Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:14, 22; 10:19; 1 Peter 1:18-19) as the only and all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins (Isaiah 53:5-7, 12; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:23-28; Gal. 3:13; 1 John 3:5). His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation (Acts 4:12; Galatians 1:6-9).

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, whose ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus (John 15:26), convinces, convicts, and reproves men (John 16:8-11). He is the regenerator of the believing sinner providing newness of life (John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5), the sanctifier of the redeemed working practical holiness (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2), and He indwells (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19), guides (Romans 8:14), instructs (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-14), and empowers and gifts the believer for godly living and service (Acts 1:8; Romans 15:13; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:18). The Spirit brings each believer into living union with Jesus (Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 3:14-19) while testifying to us of our relationship with the Father (Galatians 4:6).

Man, Sin, and Salvation

Man was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6) but willfully disobeyed God falling into sin and as a result all people are radically corrupt (Psalm 14:2; Romans 5:12,19; 1 John 1:8, 10), alienated from God and utterly lost and without true life (Romans 3:23; 5:10; Ephesians 4:18). In vital need of restoration to fellowship with God, man is yet unable to restore himself (Romans 2:12; 3:9-19; Ephesians 2:1-3).

Restored fellowship with God and the eternal life that mankind needs is available solely by the grace of God through the vicarious death of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ's shed blood and resurrection provide the only basis for salvation (Acts 4:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19), and only those who, by a willing and personal exercise of faith, receive Jesus as their own Savior are born of God and receive this gift of life (John 1:12-13; 3:14-18, 36; Acts 16:30-31; Colossians 1:19-23).

The Church

The Church, or body of Christ, is composed of all persons who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God through having placed personal saving faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:13-22). This body, of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:18-23), is dedicated to the worship and service of God (1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 10:19-25) and the proclamation, in word and deed, of the Good News of reconciliation that is available by the grace of God (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). The Church is God's chosen agent for reaching the lost during this present age. This call, to share with those who are lost and who need to become followers of the Lord Jesus, is the God-given mission of the Church (Matthew 28:18-20). In carrying out this call, the Church practices two ordinances: baptism (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-34).

The members of the body of Christ are equipped for service by the Holy Spirit and each member is gifted for the building up of the Church (Romans 12:3-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). None of these gifts are, standing alone, indicators of spiritual maturity, the sole evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual believer, or a necessary concomitant to salvation. None of these gifts are to be singled out as either despised or exalted, but all these gifts are to be sought for and exercised for the edification of the body and the glorification of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:31; 13:12,26-40; Ephesians 4:11-16).

Last Things

Jesus Christ will return to this earth, personally (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10), at the end of this present age and will judge both the just (Matthew 16:27; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10) and the unjust (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 20:11-12).

Eternal punishment, including complete and enduring separation from God, is the ultimate destination of unregenerate men, Satan who is the leader of the fallen angels, and all of his demonic hosts (Matthew 25:41-46; John 5:28-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 20:10). Life eternal, full of joy, in the manifest presence of God to serve, worship and glorify Him, is the final destiny of all the redeemed (John 14:3; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 7:9-17).