

Doctrines forming the doctrinal basis

a). The divine inspiration and consequent authority of the whole canonical Scripture.

I believe that the Bible (66 books excluding the apocrypha. The apocrypha is not, nor will it ever be Scripture) is inerrant and the perfect inspired word of God. The original manuscripts were without error. It is the only such document ever given by God and is true in all that it claims and teaches. 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21. The canon is closed. Prov 30:5-6, Jude 3, Rev 22:18.

My ultimate authority rests in the character and truth of God as plainly revealed in the word of God. The Holy Spirit leads us in truth and apart from him regenerating someone's heart they can not understand or know God. 1 Cor 2:10-14.

b). The Trinity (please include also a discussion of the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit).

The Trinity is arrived at systematically as we study Scripture. Gen 1:26-27, Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14. There is only one God with no gods created before or after him. He exists in three eternal, simultaneous, co-equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Isaiah 44:6,8, Matthew 28:19.

An understanding of the ontological and economical Trinity are arrived at through the systematic study of scripture as well. The Bible teaches that while each ontologically equally God, the persons of the Trinity economically take on subordinate roles. The Father gave and sent the Son, John 3:16, 1 John 4:10, the Son always does the will of the Father, John 6:38, The Son and Father sent the Holy Spirit, John 14:26, John 15:26. The Holy Spirit always testifies of Christ and leads us in truth, John 15:26, 1 John 5:8, John 14:17.

Jesus Christ is fully man and fully God. He is presently both human and divine. Heb 6:20, Heb 7:25. Luke 24:39, John 20:27, 1 Tim 2:5, Rev 1:17-18. The deity of Christ is seen in: John 1:1, Col 2:9, John 1:14, Psalm 45:6, Heb 1:8. He forgives sins, is worshiped, and is the Alpha and Omega. Mark 2:5-12, Matt 2:2, Matt 14:33, Matt 28:9, John 9:35-38, Isa 44:6, Rev 22:13.

The entire Bible speaks of and points to Christ. Gen 3:15, Luke 24:27.

Personhood is perhaps a better term in relation to the nature of the Holy Spirit and it is crucial that we use precise terms in our study and explanation of theology. He is the third person of the Godhead and co-equal with the Father and the Son. Romans 8:11, John 6:63, John 14:26, Rom 8:16. The Holy Spirit has emotions, knows, can be lied to, can be tested, has a mind, speaks, loves, intercedes, teaches, is truth, gives life. Eph 4:30, Rom 15:30, Acts 5:3, Acts 5:9, Rom 8:27, 2 Sam 23:2, Acts 13:2, Rom 15:30, Rom 8:26, Luke 12:12, 1 John 5:6, John 6:63.

c). The fall of man, his consequent moral depravity and his need of regeneration.

Genesis is literal history, the fall was a literal event and Adam was a real person. Gen 2:7, Rom 5:12, Gen 3, Luke 3:23-38, Matt 19:4.

There is only one race and we are all literal descendants of Adam and Eve. It is important to reject any notion that the genealogies given in the Bible represent anything other than literal, historical people. Gen 2:7, Luke 3:23-38.

Furthermore, it is my belief that the Bible teaches that earth is fairly young, around 6,000 years. I completely reject any notion that God used macro/Darwinian evolution. The age of the earth and belief in the theory of evolution is not a salvation issue. However, it poses serious implications in regard to the origin of sin, federal headship, and the veracity of Scripture. It is my belief that this issue is a huge and often unaddressed stumbling block in and outside of the church for billions of people in the world today. It is my belief that evidential apologetics cannot save anyone. However, they can certainly challenge the humanistic worldview and embolden believers to share their faith.

The doctrine of federal headship indicates that the father is the one who represents the family and by one man sin entered the world leading to death so one man's righteousness leads to life. Rom 5:12-14, 1 Cor 15:22. As a result being fully man and fully God Jesus represented his people perfectly. 1 Cor 15:45, Rom 5:18, Col 3:3, Rom 6:8.

As a result the Bible clearly teaches that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All men refers to all people regardless of their knowledge of the gospel. People are condemned for their sin. There is no one that is good, there is no one that seeks after God. Rom 3:10-12, Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3. By our nature all people are guilty before a holy and just God and because he is good he has to punish sin. Heb 9:27, Ezek 18:20, Psalm 145:10, Matt 25:46, James 2:10.

I am certain man is totally depraved (except Jesus). We have hearts of stone and are incapable of seeking or finding God apart from his action and are slaves of and to sin. 1John 4:19, 1 John 4:10, 1 Cor 2:14, Eph 2:3, Rom 6:16-20, Rom 5:6.

Regeneration is essential for a person to be a true believer. Unbelievers need a new heart. John 3:3, John 3:5, John 3:8, John 1:12-13, John 6:28-29, Acts 13:48, Philippians 1:29, 1 Peter 1:3. Furthermore, since regeneration is wholly a work of God it is impossible for someone to lose their salvation. John 6:37. Regenerated believers still sin, however, we war against sin. 1 John 1:8, Rom 6:1.

d). The atonement through the substitutionary death of Christ.

I know God is holy just and perfect. Psalm 145:17, 1 Sam 2:2. We have all broken God's law. Romans 3:23. The entire sacrificial system points like a neon sign in a meadow to Christ. Gen 3:15, Gen 22. The institution of the Passover is a clear foreshadow of the coming messiah. Exodus 12. By God's grace I believe the atonement is the only way for us to be reconciled to God. 1 Tim 2:5-6, John 14:6, Acts 4:12. God's law requires the shedding of blood. Lev 17:11. The sacrifice must be unblemished. Lev 22:19. Jesus was/is that sacrifice John 1:29. I know that Jesus was my substitute. 1 Peter 2:24, Col 2:14, Isa 53, Eph 5:2. Jesus is fully man and fully God and is our high priest. Col 2:9, Heb 4:14.

The atonement is limited to the elect alone. 1 Sam 3:13-14, John 10:26, Gen 18:19, Psalm 106:23, 2 Thes 2:13, Matt 24:22, Matt 24:24, Rom 8:29-30, 1 Cor 2:7, Eph 1:5, Eph 1:11. The debt was cancelled at the cross prior to a person ever being born. Col 2:14, Eph 1:4, 1 Tim 5:21, Rom 8, Eph 1, Matt 22:14.

Not holding to limited atonement is not a salvation issue but it would be difficult to contend why one person believes in Christ and another does not wholly apart from the grace of God for the glory of God. Romans 8. I believe that the limited atonement position is best and results in a high view of God and his supernatural work in regeneration. Limited atonement can also be helpful to avoid man made pragmatism resulting in false assurance prevalent in much of the world today. Holding the position of limited atonement should result in humility and zeal, never pride. 2 Tim 2:25, Acts 16:14.

e). Justification by faith. (Include a discussion on all that is necessary for a person to be saved.)

I am certain that only Christians are saved. Only Christians are justified. Man is imputed with a legal right standing before God by faith in the finished work of Christ alone. Rom 5:1, Eph 2:8-9, Rom 3:28, Titus 3:5, Rom 5:9, Rom 3:22, Rom 3:24, Rom 3:26, Rom 3:28-30, Gen 15:6, Rom 4:3, Rom 4:5, Rom 4:11, Rom 4:16, Rom 9:30, Rom 9:33, Rom 10:4, Rom 11:6, Gal 2:16, Gal 2:21, Gal 3:5-6, Gal 3:8, Gal 3:14, Gal 3:22, Gal 3:24, Eph 1:13, Phil 3:9, 1 Tim 1:16.

Faith is a work and gift of God and happens at regeneration. Eph 2:8-9, John 6:28-29. True faith produces Godly sorrow and repentance. 2 Cor 7:10. Repentance and faith are different sides of the same coin. Rom 7:19, Acts 17:30, Acts 11:18.

f). The resurrection of the body, both in the case of the just and of the unjust.

I believe there will be a physical bodily resurrection of believers and unbelievers. John 11:24-25, Luke 14:14, John 6:40, John 6:44, Rev 20:4-6, John 5:29, .

g). The eternal life of the saved and the eternal punishment of the lost. (please include a discussion of heaven and hell).

I am certain that believers will live forever with God in Heaven. John 3:16, Romans 6:23, Matt 25:46, John 17:3. Matt 13:50, John 6:50-71, John 14:1-3, 2 Cor 5:8, .

The lost will also live forever in Hell, conscious and in unceasing anguish. Rev 21:8, Rev 20:15, Matt 25:46, Mark 9:43-48, 2 Thess 1:9, Rev 20:10, Rev 14:11, Luke 16:19-31, Rev 19:3.

Heaven is a real physical place of unspeakable beauty and the dwelling place of God. Rev 21:4, John 14:2, 1 Cor 2:9, Rev 22:1-5, Luke 23:43, Rev 21: 22-27, Heb 11:16.

Hell is a real physical place of unspeakable horror and torment apart from God for all eternity. Rev 21:8, Rev 20:15, Matt 25:46, Matt 13:5, 2 Thes 1:9.

a). The virgin birth of Christ.

Christ was born of a Virgin and is fully man and fully God for all eternity. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:25, Luke 1:34-35.

b). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit indwells all true believers. Eph 1:13, Gal 3:14, Eph 4:30 ,John 16:7.

c). Sanctification

Sanctification follows justification and is the process by which the regenerated believer participates with God in growing to be more like Christ. 1 Thess 4:7, Eph 2:10.

d). The separated life

We are called to love the unlovely and to proactively seek their welfare. Matt 5:16, Deut 6:5. We are also called out of the world and are not to be partakers in sin. Rom 6:2. As a result of our position and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us people in the world will often hate or insult us. John 15:19. The Christian is never justified before God by what he abstains from. However, there is a tension in every believer's life in regard to things they have freedom to pursue and the application of living a separated life and this will look different for each person. Having said that as a pattern of life the believer should seek to glorify God in everything they do and be continually being transformed into the image of Christ. Personally, I do not believe much of what is on TV is wise to let into your home, nor do I think the public school system is the best place to train up a child in the way they should go. The prior examples of TV and school are a few of my and Becky's standards and I would certainly not hold other believers to them.

e). Spiritual gifts

I believe much of what we see in regard to the use of Spiritual gifts in our culture is Charismania. The application of these gifts is often not Biblical. I lean toward the cessation position. However, I am very hesitant to say that the gifts have ceased. I would feel very uncomfortable making such a claim and find it hard to reconcile the immutability of God and the way in which his indwelling Spirit does or does not currently operate.

f). The security of the believer

A believer can not lose his or her salvation. John 6:37-40, John 10:27-28. Furthermore, it was an actual atonement not a potential one. Eph 1:4-5 , 2 Thess 2:13

g). The return of the Lord and the Millennium

I hold my eschatology loosely and am currently pre tribulation rapture and pre millennial. I believe Christ's rule to be a literal 1,000 years and a literal Kingdom. The next event (I say this loosely) is the pre-tribulation rapture.

h). The judgement of heathen (please include a discussion of whether or not those who have never heard the gospel are lost).

All people have sinned and there is no one that does good or seeks after God. The wage of sin is death which is a physical death and includes eternal punishment in Hell. Rom 3:23, Rom 6:23, Rom 3:10-12, Rev 21:8, Mat 25:46.

Not hearing the gospel does not change the nature of God or his standards. James 2:10. People are condemned for sin not for ignorance of the gospel (Romans 1:18-32). Any person that dies apart from saving faith in Christ will spend eternity in Hell.

God is good, fair and just and because of this the punishment for those that have not heard (though horrible and still Hell) will be less severe than those who have openly rejected the gospel. Mat 10:14-15, Mat 11:22, Rev 20:12.

The question is often phrased: "What about the innocent man living in the jungle, would God send him to Hell?"

This sounds compelling however, there is no innocent man living in the jungle or anywhere else in the world which is why it is crucial to get the gospel out.

i). The personality of the devil (include a discussion as to whether or not the devil is a real person)

The devil is real and is a fallen angel. He is not sovereign and can not be in multiple places at once. He attacks our areas of weakness. He is a liar and the father of lies, when he lies it is consistent with his nature. John 8:44. He is an enemy of God and of Christians and has been defeated but is still active. Col 1:13, 1 John 3:8, Heb 2:14-15, Rev 3:21, John 12:31.

j). The historicity and integrity of the Scriptures (include a discussion of whether or not you believe the books were written by those who professed to write them, and of how the Scriptures today compare with the original writings)

The Bible is God breathed, inspired and infallible without error in the original autographs. The Bible consists of 66 books and the canon is closed. There are 39 old testament and 27 new testament books. They have been preserved by God for his Church to hear and understand. John 10:27.

It is an important distinction to recognize that the books of the Bible were not chosen they were recognized by believers as directed by the Spirit of God. Many false religions try to usurp the work of the Holy Spirit by claiming they "gave us" the Bible or new books etc. This is completely false. Christians today still recognize the voice of God as revealed in the Bible.

The Bible is the word of God. Ultimately our confidence in the Bible is supernatural and rests in the character of God and the person of Christ. Rom 3:4. Furthermore, God and the Bible are the only logical basis for a functioning worldview. Col 2:3. Copyist errors are nominal (less than 1.5%) and no essential doctrine are in question. Textual criticism is also helpful to determine accurate wording and meaning, but again do not impact any major doctrine.

I am certain of two things: I love Jesus and the Bible is the infallible word of God given once for all to the saints.

"I affirm that the above doctrinal statement represents my personal belief and I have indicated any points on which I have reservations."

John Risner
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