

Theological Statement

A Paper

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Theological Statement

Doctrine of Scripture

The Scriptures, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, are totally and completely inspired by God (verbal and plenary). Verbal inspiration means that every word in the original autographs was inspired by God and plenary means that this inspiration extends to all of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). Dual inspiration is not to be assumed by this definition of plenary.¹ The Holy Spirit moved on the human authors and guided the process of writing the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:19-21).

The Scriptures are totally and completely given by God (inspired – God breathed) and it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2). The Bible is totally and completely without error (2 Sam 22:31; John 17:17; Heb 6:18).

God has providentially preserved His Word. God has promised to preserve His word (Ps 105:8; Ps 119:89; Matt 5:18; 24:35; John 10:34-35; 1 Pet 1:23-25). God has done this preservation activity both by providential means and using humans as the preserving agent (2 Kgs 22:8-13, Jer 36). The results of His preservation of the Word can be seen throughout history. The Word of God is preserved today in the Received Text family and the Masoretic Text.

The Word of God is sufficient. It is all a person needs in order to know both the way of salvation and the way of obedience (2 Tim 3:15-17). It is completely authoritative and sufficient in every area of life (Ps 19:7-9; John 10:10; Isa 55:9; Gal 1:8; Col 2:1-10; Jude 1:3).

¹ Dual inspiration means that the translators of the Bible are inspired in the same way as the original authors.

The Bible is to be translated using a formal equivalency translation philosophy, recognizing that every word is important. Every word should be represented in the translated text in same part of speech as the original.

Doctrine of God

God is a unique, incomprehensible being that has made Himself known through His Word. (Isa 40:28; 55:8-9; John 1:14, 18). He has existed forever. That is to say that He was not created nor born (Col 1:17; Ps 90:2). He does not need anything (Acts 17:25). He is jealous (Ex 34:14; Nah 1:2). By stating God is jealous we mean that God wants us to wholly devote ourselves to Him and Him alone. He does not want to compete for our attention.

There is one God (Deut 6:4; Isa 37:20; Mal 2:10; Mark 12:32; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 8:6; 1 Tim 2:5). This one God exists in three distinct persons: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost (Matt 3:16-17; 28:19). These Persons are equal in every attribute and have distinct roles, working together in unity (John 14:26; 17:11; Eph 1:3-14; Rom 8:11). Although the Godhead exists in three distinct persons, God is one and cannot be divided.

Being God, there are certain attributes (characteristics) which are God and God's alone. God alone is eternal. He is transcendent, outside of time and space (Gen 1:1; Deut 33:27; Job 26:7; Ps 90:2; John 5:26). God is the good (Rom 11:22). God is Holy. This means that He is righteous and separate from sin and incorruptible. There is absolutely no sin or evil thought in God at all (Is 6:3; 1 Pet 1:16). God is immutable. His personality and characteristics do not change (Mal 3:6; Ja 1:17). God defines and exemplifies love. This is best described using a formula "God equals love" (1 John 4:16). There is no limit to His power (Matt 19:26). He is omnipresent (Heb 13:5; Matt 28:20). He is omniscient, that is saying He is all – wise (Ps 139:7;

147:5). There is no one wiser than He (Rom 8:38-39; 1 John 3:20). God is Sovereign. There is no one with more authority than God. He is above all and will accomplish His will. (Ps 115:3; Is 46:10; 1 Tiim 6:1; Rev 19:16). God cannot lie (Tit 1:2). He is just (Deut 32:4). He treats everyone exactly the same (2 Chron 19:7; Rom 2:11). He is merciful and gracious (Luke 6:36; John 1:14; Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; 2:4).

Preexistence

Being God, Jesus Christ has existed for all eternity (John 1:1-14; 8:58, 10:30; Micah 5:2). He was active in creation (Col 1:16). He appeared in human form in the Old Testament (Gen 16:7, 18:1-3; Exod 2:1; Judg 13:2-25).

Virgin Birth and Incarnation

Jesus Christ, Himself God, took on human flesh (John 10:30; Gal 4:4; Luke 2:1-7). Incarnation simply put means taking on flesh (Phil 2:5-11). He came as a baby (Matt 1:18; Luke 1:26-27, 34). Although He had a human mother, Mary, He had no human father (Matt 1:18, 20-23; Luke 1:26-27, 34). Jesus Christ was born of a virgin (Matt 1:18; Luke 1:26-27, 34). This was prophesied in the Old Testament (Isa 7:14) and fulfilled in the New Testament (Matt 1:18; Luke 1:26-27,34). The incarnation is essential to: His sinless sacrifice (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15), His high priestly work (Heb 2:12, 14-18; 7:23-28), and His Kingship (Ps 89:2-4; Amos 9:11, Isa 9:6-7).

Atonement

At its base definition, atonement is simply the reconciliation of mankind to God. This is only possible because of Christ's work on the cross (Heb 9, 10:4, 19-20). Christ's work on the cross is

substitutionary and propitiary (Propitiation) in nature (Rom 5:6-9; 1 Pet 2:24; 1 John 4:10). The atonement is available (extent of) for all mankind (1 John 2:2).

Resurrection

Three days after Christ's death on the cross, He rose again (Matt 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:1-7). This was a literal, physical, bodily resurrection (John 20:27-28) and was witnessed by over 500 people (Acts 2:32; 1 Cor 15:3-8).

Person of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is one person of our triune God (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor 3:17-18). He possesses divine attributes (Heb 9:14; Ps 139:7-10; Luke 1:35; 1 Cor 2:10-11; Rom 15:30; Eph 4:30).

Ministry and Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has a variety of ministries today. He convicts the dead in Christ (Eph 2:1; John 16:8-11). Outside of convicting the lost, the primary ministries of the Holy Spirit deal with the believer. He regenerates (John 3:3-6; Eph 2:1), indwells (1 Cor 6:15-19), seals (Eph 1:13-14, 4:30), assures (Rom 8:14-16), strengthens (Eph 3:16), comforts (John 14:26), assists in prayer (Rom 8:26; Jude 20), counsels (John 14:26), leads the believer as we submit to Him (Eph 5:18; Rom 8:14), illuminates Scripture (1 Cor 2:12-14) and He equips believers for service (Heb 13:21). He performs the work of God (Gen 1:1-2; Job 33:4; John 3:5-8; 1 Cor 6:11; Rom 8:11, 23).

Holy Spirit and Miraculous Gifts (Statement on the Charismatic Movement)

As the Word of God was being written, the Holy Spirit gave spiritual gifts (a supernatural, Holy Spirit – energized ability that was sovereignly given by God for service within the local church

during the transition from the old dispensation to the new dispensation²) to authenticate the Word of God. (1 Cor 12:1-11; 13:8-13; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3-4). As a result, all spiritual gifts have ceased (1 Cor 13:8-13). This is not to deny God – given talents that are useful in the ministry today. Those talents just are not equivalent to the spiritual gifts that were given during the Apostolic Age.

Angels and Demons

Angels are created beings, created by Christ (Ps 148:5; John 1:1-3; Col 1:16). Although the time of their creation is not explicitly stated, they were created before the creation of the earth (Job 38:6-7). At the time of their creation, they were holy (Gen 1:31; Mark 8:38). Angels are distinct from human beings (1 Cor 6:3; Heb 1:14). As created beings, they are limited in power, knowledge, and activity. They will be subject to judgment (1 Cor 6:3; Matt 25:41). Even though they are spiritual beings, they possess the state of being persons. As spirit beings, they are immaterial and incorporeal (Mat 8:16; Eph 6:12). They are immortal and do not propagate, as such they do not die (Matt 22:30; Luke 20:36). Angels are organized (Eph 3:10). Angels exist to serve God (Heb 1:14).

Satan is an angel that rebelled against God (Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:11-19). As with all angels, he was originally created perfect and without sin (Ezek 28:15). Satan's sin affected other angels. Just as the sand on the sea shore is innumerable, yet there is a fixed amount of sand, angels, including demons, are innumerable (Heb 12:22; Rev 12:4). One third of the angels followed Satan in his rebellion (Rev 12:4). Satan and his angels, also called demons, will be bound during the millennial kingdom (Rev 20:3) and ultimately be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Matt 25:41).

² Pettegrew, Larry Dean. The new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.

Satan is called the “Prince of this World” and “The god of this world” (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4).

Satan is the ruler of the world (John 12:31; 16:11). As Christians, we actively fight against Satan and his demons (Eph 6:10-18). The angels that rebelled with Satan are called demons (Matt 8:16; 12:24; 17:18; Eph 3:10; 6:12).

Creation

God created the entire physical and spiritual world (Gen 1:1). He did not use any preexisting materials. He created the world out of nothing (Gen 1). The one exception is the creation of man, in which He used previously created material (Gen 1 – 2). In the creation of man, God used the dust of the ground and formed man (Gen 2:7). Creation was completed in six literal 24-hour days (Gen 1; Ex 20:11; 31:17). At the time of creation, creation was “good” (Gen 1). In contrast to other created beings and things, mankind was created unique. It is only mankind that was created in God’s image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27). As for procreation, the soul is transmitted, not created, through the process of natural reproduction. This is not meant to imply that every soul was created at the time of creation (Gen 2:1-3). Creation only replicates “after their own kind” (Gen 1). All things were created for the glory of God (Rev 4:11).

Fall of Man

Adam and the Women were created perfect, without sin (Gen 1:26-31; 2:21-25). However, Adam and the Women did have the capacity or ability to sin (Gen 3). God allowed Satan to test both Adam and the Women because He wanted mankind to voluntarily choose to obey and serve Him. Adam and the Women failed the test (Gen 3). After the fall, the woman was renamed Eve (3:20) As a result, all creation has been affected by the consequences of their sin (Gen 3).

Because of Adam’s sin, sin has passed upon all mankind (Rom 3:23; 5:12). As a result, every

person is born sinful and is condemned already (Rom 3:23). This sinful nature is transmitted by the father to the offspring (Rom 5:12).

Salvation

Salvation includes the total work of God in bringing people from a sinful existence to fellowship with God (1 John 1:3-7) and is used in three tenses (past – actual time of salvation {Eph 2:8-9}, present – also called sanctification {Heb 7:25}, and future – salvation from the presence of sin {Rom 5:9-10}).

Election is best understood as corporate election. All believers are elected to receive the blessings and purposes of salvation (Eph 1:3-4). It is not individual nor is it to be understood as elected to receive salvation.³

Upon the fall of Adam, the entire human race became spiritually dead (2 Cor 5:14).

Regeneration is the act of restoring life and is only possible through the substitutionary death of Christ (John 3:7; 14:6; Rev 1:5). Upon salvation, one is justified by God (Rom 3:24; 5:1). The sinner is declared righteous, justified, not based upon the sinner's work, but rather faith in the completed work of Christ on the cross (Rom 5:9, Rev 1:5). This faith is given at the time of salvation and comes from God through His Word (Rom 10:17). Repentance is a necessary part of salvation and involves a change of purpose. It is an act of God upon the new believer at the time of salvation (1 Thess 1:9; Acts 3:19, 11:18).

³ Parkinson, John F. *The Faith of God's Elect, A Comparison Between the Election of Scripture and the Election of Theology*. Gospel Tract Publications, 1999.

Sanctification is not to be confused with salvation or regeneration. Where regeneration/salvation is a one-time event, sanctification is an on-going process (Rom 8:29; Rom 13:11⁴; 1 Thess 4:4).

All believers will persevere to glorification. That is to say that it is impossible for someone that is saved to lose their salvation (John 10:28-30; Eph 4:30; 1 Pet 1:5).

The Church

The church is a local, visible assembly (Acts 2:1; 37-42). It is not universal, nor does it include the entirety of the family of God. The family of God includes all saved people, whether in heaven or on earth. Upon salvation, a person becomes a part of the family of God (John 1:12).

The family of God is not to be confused with the church. It is possible to be a part of the family of God and not be a part of the church of God (Acts 2:41).

Throughout the New Testament, the church is identified as the body of Christ (Col 1:18; Rom 12:4-5; Eph 1:22-23). This metaphor is best defined from a strictly local church position. The word used for body is soma. Soma refers to someone or something that is able to cast a shadow. Therefore, the body of Christ cannot be speaking of a universal church. Rather, it is showing how the church is to function (Eph 4:1-16).

To be a part of the church one must be saved and properly baptized (Acts 2:37-42). There is one baptism (Eph 4:5). This baptism is water baptism by immersion (Acts 8:38). Baptism is done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Matt 28:19) and under the authority of the local church (Acts 2:37-42). Baptism is not required for salvation (1 Pet 3:21) and is a visible

⁴ Although the word "salvation" in Rom 13:11 is specifically referring to glorification, it does show that salvation is a one – time event.

picture of our identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 6:4). It is a requirement for church membership (Acts 2:41).

The Lord's Supper is given to the local church as a reminder of the death of our Lord (1 Cor 11:24). The Lord's Supper is best understood as a time of renewal. We are renewed in three areas: our spirit, our fellowship with other believers, and our work. It is limited to members of the local church in which it is practiced (1 Cor 11:20-34). This is often referred to as closed communion.

The church and Israel are two distinct groups and are not to be confused with each other (1 Cor 10:32).

Recognizing the headship of Christ over the church (Eph 1:22; Col 1:18), the church is governed by the congregation. This is not to imply that the congregation or deacons have any oversight role regarding the pastor, but rather the pastor has oversight of the congregation (1 Pet 5:2).

Each church is autonomous with Christ as its head and is to govern its own affairs (Acts 6:1-4).

There are two offices given to provide leadership within the church: deacon and pastor (1 Tim 3:1-13). The role of the deacon is to serve the congregation, taking responsibility, allowing the pastor to spend time in the Word (Acts 6:1-4). The role of the pastor is multifaceted and includes but is not limited to protection, feeding, serving as an example, and oversight (1 Tim 4:12; Titus 1:13; 1 Pet 5:1-4). It must be recognized that the pastor's authority comes not from the congregation, but rather from God (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1; 5:17; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:3).

The church is to be supported by the tithes and offerings of His people. The tithe was instituted before the law (Gen 14:20; 28:22), existed during the law (Lev 27:30-33), and exists after the

law (Matt 23:23; Matt 5:17; 1 Cor 16:1-2). Our giving is to be done with a cheerful heart, not out of necessity (2 Cor 9:7) and is not limited to the tithe (1 Cor 16:1-2).

The mission of the church is two – fold: the maturing of believers (Eph 4:12 – 14) and the evangelization of the world (Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16:15).

Last Things

The next event on God’s prophetic calendar can happen at any time, that is to say that it is imminent (1 Thess 5:2). This event is commonly referred to as the rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18).

The rapture is best defined as Christ returning in the air for all church – age believers.

Specifically, the rapture will occur before the tribulation period (1 Thess 5:9; Rev 3:10). As the rapture will occur before the tribulation period, it is also must be premillennial and by default must occur before the seven year tribulation period (pretrib).

There are three future judgments. The first and second judgments occur immediately following the rapture. The first judgment is called the “day of the Lord.” It is also often referred to as the tribulation period. This period of judgment will last for seven years (Dan 9:27; Rev 11:2-3).

The second judgment takes place in heaven. It is during this time that the believer will be judged by the Lord, not in relation to his eternal destiny, but rather his works done on earth as a believer (1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor 5:10).

The final judgment will occur at the end of the millennial kingdom and is called the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15). This is a judgment upon unbelievers and leads to the eternal state of all unbelievers.

After the tribulation period is over, the Lord will physically return to earth to set up the millennial kingdom, for a period of one thousand years (Matt 25:31 – 46; Rev 20:6). It is during this time that the kingdom promises of God to the nation of Israel will be fulfilled in a literal manner.

Upon death, the soul and spirit is separated from the body. For the believer, the soul and spirit immediately enter heaven (2 Cor 5:8). For the unbeliever, the soul and spirit immediately enter hell (Luke 16:22-23). At the final judgment, hell will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14).

Both believers and unbelievers will be physically resurrected (1Thess 4:13 – 18; Rev 20:12-13). When resurrected, both believers and unbelievers, the body, in its eternal form, will re-unite with the soul and spirit (John 5:28-29). As such, both the believer and unbeliever enter the eternal state with a physical presence. The believer will enjoy eternal life in the new heaven and earth (Rev 21:1-2). The unbeliever will be cast into the Lake of Fire, suffering eternal, conscious punishment (Rev 20:11-15).

Ministry Statement

One of the many dangers of studying theology is that it becomes a mere intellectual exercise. However, theology is immensely practical in nature. As one ministers, one cannot help but recognize the practical out workings of one's theological beliefs. I have been privileged to carry the gospel to lands where it has seldom been preached and to places where the gospel story is well – known. In both situations, the way in which one ministers is a direct reflection of one's theological persuasion.

Within the context of where God has allowed me to minister, I often deal with issues of translation and the church. I would like to use these two areas to show the practical nature of our theological persuasions.

The area in which we are currently ministering has over 80 different nationalities represented. Our area is not unique. Any one of the world's large cities have a representation of many different nationalities. As a result, issues regarding translations often arise. How does one determine if a translation is well – done? How does this relate to preservation and inerrancy? What about those situations in which the connotation of the word is different in different languages? These are all theological issues that one must contend with as one seeks to minister in our international, connected world.

While we were in Mongolia, there was a great debate as to what Mongolian word would be equivalent to the word “God” in Scriptures. Do we use a word that can also refer to false gods such as Buddha or do we make up a new word? How do we take a people group that has no Biblical background and teach them the Bible? What about the “social gospel” movement? Do

we seek to primarily meet spiritual or physical needs? How questions like these are answered shows our theological persuasion. Our theological persuasion is immensely practical.

One of the responsibilities of a church is to reproduce themselves. That is to say one of the things a church is to do is to start new churches. It is impossible to start a church without considering the practical out – workings of your belief in the church. How does one and to whom does one administer baptism? When and who participates in the Lord's Supper? How is a church to be governed? These are all theological issues that must be practically lived out in the starting of a new work. Theology is immensely practical.

Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as the “Substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Although one cannot see faith, we can see the evidence of faith in changed lives (2 Cor 5:17). In a similar manner, we cannot see our theological persuasion, but we can see the practical out – workings of those theological beliefs. Our theological beliefs are reflected in every area of ministry. Theology is immensely practical.