

WYOMING BAPTIST CHURCH

Doctrinal Statement

Since we seek to minister in a culture that moves increasingly towards ambiguity of beliefs and a demand for tolerance of all beliefs, it is appropriate and wise that we identify a clearly defined doctrinal framework that we will align ourselves with. These doctrinal statements provide us with a clarity of understanding about what we believe regarding foundational principles of the Christian faith.

GOD

God is wholly one (Deut 6:4-6), yet existing in three persons (2 Cor 13:14, Mat 28:19). He is God the Father (Mat 11:25), God the Son (John 1:1, Heb 1:8) and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3, 4). Through this triune being, all creation came together and holds together (Gen 1:1, John 1:1-3, Col, 1:16).

God is all powerful (Ps 89:8), all present (Ps 139:7-10), all knowing (Rom 11:33), holy (1 Pet 1:15-16), the perfection of love (1 John 4:8), faithful (Lam 3:22-23), full in grace and mercy (Eph 2:8-9, Heb 4:16), unchanging (Mal 3:6, James 1:17), eternal (Gen 21:22), sovereign (Ps 135:6, Acts 4:24), and just (Ps 36:6).

God is worthy of ones full devotion, trust and praise. It is the right conclusion of man to worship him alone (Ex 20:1-6, Ecc 12:13).

JESUS

Jesus is the second person of the trinity (John 1:1). He entered humanity through miraculous birth, born of a virgin, conceived by the Spirit of God (Luke 1:35). He was fully human and simultaneously fully God (Phil 2:5-8), and lived a sinless life so as to be sufficient as a perfect sacrifice (Heb 4:15).

He came to be the Saviour of all mankind (Luke 19:10, Mk 10:45), and is the only one through whom people can find reconciliation with God (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Tim 2:5-6).

The result is that through faith in the life, sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ, every person can experience the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life in right relationship with God (John 3:16, 1 Cor 15:3-4, Eph 2:8-9).

Today he remains the head over the church (Col 1:18, Eph 1:22-23), and intercedes on our behalf before God the Father (Heb 7:24-25, 1 John 2:1).

HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity. He is the fulfillment of the promise that God would always be present with his followers (Mat 28:20). For the follower of Christ, the promise is that the Spirit of God would dwell permanently with and in you (John 14:15-17). Our body as a believer is the temple (presence, dwelling) of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20).

The Spirit of God acts to secure our salvation with God and preserve us for whatever God has for us in the future (Rom 8:9-11, Eph 1:13-14). He also therefore provides each person with the gifts God desires each one to have (1 Cor 12:7-11), and produces the results of faith in each one (John 14:26, 15:26, Gal 5:16, 22-23). He works not only in each individual, but across the body of the church (1 Cor 12:13), empowering all for works of ministry (Acts 1:8) and the revelation of God's own word (1 Cor 2:10-14).

He is active in convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16:8-11).

REVELATION AND THE WORD OF GOD

God has revealed himself to mankind in a number of ways through history. Today, we understand his revelation to be present primarily in three ways. First, creation and the world around us is considered general revelation so that all humans can be aware of his existence (Rom 1:20).

Secondly, he reveals himself through his word, our Bible. It is the written expression of his revelation of himself to man, inspired in its writing by his own breath, inerrant in its original expression, and of immeasurable value for us for instruction, correction and training in faith (2 Tim 3:16). We choose therefore, to submit to its authority in all matters.

Thirdly, scripture itself points to the revelation of God found in Christ (Luke 24:44-46). Jesus Christ represents the fulfillment of all Old testament prophecies about the messiah and God's intent to redeem all creation to himself. Christ then is the perfect and fullest revelation of God for us (John 1:12-14, 14:7-9, Heb 1:1-3).

MAN, SIN, and SALVATION

Mankind was created in the image of God, intended in some way to bear his image and represent him in creation. He was granted authority and responsibility over creation by God (Gen 1:26-27). It was God's design to settle mankind into a state of blessing and right relationship with himself (Gen 1:28-31). As part of that, God designed marriage to be the union of one man and one woman as the perfect lifetime covenant relationship between two people (Gen 2:22-24).

The very first of humankind, however, disobeyed God and gave in to a sinful and selfish nature (Gen 3:1-8), opening the door for sin to enter the world along with all of its consequences (Gen 3:13-19, Rom 5:12). All people, across all history fall short of the glory of God, short of the perfection needed to be right with him, and as a result every person is ultimately condemned before God if not for the salvation available in Christ (Rom 3:20, 28, Heb 9:27).

The curse of sin haunts all mankind, and man has no sufficient way to overcome it. Although we are separated from God by sin, the salvation needed to reconcile us all with God is available in Christ. Anyone who accepts by faith that salvation and reconciliation with God was accomplished by the death on the cross and resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ will in fact be saved, made new, and fully redeemed before God (Eph 2:8-9, Phil 2:15-16, Col 1:21-22, John 3:16).

Our salvation comes through the grace of God, which is not only extended as an expression of compassion, but the very thing we need in order to embrace faith (Eph 2:8-9). As we receive that faith and believe in Him, we are immediately identified as His children (John 1:12). It is the grace of God that empowers us to receive faith, and the response of God to our choice of faith that assures us as His own.

Our hope of eternal life is grounded in the promise that God has provided it for us in Christ (1 John 5:11-13). Phrased quite simply, we have life when we have Christ, and no hope of fullness or eternal life apart from Christ.

We gain assurance of our salvation through:

The promises of the word (John 1:12, 3:16, 5:24, 10:27-30, Romans 6:23, 8:36-39, 10:13), the evidence of the Spirit in our lives (Romans 8:16, Ephesians 1:13-14, Revelation 3:20) and the evidence of growth and change in our lives (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:22-23).

SANCTIFICATION

Everyone who accepts Christ by faith has a right standing before God (Heb 10:10). Nevertheless, every believer is called to live a life set apart, holy and intentionally submitting to God (1 Pet 1:15-16).

The Holy Spirit works to continually shape a believer into a more refined image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18), and it is the responsibility of the believer to seek and submit to this (1 Tim 1:5, 4:7). This pattern of maturity, growth and refining is referred to as sanctification, and it is a process we can be confident God will follow through with it for each person (Phil 1:6). In the church, it is accomplished through teaching of scripture, fellowship, worship, witnessing and service (John 17:17, Acts 2:41, Rom 12:9-17, Gal 5:16, 22-23).

THE CHURCH

The church was begun at Pentecost (Acts 2:1) and has both a spiritual and institutional aspect.

The invisible church is the spiritual body of all believers of all ages (Hebrews 12:23; Ephesians 4:4). The universal church is the spiritual body made up of all believers who are on the earth at any given time (1 Corinthians 1:12; 11:16). The local church is the gathering of true believers in a certain place of worship. The purpose of the local church is to glorify and worship the Lord, grow in Him, fellowship with one another, and grow by reaching people for Christ and by folding them into the life and fellowship of the church. This local church membership is made of true believers who have publicly expressed their faith in Christ through baptism by immersion (Acts 2:41,42).

The Baptist distinctives for the local church are as follows:

B – Born again church membership (Acts 2:41)

A – Authority of the Word of God in all matters of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16)

P – Priesthood of all believers. All believers are students of scripture and ministers of the gospel. (1 Pet 2:5,9)

T – Two ordinances: Baptism by immersion (Romans 6:3,4; Acts 8:38; 1 Peter 3:21)
 The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:18-34).

I – Independence (or autonomy) of the local church (1 Corinthians 1:2,9, Ephesians 1:22)

S – Separation of church and state (Acts 4:19,20)

T – Total world mission (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

CHRIST'S RETURN

The victory over sin, death and Satan is already won (1 Cor 15, Col 2:15). Therefore we have an eternal hope because of Christ (1 Pet 1:3-5, 1 Thess 4:13-18). Christ will return and gather all believers to himself (Mat 24:42, 1 Thess 4:15-17) at a time appointed by God and unknown to mankind (Mat 24:36). As this age of history ends, Satan and his demons will be fully defeated and sentenced to an eternal punishment. There will be a day of final and all encompassing judgement (Rev 20).

God will establish a new heaven and a new earth where the righteous (redeemed) will live forever in the presence and relationship with God that was the intent of original creation. In that state, there will be no evil, sorrow, sickness or death (Rev 21:1-22:5). This is the eternal hope of faith in Christ.