

Doctrine and Philosophy

As a personal addendum to the Baptist Faith and Message I would like to add the following statements as necessary to address critical issues confronting the church and culture of today.

(1) The Holy Scriptures

I believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as originally given to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures as we have them are inerrant, infallible as translated from the original, and therefore are our final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures should be interpreted using among others the grammatical-historical method for a Biblically accurate understanding.

(2) Dispensational

I believe that the Scriptures properly interpreted reveal divinely determined dispensations or periods of time which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardship's by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations-the law, the church, and the kingdom-are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (Gen. 1 :28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col.1 :24-25,27; Rev. 20:2-6).

(3) The Godhead

I believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit-each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory , and having the same attributes and perfections (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10,26).

(4) The Person and Work of Christ.

(a) I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, is the one and only eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1 :35; John 1 :1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8).

(b) I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through his death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Peter 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

(c) I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2).

5) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

(a) I believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration and baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption

(John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14). {Indwelling takes place the moment of Salvation, see item b for filling of the spirit}

(b) I believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 1 :17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20,27). {filling of the Spirit is temporal and conditional based upon the life of a believer}

(c) I believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, teachers and others as identified in scripture to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11,28; Eph. 4:7-12).

(d) I believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit to man, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing were temporary. I believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing, it is not the touch of man in any form.(1 Cor. 1 :22; 13:8; 14:21- 22).

(6) The Total Depravity of Man

I believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam and Eve's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and, of himself, unconditionally unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen. 1 :26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19).

(7) Salvation

I believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

(8) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

(a) I believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1,38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4- 5). [See separation (10)]

(b) I believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as a license to sin (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

(9) The Church

(a) I believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again men, women, boys and girls. (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27).

(b) I believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17,28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1 :5-11).

(c) I believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control.

(d) Autonomy does not constitute the freedom to apply individual or congregational doctrine over that of scripture.

(e) Acts recognize water baptism and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

(10) Spiritual separation of the believer

I believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful lifestyles, practices and associations is commanded of God (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

(11) The Second coming of Christ

I believe in that "blessed hope," the personal, imminent return of Christ Who will rapture His Church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

(12) The Eternal State

(a) I believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28,29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13).

(b) I believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first rapture, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6).

(c) I believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be consumed, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

(13) The Personality of Satan

I believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

(14) Creation

I believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. I reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, Theistic Evolution and similar positions as unscriptural theories of origin (Genesis 1-2; Ex. 20:11).

(15) Civil Government

I believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions:

a) the home; b) the church; and c) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned areas of responsibility under God (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14). I further believe our founding fathers established this nation upon these principles and they are specifically spelled out within the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

(16) Human Sexuality

I believe that God has commanded us to abstain from all intimate sexual activity outside of marriage. The word of God clearly teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman. I believe that all forms of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are wrong and sinful perversions of God's gift of sex to a man and a woman. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5,13; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29. 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb.13:4).

(17) Divorce and Remarriage

I believe and understand the Bible to teach that God intended for a marriage to last for a lifetime and to be only between a man and a woman. It was and still is God's plan for one man and one woman to be together for one lifetime. The Bible also teaches that people behave in ways which are not God's perfect will, unequal yoking, deception, adultery, immorality, abandonment and abuse for example, lead to divorce. Therefore, the Bible teaches that when a couple is having trouble in their marriage, everything that can be done, should be done by each partner to keep the marriage together including prayer and godly counseling. If all fails and divorce has occurred, both individuals can move on and live a restored Christian life; after all spiritual matters have been handled appropriately. God loves those that have gone through a divorce. Divorce has been wrongly labeled as sin in and of itself, we too often forget that God Himself divorced Israel because of their spiritual adultery; if divorce is sin, how can God commit sin? We should understand that divorce is caused by sin, sin that is unrepentant and allowed to grow until it consumes one or both partners in a marriage. Furthermore the Bible does not teach that biblical divorce and remarriage disqualifies a man from serving the Lord in any capacity including a deacon or pastor. If a man has established himself Biblically and the people want him for a pastor or any other office, I find no reason for him not to hold that position. (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6 refer to moral and ethical practices which reflect godly character in a pastor and deacon). It is not Biblically appropriate to hold one party (man or woman) accountable or restrict their opportunities due to the actions or behavior of the other. The Old Testament teachings explained by Jesus and the Apostle Paul confirm this position as being Biblically accurate. It is important for second marriage candidates to be confident in their current spouse's testimony, lifestyle and commitment to God's call on the husband and willing to be a wife to them as a servant of God. Furthermore it is not required of any church to accept as a candidate, they may exclude any candidate for whatever reason, they should not wrongfully apply the scripture in order to support it. (Deut. 24:1-5, Matt. 5:31-32, Mark 10:2-12, Matt. 19:1-12, 1 Cor. 1:1-17)