

Overview

Scripture is inerrant. The creator God is a Trinity. Man is sinful. Christ's work alone saves. Salvation comes by grace, through faith. Word and sacrament ministry is the means of grace (including infant baptism, child communion, and church discipline). Christ will return after the nations have been discipled to judge the wicked and bring about bodily resurrection, before consummating a glorious new creation.

Summary

I. Scripture

- A. Revelation - While God reveals Himself in many ways, the only authoritative, propositional revelation of God today is found in the Bible.
- B. Books of the Bible - The written, infallible, inerrant revelation of God is limited to the 66 books of the protestant canon of Scripture.
- C. Infallible and Inerrant - The Bible is inspired by God and therefore, infallible and without error in all that the original texts teach.

II. God

- A. One God who is a Trinity - Scripture reveals that the creator God exists as three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) in one divine nature. God created the world solely for His own glory, each person of the trinity being active in the creative activity.
- B. Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable - God's being is infinite. There are no quantitative limits to God's magnitude, being comparable only analogically to the infinities man can describe. He is eternally unchanging. God's being is self-sufficient. There is no lack in His nature. And since there is no lack in God's nature, He has always existed outside of time and thus is not subject to change. God is tri-personal and has covenanted to create the cosmos, humanity, and to redeem fallen humanity for a glorious destiny.
- C. Sovereign - The triune God's will is bound by nothing other than His own character. His decision to create the world and all events that comprise the world's history, including the free choices of man, is only subject to His character. He is thus the determiner of every event in history, including the sin of man and all evil (human and natural) that has been caused by man's sin. God is not, however, the direct cause of evil since He is absolutely holy and cannot go against His own nature.

III. Humanity

- A. Original State - God made Adam and Eve as righteous with the ability to embrace moral corruption by disobeying God's Law.
- B. The Fall - Adam as the head of humanity and of creation permitted sin to enter the world, and as a result all of humanity and the entire creation fell into sin, being subject to the miseries of sin.
- C. Male and Female - Humanity was created male and female. Through the mandate at creation, people were to fill the earth through the covenant of marriage. Marriage is a lifelong commitment of one man and one woman with the ordinary goal of raising children to know the Triune God through the redemption of Christ.

IV. Christ

- A. Human - Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures. He is the "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15) who was born of the virgin Mary. He was truly human, sharing the nature of humanity.
- B. Divine - Jesus Christ is the incarnate God, the Second Person of the Triune God. He was truly God in nature.
- C. Return - There will be a final consummation of the kingdom of God in the return of Christ at the end of this era of the nations being made disciples. There will be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous, a final judgment, and a new cosmos for never-ending purposes."

V. Salvation

- A. Christ's Faithfulness - The faithfulness of Jesus resulted in His atoning murder on the cross. The death of the righteous, sinless Christ liberated the cosmos for the glorious revelation of the sons of God (Rom. 8). Faith in Jesus applies His righteousness in life and death to believers. Obedience to the moral claims of Scripture before faith or after faith are not the basis of salvation, but the result of union with Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Believer's Faithfulness - The faithfulness of believers is a response to the work of Jesus through the Holy Spirit renewing a believer's life. Followers of Christ are called to live in obedience to the Law of God (i.e., the moral precepts of Scripture). Conscious dependence on the Spirit of God is the means of a life of faith, obedience, and holiness.

VI. Church

- A. Catholic - The Church includes all those from all times and in all places who are united to Christ. Church is universal (catholic) and is manifest in all places. It is the duty of believers to show unity, love, and appreciation for the Church universal.
- B. Multi-ethnic - The Church is composed of every kind of person, ethnic group, and place and time. All humanity descended from one man, Adam, and thus all humanity is united in the final Adam, Jesus Christ. There is no basis in the Christian faith for the inherent superiority of one race or ethnic group over another.
- C. Great Commission - The Church has been given the command to disciple all ethnic groups (nations) in the world. The mission of the Church is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. This includes translating the Word of God in every language of the nations, preaching and teaching all that the Word of God demands in every nation, and establishing congregations in every place for the worship of the true God and the salvation of all kinds of people.

VII. Word, Sacrament, and Discipline

- A. Preaching - The instructional proclamation of the truth from Scripture in the power of the Spirit is required of the Church through properly ordained messengers (ministers, pastors, teachers, elders, evangelists, etc.). The gospel of Jesus must be proclaimed continually in the Church and to the world in order to fulfill Christ's mission for the Church.
- B. Sacraments - The Church has been given two sacraments for the signs and seals of Christ's work: baptism and communion. Baptism inducts a person into the Church and a formal relationship with Christ through the rite of applying water in the name of the Triune God. It represents all of the ways God reaches out to cleanse and receive sinful people into union with Himself. It is properly administered to covenant children (i.e., a child of at least one believing parent). Communion (Eucharist) is the rite of the new covenant which requires eating bread and drinking wine with the people of God in Christ's promised presence, in remembrance of Christ's work. It is properly given to all the baptized, not under discipline. It is a sign of the completion of Christ's work on the First Day of the Week.
- C. Discipline - The Church is responsible to distinguish between the faithful to Christ and the unfaithful. Baptism is the first distinction between the world and the Church. While informal discipline takes place in the life of the Church's ordinary means of grace (such as preaching, teaching, communion, etc.), formal discipline is a process to call sinners to repentance for overt disobedience. The ordered, careful process of this discipline of individuals which may result in the official removal of them from a congregation is required for the peace and purity of the Church.

VIII. Eschatology

- A. Christ ascended to reign over heaven and earth. He empowers the Church to proclaim His gospel to all nations and establish His Church in every place.
- B. He has brought about historic, temporal judgments, such as the end of the old covenant era in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (70 A.D.).
- C. Christ will return and judge all, dead or alive, raising all to eternal bodily life or eternal bodily death.
- D. Christ will consummate His work in this era with a renewal of this creation for the resurrected saints.
- E. This resurrection consummation is only the beginning of the glorious eternal plan of the Triune God for His redeemed people. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).