

Alliance Bible Fellowship Expanded Doctrinal Statement

I. The Word of God

We believe the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We believe God has faithfully preserved His Word such that it is fully reliable and trustworthy today. We believe the Word of God is the only infallible rule of faith and practice in the life of all believers, and that it is the believer's responsibility to submit to its authority. Further, we hold that while Scripture will have many applications, there is only one correct interpretation. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20,21; Matthew 5:18; John 8:31,32; John 17:17; John 20:31; Acts 20:32; Hebrews 4:12)

II. The Trinity

We believe there is one living and true God, an infinite, all-knowing, sovereign, all-powerful, all-glorious Spirit who is eternally manifested in three excellent Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; that these are equal in every divine attribute, and that they execute distinct but harmonious functions in the work of creation, providence and redemption. We believe that each Person of the Trinity is fully and equally God, and therefore they are to be fully and equally loved, worshiped and obeyed. (Genesis 1:1-2,26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1,3,14, 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; I Corinthians 8:4; II Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5,6)

III. God the Father

We believe in God the Father, fountain of all being, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, justice and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of people, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16, 4:24; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2, 2:5,6; I Peter 1:3)

IV. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, begotten, not made, without beginning, being of one essence with the Father and conceived by the Holy Spirit. He is equal with the Father in all divine attributes. We believe in His incarnation through the virgin birth, by which He became fully man, and will remain so forever, yet remained fully God without confusion or mixture; two distinct natures joined together in one Person. Though tempted in every way as a man, we believe in His sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His voluntary and substitutionary, atoning death on the cross for the sins of people, which He bore in His body, the Just for the unjust. We believe in His bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25, 20:28; Luke 1:26-38, 24:39; John 1:1,14, 10:30, 20:27-31; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8, 6:9,10, 9:5; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:4; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 7:25, 9:28; I Peter 2:21-24)

V. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and the Son and is equal to the Father and the Son in all divine attributes. He came to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the agent of new birth, indwells every believer in Christ, is the seal of our eternal salvation, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. (John 3:5-6, 14:15-26, 15:26,27, 16:9-14; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, 12:13; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 1:13-14)

We believe the Holy Spirit has sovereignly gifted every believer, and that these divine gifts are for glorifying God and building up one another in love and showing Christ to the unsaved world through the unity of the Body of Christ. Further, He may distribute whatever gifts He sees necessary for today. We believe, however, that no one person has all the gifts, nor is any single gift possessed by all. (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 29-30; Ephesians 4:11-16)

We believe the baptism, indwelling, and filling of the Holy Spirit are to be distinguished. The baptism of the Spirit is that one-time event at conversion whereby the believer is placed into the body of Christ. The indwelling of the Spirit also occurs at salvation and refers to the believer as the temple of the Spirit in which He lives. The filling of the Spirit is a recurring event that happens frequently in the life of the believer whereby he/she consciously and willingly surrenders to the control of the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-9; I Corinthians 6:19, 12:1-3, 13; Ephesians 5:18)

VI. Creation, Man and the Fall

We believe God created the universe and everything in it out of nothing by His wisdom and power through the Word, and that all three Persons of the Trinity had part in the creation. We believe God directly created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side. We believe Adam and Eve were the historical parents of the entire human race; that they were created male and female equally in the image of God, without sin; that they were created to glorify their Maker, Ruler, Provider, and Friend by trusting His all-sufficient goodness, admiring His infinite beauty, enjoying His personal fellowship, and obeying His all-wise counsel; and that, in God's love and wisdom, they were appointed differing and complementary roles in marriage as a type of Christ and the Church.

We believe that although man was created morally pure, he was led astray from God's command and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan's deceit, and chose to take what was forbidden, and thus declare his independence from, distrust for, and disobedience toward his all-good and gracious Creator. Thus, our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original innocence and communion with God, thereby incurring the penalty of spiritual and physical death. In this lost spiritual state, humankind is unable to do that which is acceptable to God and is hopelessly lost apart from the salvation which is found only in Jesus Christ. We believe that this total depravity has been transmitted to the entire human race, Jesus Christ being the exception. All people, consequently, are sinners by nature, and by choice. (Genesis 1:1,26-27, 2:7,17-22, 3:1-13, 5:2; Psalm 14:1-3,

33:6; Jeremiah 17:9; John 1:1-3; Acts 17:25; Romans 3:10,23, 5:12-21, 6:23, 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:3, 11:3; James 2:10)

VII. Salvation

The Saving Work of Christ

We believe that salvation is completely by the grace of God as He sent His only Son as a sin sacrifice, and that man's salvation is not contingent upon his goodness, works, or merit. (John 1:12, 3:16; Romans 3:9,19-28; Galatians 2:16-21; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

We believe that by His perfect obedience to God and by His suffering and death as the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins and the gift of perfect righteousness for all who trusted in God prior to the cross and all who would trust in Christ thereafter. Through living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed our punishment, appeased the wrath of God against us through propitiation, vindicated the righteousness of God in our justification, and removed the condemnation of the law against us. (John 1:29, 4:1-4; Romans 3:21-26; Galatians 3:13-14)

We believe that Christ's atonement for sin warrants and impels a universal offering of the gospel to all, so that it may truly be said, "God gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Whosoever will may come for salvation, and whoever does come, Jesus will not cast out. (John 1:29, 3:16-18, 6:37; Romans 3:21-26, 5:6-9, 18-19, 8:1-3, 10:8-13; I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:1-9, 2:1-4; Titus 3:4-8; I Peter 2:24, 3:18)

The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the mission of the Spirit is to glorify the crucified and risen Christ. This He does by giving Jesus' disciples greater power to preach the gospel of the glory of Christ, by opening the hearts of hearers that they might see Christ and believe, by revealing the beauty of Christ in His Word and transforming His people from glory to glory, by manifesting Himself in spiritual gifts for building up the body of Christ and the confirmation of His Word, by calling all the nations into the influence of the gospel of Christ, and, in all this, thus fulfilling the New Covenant promise to create and preserve a purified people for the everlasting habitation of God.

We believe that, apart from the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would come to faith, because all are dead in trespasses and sins; that they are hostile to God, and morally unable to submit to God or please Him, because the pleasures of sin appear greater than the pleasures of God. Thus, for God's elect, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance, wakens the dead, removes blindness, and manifests Christ in such a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel that He becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart. (Jeremiah 31:33-34; Luke 24:49; John 3:3-8, 6:35-65, 16:8-14; Acts 1:8, 16:14; Romans 8:7-9; I Corinthians 12:7-10; II Corinthians 3:17-18; Ephesians 1:3-7, 2:1-3)

Justification and Sanctification

We believe that in a free act of righteous grace God justifies the ungodly by faith alone apart from works, pardoning their sins, and reckoning them as righteous and acceptable in His presence. Faith is thus the sole instrument by which we, as sinners, are united to Christ, whose perfect righteousness and satisfaction for sins is alone the ground of our acceptance with God. We believe that faith, which alone receives the gift of justification, does not remain alone, but produces, by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of love and leads necessarily to sanctification. (Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 10:14; James 2:14-26)

We believe that the reason justifying faith necessarily sanctifies is because it is a persevering faith, that is, continuing, kind of faith. We believe that this persevering faith is life-transforming, and therefore renders intelligible the teaching of the Scripture that final salvation in the age to come depends on the transformation of life, and yet does not contradict justification by faith alone. (I Corinthians 2:14)

We believe that the ongoing work of sanctification, which comes by the Spirit through faith, is incomplete in this life. Although slavery to sin is broken, and sinful desires are progressively weakened, yet there remain remnants of corruption in every heart until perfection in the age to come. This perseverance is the promise of the New Covenant, obtained by the blood of Christ, and worked in us by God Himself. (Romans 6:1-23; Philippians 1:6; I John 1:9)

VIII. The Church and Her Ordinances

We believe in the one universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons, past and present, are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, prayer, fellowship, discipleship, service and evangelism. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of living and communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 2:42-47; Ephesians 1:22, 2:19-22, 4:15-16, 5:19-21; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:23-25)

We believe each local church should practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord by which those who have repented and come to faith express their union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. We practice baptism by immersion in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a sign of belonging to the new covenant people of God, and a symbol of burial and cleansing, signifying death to the old life of unbelief, and purification from the pollution of sin. (Matthew 3:17, 28:19; Acts 2:38, 8:36-39)

We believe the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord in which gathered believers eat bread, signifying Christ's body given for His people, and drink the cup of the Lord, signifying the New Covenant in Christ's blood. We do this in remembrance of the Lord, and thus proclaim His death until He comes. Those who eat and drink in a worthy manner partake of Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually, in that, by faith, they are nourished with the benefits He obtained through His death, and thus grow in grace. (Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:23-26)

We believe that each local church should recognize and affirm the divine calling of spiritually qualified men to give leadership to the church through the role of pastor-elder in the ministry of the Word and prayer. Women are not to fill the role of pastor-elder in the local church, but are encouraged to use their gifts in appropriate roles that edify the body of Christ and spread the gospel. (Acts 6:1-7, 14:23, 20:28-31; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Timothy 2:14-3:13; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4)

Healing

We believe that healing for physical sickness is provided for in the atoning work of Christ. By grace through faith in Christ, we become God's children and have the privilege to seek Him for healing. Healing is a possibility for the Church today because Jesus has defeated sin and death on the cross. Power for healing originates not from our own faith or from using just the right words; it comes to us from the cross and empty tomb of Jesus Christ because that is the place where sickness and death met their ruin. While we affirm the gift of healing, we deny faith healers and faith healing; we affirm divine healing. While God may choose to heal His children, His choice to do so or not to do so lies within His sovereign will and is always best for His children. (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 4:23-24, 8:14-17; John 9:1-3; II Corinthians 12:7-9; Galatians 4:13-14; James 5:13-16)

XIII. The Last Things

We believe in the blessed hope: the personal, visible and pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; I Corinthians 4:5, 15:1-58; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15)

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