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ABWE Doctrinal Statement



Preamble



For over 2,000 years, the church has sought to faithfully guard the good deposit of the faith handed over to the saints once for all (2 Timothy 1:14; Jude 3). Like all Christians, ABWE is an heir to this legacy, and our statement of faith seeks to reflect our indebtedness to the saints that have gone before us. Scripture will always be our ultimate authority for matters of faith and practice, but we do not hold our beliefs in isolation from the great cloud of witnesses and the historic articulation they have imparted. Our doctrinal statement represents our enthusiastic, bold commitment to historic, creedal orthodoxy, conservative Protestantism, historic evangelicalism, and Baptist identity.

ABWE recognizes there are areas of doctrine that are of first and second order (1 Corinthians 15:3). All those joining with us to serve voluntarily sign our doctrinal statement, indicating they agree without reservation with first-order elements of creedal orthodoxy and Protestant evangelicalism. Signing in agreement with the doctrinal statement indicates personal belief in and commitment to these fundamental doctrines of the faith as articulated by the very words of the statement. ABWE also recognizes there are areas of second order where faithful, orthodox Protestants have disagreed amongst themselves, yet where taking a convictional stand is necessary to build healthy churches that cohere as part of the missional task. While salvation is not at stake with secondary issues, by subscribing to our doctrinal statement one is indicating alignment with these doctrines and agreeing not to teach or act in a manner contrary to these stated beliefs.

Those who sign their agreement with our doctrinal statement indicate their partnership in passing on the faith handed over to the saints once for all. It is this shared passion for the historic orthodox Christian faith and our Protestant, Baptist distinctives that bind us in unity under Christ as we seek to make disciples in all nations.

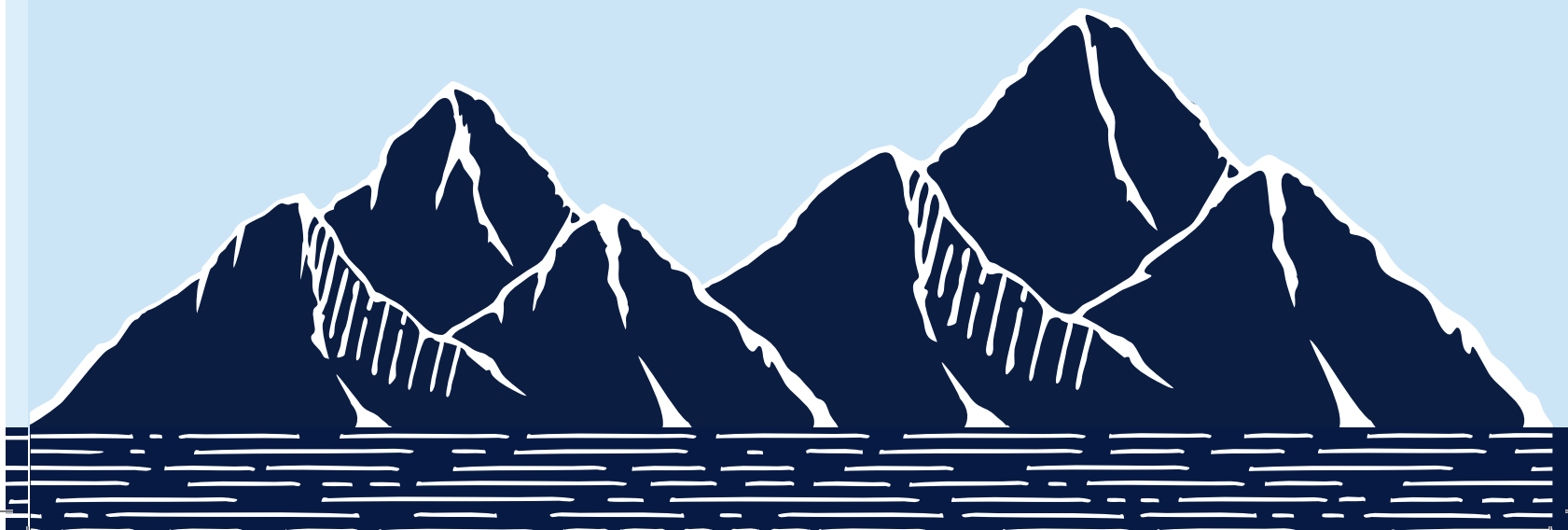


ABWE Doctrinal Statement



Table of Contents

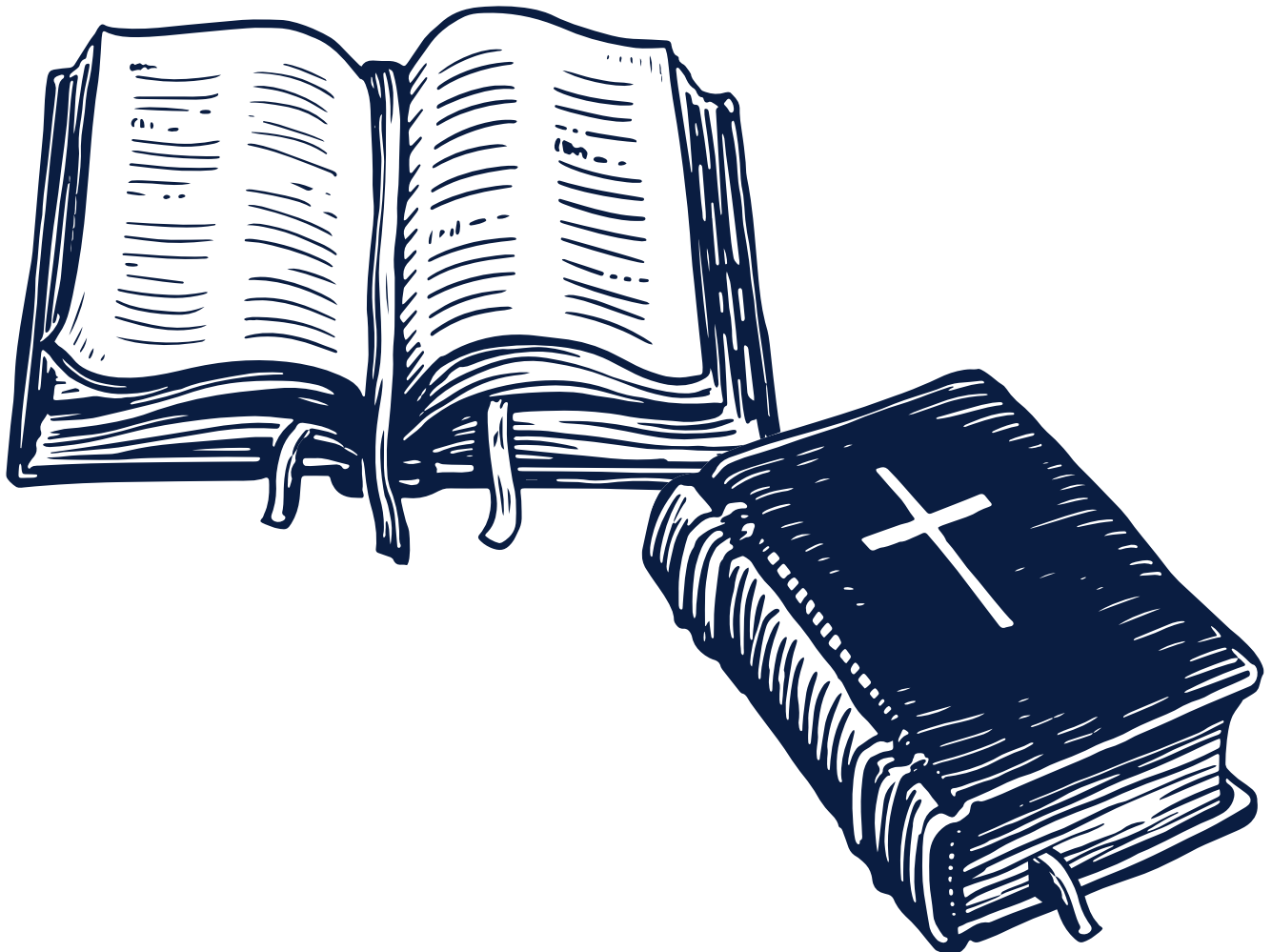
Preamble.....	2
ABWE Doctrinal Statement.....	3
Catechism	13
Appendix: Memorization Verses.....	23
Appendix B: Theological Influences	25



1. CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, composed of 66 books, are God-breathed as God communicated through men carried along by the Holy Spirit. The very words of Scripture are inspired, authoritative, without error in their original autographs, and sovereignly preserved by God. We believe the Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will for humanity today, is sufficiently clear in its revelation of truth, and constitutes the only infallible guide for faith, life, and ministry.

Psalm 119:128; Matthew 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21; John 17:17; Revelation 22:18-19; John 10:34-35; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12

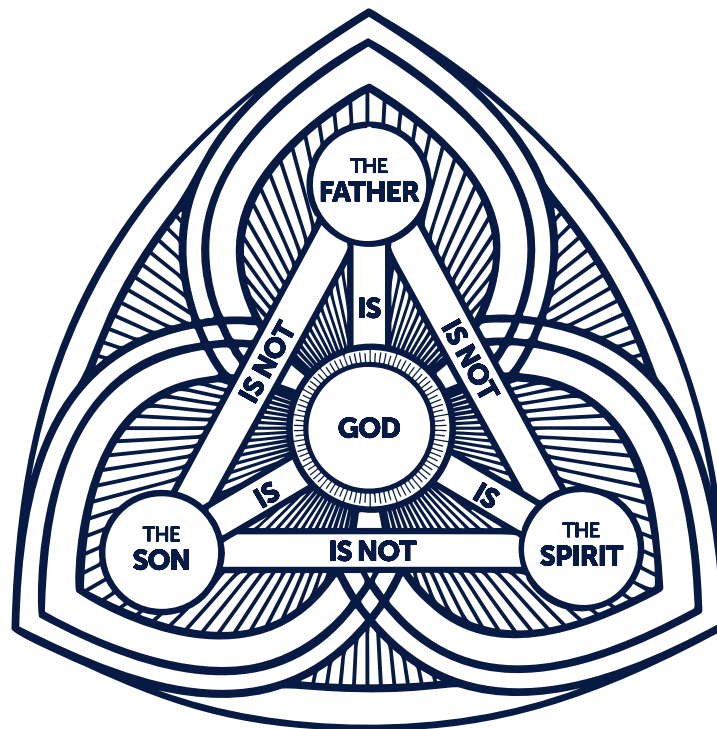


2. CONCERNING THE ONE TRUE GOD

We believe in the one true God who is spirit, infinite, eternal, holy, loving, and the creator of all that exists. He is all-knowing, all-wise, ever present with his people, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, forgiving, and abundantly able to keep all his promises according to his faithfulness. He is good and completely sovereign over all that occurs but is not the author of evil and will justly punish all sin. Although completely distinct from his creation, he is immanently at work in the world preserving it and effecting his good pleasure.

This one God is three eternal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These persons are identical in essence, the same in substance, and co-equal in divinity, power, glory, and majesty. Each divine person is fully God, and none is before or greater than the others, each being co-eternal and not manifestations of God or parts comprising the whole. The unity and distinction of the divine persons is revealed in all the works of God including creation, providence, and redemption.

Genesis 1:1; Exodus 15:11-13; Exodus 20:2-3; Leviticus 11:44; Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; Psalm 19:1; 103:19; 139:1-6; Isaiah 46:9; Jeremiah 10:10; Habakkuk 1:12-13; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 1:1-3; 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-5; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:8; James 1:13





3. CONCERNING GOD THE FATHER

We believe God the Father is truly God and co-equal with the Son and the Spirit. The Father has planned for his glory all that comes to pass. The Father sent the Son and with the Son sent the Spirit. In love and mercy, he purposed from before the foundations of the world to redeem a people for himself from every tongue, tribe, and nation. The Father chose us in Christ and draws all those who come to him through the Son. The Father adopts believers to be his children and become co-heirs with Christ. The Father disciplines us for our good. The Father, being well-pleased in the Son and his work, put all things under the Son and installed the Son at his own right hand.

Psalm 110:1 John 3:16; 6:44; 8:28-29, 42; 14:16-17, 26; Acts 1:7; 2:39; Romans 5:8; 8:14-16; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 15:20-28; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 1:3-11; 4:3-6; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:5, 13; 5:6; 12:9-10

4. CONCERNING GOD THE SON

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is truly God and co-equal with the Father and the Spirit. He took on true human nature, without the corruption of sin. Being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, Jesus Christ has two perfect and distinct natures in one person. He is truly God and truly man, the only mediator between God and man. As such, he lived a sinless, obedient life fulfilling the law. He voluntarily died on the cross to make a full atonement for our sins, substituting himself to bear the wrath of God we deserve. He was buried, arose bodily from the dead on the third day thereby conquering sin and death, ascended bodily into heaven, and presently reigns at the right hand of the Father making intercession on behalf of all who come to the Father through him.

Isaiah 7:14; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 1:18-25; 28:6, 18; John 1:1; John 14:6; Titus 3:5



5. CONCERNING GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit is truly God, co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is the promised Comforter sent by the Father and the Son, possessing full personhood. The Holy Spirit is the efficient agent in the application of redemption. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. No one can savingly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord apart from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth, at which time he baptizes believers into the body of Christ. He seals, indwells, fills, sanctifies, convicts, gifts, and guides believers. The apostolic sign gifts, while not normative for today, were powerful indicators in New Testament times whereby the truth of the gospel message was authenticated; yet God is able to do the miraculous today according to his sovereign purposes.

John 7:39; 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 12:3, 8-13, 27-31; 13:8-12; Hebrews 2:1-4; 9:14; Acts 1:4-5; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:7-11

6. CONCERNING HUMANITY

We believe men and women each are created fully in God's image. The first man and woman were created by the distinct design and direct action of God as described in Genesis 2 and not from any previously existing form of life. By voluntary transgression, Adam fell from his state of innocence. As the representative head of humanity, Adam's sin, guilt, and corruption has been placed upon all human beings. Humans are now sinners by nature and by choice, enslaved to sin, unable to know or please God on their own apart from his saving work, and under just condemnation to everlasting, conscious punishment, separated from God.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7-8, 18-23; Romans 3:23; 5:12-19; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:9-18; 5:12, 15-21; 6:17-18; 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

7. CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe God created man and woman as biologically unique persons. God's design for the union of marriage is that a biological man and a biological woman covenant to be one flesh for life in a monogamous union that is spiritual, emotional, and physical. God's design for sexual union is for its expression to be only within the bounds of this male and female marital union. We believe that a person's true identity is found and fulfilled in Christ alone and in a relationship with him. Therefore, a Christian must not embrace identities, desires, or behaviors that are contrary to the express teaching of Scripture.

Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9

8. CONCERNING SALVATION

We believe salvation is initiated by a loving God, wholly of his grace, and accomplished only through the mediating work of the Son of God and applied by the Holy Spirit. Salvation is granted only through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This message of salvation in Jesus Christ is the gospel. An individual must be born again, being regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit thereby becoming a new creation. The believer who has exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is united to Christ, justified in Christ receiving the gift of imputed righteousness, and possesses a salvation which is eternally secure. God sanctifies those he saves so that their lives are marked by transformation of sinful desires, obedience to God, good works, and perseverance in the faith.

John 3:3-6, 16; 10:28-29; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; Titus 3:8; Acts 13:39; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-23; Romans 2:4; 4:2-9, 25; 5:1, 9; 8:16, 28-29; 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 2 Peter 1:4

9. CONCERNING EVANGELISM AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

We believe Jesus, the only Savior of humanity, calls the church and every believer to proclaim the gospel with urgency, compassion, and persuasion to all people and invite them to repent and believe. The Scriptures teach both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Christians are to be known as disciples of the Lord Jesus by their love and care for both fellow believers and unbelievers as an important part of demonstrating the transforming power of the gospel. In love, the gospel is to be proclaimed throughout the world offering salvation to all who believe. Because faith comes through hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ, gospel proclamation is how God draws the lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The unbeliever comes to experience saving conversion through hearing the Word of Christ, the inward working of the Holy Spirit, and confessing with their mouth and believing in their heart that Jesus is Lord resulting in life transformation and an ever-growing allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 12:31; John 3:3; 13:34-35; Romans 5:1, 9-10; 8:1; 10:9-18; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5-6; Ephesians 2:1-7, 11-16; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2:9-10; 1 John 3:23; 4:7-11, 20-21





10. CONCERNING THE CHURCH

We believe the church of Jesus Christ was inaugurated at Pentecost and must be considered in two aspects: the local church and the universal church, which is the entire company of believers in Christ. A local church is an organized assembly of baptized believers, united by a commitment to the faith, fellowship, proclamation of the gospel, prayer, and observing the ordinances of believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. The local church regularly gathers in the presence of one another for worship, hearing God's Word, meeting the needs of one another, and the mutual edification of one another. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. Under him, there are two offices in the local church. The office of spiritual leadership and the ministry of the Word is called elder, overseer, or pastor. The office of service is called deacon. The New Testament delegates headship and authority of the local church to qualified men.

Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Titus 1:5-9; Philipians 1:1; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:44-45; 11:15-16; Ephesians 1:22-23; Hebrews 12:23; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; 3:1-13

11. CONCERNING BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, representing the believer's death to sin, their resurrection to new life, and their union to Christ and his death, burial and resurrection. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's death to be observed by believers until his return and should be preceded by honest self-examination and confession of sins.

Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-47; 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

12. CONCERNING ANGELS

We believe God created spirit beings called angels to worship and serve him. One of these angels became proud and rebelled against God. God judged this angel along with many other angels who followed his rebellion. Those who rebelled are demons, and their leader is Satan or the accuser. They seek continually to frustrate the purposes of God and to cause mankind to sin against him. Satan's presence is finite, and his power is limited by our infinite, reigning God. Christ defeated Satan and demons on the cross and therefore, God exalted Christ to his own right hand in the heavenly places above all rule, authority, power, and dominion. Satan's plans will ultimately fail, and God will condemn him with the other demons to the lake of fire which he prepared for them.

2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Ephesians 1:20-21; 2:2; Revelation 12:9; Hebrews 1:14; 2:14; 12:22; Ezekiel 28:11-19; 2 Kings 6:16-17; Job 1:12; 2:6; Isaiah 14:12-17; Colossians 2:15; Revelation 20:10

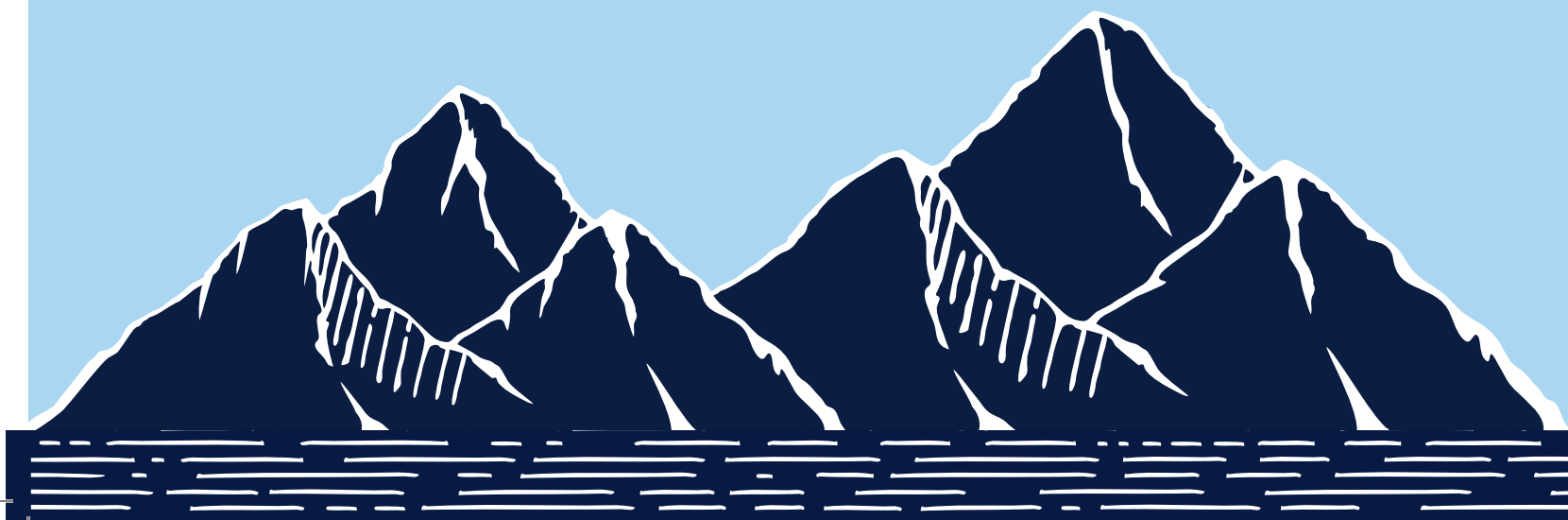
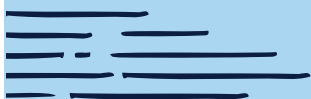
13. CONCERNING THE LORD'S TRIUMPH

We believe in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take his saints to be with him. The Lord Jesus Christ will return bodily at the second coming to earth in power and glory where he will manifest his earthly kingdom reign in the presence of all. Satan, after leading a final rebellion, will be cast into the lake of fire, along with death, hell, and the unrighteous dead. The Lord Jesus in triumph will judge the whole world.

There will be a future bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust. The just, those who have been redeemed, will spend eternity in full enjoyment of God's presence. The unjust, those who through impenitence and unbelief in their earthly life refused to accept God's offer of mercy, will spend eternity in everlasting, conscious punishment. We believe the final destiny of the righteous saints is the new heaven and new earth where God will dwell with humanity for all eternity and God's glory will radiate through all creation.

Psalms 16:11; Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:28-29; Matthew 24:36-42; 25:46; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 15:50-56; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2:1-10; 2 Peter 3:1-10; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:13-16; 20:1-15; 21:1

Catechism



Article 1:

Q1: What is the Word of God?

A1: The Bible, both Old and New Testaments composed of 66 books is the Word of God and is the only infallible guide for faith, life, practice, and ministry.

2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 22:18-19

Q2: What is meant by “the Bible is the Word of God?”

A2: The Bible is God-breathed, as God communicated through men carried along by the Holy Spirit. Every word in the original autograph is from him, while they are written through the hands of men and include their grammar, styles, and personality.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21

Q3: Does the Bible contain errors?

A3: The words of Scripture in the original autographs are without error. The words are infallible, authoritative, and sovereignly preserved by God through the means of human copyists who themselves are susceptible to error.

2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 5:18; John 10:34-35

Q4: Can one trust the Bible?

A4: Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, has shown us the Bible is true, trustworthy, and authoritative. The Bible is trustworthy because God is trustworthy. God desired to make himself known and has revealed himself in His Word. Since God does not deceive in making himself known, the Bible is an accurate and reliable account of his works of revelation for our salvation.

Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:27; John 10:34-35; 17:17

Article 2:

Q5: Who is the first and best of beings?

A5: God is the first and best of beings.

Isaiah 41:4; 43:10-11; Revelation 21:6; 22:13

Q6: What is God?

A6: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

John 4:24; Deuteronomy 33:27; James 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:16; Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 6:4

Q7: Is there more than one god?

A7: There is but one only, the living and true God.

Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4

Q8: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A8: There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power, might, and glory.

Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

Q9: Is there hierarchy or rank inside the Godhead?

A9 Shorter: No. The persons are all co-equal in power, might, and glory.

A9 Longer: No. The persons are all co-equal in power, might, and glory. Each is fully and truly God—fully having the divine nature. Yet there is only one God, not three; only one nature, not three. In their unified work, the Father sends the Son, the Son becomes incarnate and accomplishes redemption, and the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit. Thus, there is order and eternal distinction between the persons without rank or hierarchy of authority, since each is equal, fully partaking of all the divine attributes.

John 1:1-3, 14, 18; 5:17-18, 26-27; 10:30; 14:26; 16:7, 12-15; Ephesians 1:3-14

Article 3:

Q10: Who is the first person of the Godhead?

A10: The Father is the first person of the Godhead, equal in power, majesty, and glory with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

John 1:18; 1 Corinthians 8:4-5

Q11: What has the Father done before the foundation of the world?

A11: The Father has planned for his glory all things that come to pass. The Father sent the Son and, with the Son, sent the Spirit. In love and mercy, he purposed from before the foundation of the world to redeem a people for himself from every tongue, tribe, and nation.

Psalms 110:1; Isaiah 46:10; 41:26; Romans 5:8; 8:14-16, 28-30; Ephesians 1:3-5; Galatians 4:4-6; Hebrews 1:5

Q12: What is the Father's work in redemption?

A12: The Father chose us in Christ and draws all those who come to him through the Son. The Father adopts believers to be his children and become co-heirs with Christ. The Father justifies those who have faith in Christ declaring them not guilty and counts them as having the righteousness of Christ. Those whom he justifies, he also sanctifies and glorifies.

John 6:44; Ephesians 1:3-5; Romans 8:15-17, 29-30

Article 4:

Q13: Who is the Son of God?

A13: Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God without beginning and end. He shares all the divine attributes being one in nature with God, and is thus truly God, coequal in power, might, and glory with the Father and the Spirit.

John 1:1-3; 5:17-18; 10:30; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:17-18

Q14: What is the Son's incarnation?

A14: The incarnation of the Son is when he became flesh, taking on a human nature, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. In the incarnation, the Son has two perfect and distinct natures—a human nature and divine nature—which are without confusion, change, mixture, or division. The natures are distinct but inseparable; united in one person.

Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 34-35; John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-10; Hebrews 1:8-12; 2:14-17

Q15: What is the work of the Son in redemption?

A15: As the Mediator between God and man, he lived an obedient life, died on the cross bearing the penalty for sin, arose from the dead on the third day, ascended bodily into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father to rule and make intercession for us, whence he will return to judge and consummate the purposes of God.

Isaiah 53; Matthew 5:17; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 4:4-6; Acts 1-2; 17:30-31; Hebrews 1:5, 13; 2:17; 4:14-16; 9:28; 10:5-10

Article 5:

Q16: Who is the Holy Spirit?

A16: The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, who is coequal in power, might, and glory with the Father and the Son.

John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, 14-16

Q17: What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

A17: He is the promised Comforter sent by the Father and the Son, sent to convert the hearts of sinners, personally indwell believers, and equip the children of God for the work of ministry.

John 16:7-15; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Q18: What is the Holy Spirit's role in missions?

A18: He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. No one can savingly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord apart from the Holy Spirit.

John 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3

Q19: What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer?

A19: He seals, indwells, fills, sanctifies, convicts, gifts, and guides believers.

Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:13; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 3:16; 6:19

Article 6:

Q20: Why did God create Adam and Eve?

A20: By distinct and direct design, God created Adam and Eve in a state of innocence as founders of humanity to bear his image, carry the likeness of his character, and reflect his glory before all creation.

Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:4-8

Q21: Did Adam and Eve remain innocent?

A21: No. Adam and Eve disobeyed God in an act of sinful rebellion and now all humans share in this sin.

Genesis 3; Romans 3:23; 5:12-21

Q22: How do we share in Adam's first sin?

A22: Adam stood uniquely as a representative of all humanity so that, when Adam sinned, the guilt and corruption of this sin was placed upon all human beings. All humanity is now sinful by nature and by choice, children of wrath, slaves to sin apart from Christ.

Romans 3:23; 5:12, 16-19; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3

Article 7:

Q23: What does it mean that God "created them male and female?"

A23: That God, in creating human beings, created them in two distinct sexes both bearing his image. These two sexes are unique, distinct, and irreplaceable in God's plan and cannot be interchanged having been crafted in equal dignity and distinct, complementary roles.

Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:7, 18, 21-24

Q24: What is God's design for marriage?

A24: Marriage is the union of a biological male and a biological female in a covenant for life. The marriage covenant is the only appropriate context for the expression for sexual intimacy, which God has created for our good and enjoyment.

Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; Ephesians 5:22-31

Article 8:

Q25: What is the gospel?

A25: The gospel is the announcement that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. He now reigns as king and offers eternal life to all who believe on him and confess that Jesus is Lord. The gospel promises all who believe receive the forgiveness of sins.

John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 25; Acts 2:32-36; 16:31

Q26: What must someone do to be saved?

A26: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 16:31

Q27: What is saving faith?

A27: Saving faith is a gift of God's grace whereby a sinner acknowledges Jesus in his person and work, recognizes Christ's sacrifice for sin on the cross, repents of sin, confesses that Jesus is Lord, and places trust fully upon his person and work for receiving the forgiveness of sins.

John 3:16; Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 2:37-38; 16:31; 1 John 1:9

Q28: What happens to the person exercising personal faith?

A28: The believer who has exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ receives the forgiveness of sins and is united to Christ, justified in Christ receiving the gift of imputed righteousness, and possesses a salvation which is eternally secure.

John 3:16; 6:39-40, 44; Romans 3:23-26; 4:5, 22-25; 5:8-10; 6:1-8; Ephesians 1:13-14

Q29: What results in the lives of those who possess faith and are saved?

A29: God sanctifies those he saves so that their lives are marked by putting to death sinful desires, obedience to God, good works, and perseverance in the faith.

1 Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:2-5; Romans 6:13-14, 22; Romans 8:5-11; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 10:23

Article 9:

Q30: What is the Great Commission?

A30: The Great Commission is Jesus' call to his apostles, the church, and to every believer to proclaim the gospel with urgency, compassion, and persuasion to all people and invite them to repent and believe.

Matthew 28:18-20

Q31: What is the Great Commandment?

A31: The Great Commandment is that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

John 13:34

Q32: What is the relationship between the Great Commission and the Great Commandment?

A32: Christians are to be known as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ by their love and care for both fellow believers and unbelievers. In love, we proclaim the gospel throughout the world, offering salvation to all who believe.

John 13:35; 1 John 3:14; 4:20; Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12

Q33: Can a person be saved by seeing our love apart from hearing the Word of God in the gospel?

A33 Shorter: No. The Bible is clear that faith comes through hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

A33 Longer: No. The Bible is clear that faith comes through hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17). A person will not be saved without the work of God in his Word. Our efforts to share, proclaim, and articulate the gospel are essential, foundational, and primary to missions. Showing love is non-negotiable in our missionary task and testifies to the reality of God's transformation of our lives and a validation of our profession of faith, but our acts of compassion cannot save souls.

Matthew 5:16; John 17:21; 1 Peter 2:12; Romans 10:14-18; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23

Article 10:

Q34: What is the church?

A34: The church is the people of God promised in the Old Testament, inaugurated at Pentecost, and ultimately gathered on the last day—the body of Christ, consisting of those who are saved through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:42; Ephesians 2:11-22; Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 19:6-8

Q35: What is a local church?

A35: A local church is an organized assembly of baptized believers, united by a commitment to the faith, fellowship, proclamation of the gospel, prayer, and observing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Acts 2:42-47; 4:32

Q36: What is the function of church planting?

A36: Church planting is the result of gospel proclamation that leads to the conversion of the lost to Jesus Christ, who begin assembling as the local expression of the body of Christ, carrying out the tasks of the local church and growing towards being organized around the officers of the church.

Acts 2:42-47; 6:1-7; 14:32; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5

Q37: What should all local churches do?

A37: The local church gathers regularly in the presence of one another for worship, hearing God's Word, meeting the needs of one another, and the mutual edification of one another.

Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Q38: What are the offices of the local church?

A38: The New Testament recognizes two offices in the local church: elder and deacon. The office of spiritual leadership and the ministry of the Word is called elder, overseer, pastor. The office of service is called deacon. The office of leadership in the church is reserved for gifted, qualified, and called men who are filled with the Spirit.

Acts 6:1-7; 20:17-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9

Article 11:

Q39: What is an ordinance in the church?

A39: An ordinance is a God ordained task that the church is to carry out as a visible representation of the spiritual reality in the life of believers.

Q40: What are the two ordinances of the church?

A40: The two ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

Q41: What is baptism?

A41: Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It represents the believer's death to sin, their resurrection to new life, their union to Christ and his death, burial, and resurrection.

Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13

Q42: What is the Lord's Supper?

A42: The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's death to be observed by believers until his return and should be preceded by honest self-examination and confession of sins.

1 Corinthians 11:23-28

Q43: What are the elements of the Lord's Supper?

A43: The Lord's Supper is to be celebrated with bread, symbolizing Christ's body broken for us, and drink from the fruit of the vine, symbolizing his blood shed for the establishment of the New Covenant.

Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

Article 12:

Q44: What are angels?

A44: Angels are spirit beings created by God to worship and serve him.

Psalms 104:4; Hebrews 1:7

Q45: Who is Satan?

A45: Satan is a spiritual being who rebelled against God and stands to accuse the brethren. Demons are the fallen spiritual beings who follow Satan's rebellion.

Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Revelation 12:7-12

Q46: What is Satan's limit?

A46: Satan is restrained by God in his sovereignty. His presence is finite, and his power is limited by our infinite, reigning God.

Job 1:12; 2:6

Q47: How has Christ defeated Satan?

A47: Christ defeated Satan and demons on the cross and in his exaltation to the right hand of God over all rule, authority, power, and dominion. Christ reigns to assure the accomplishment of his mission, and Satan will not win and cannot ultimately prevail against the church in its global task.

Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 1:20-21; Hebrews 2:14-15

Article 13:

Q48: What should we expect regarding the Lord's return?

A48: We expect the Lord Jesus Christ's bodily return to take his saints to be with him.

Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Hebrews 9:28

Q49: What will happen at the second coming?

A49: The Lord Jesus will return bodily at the second coming to earth in power and glory, in which he will manifest his earthly kingdom reign in the presence of all.

Acts 1:11; Hebrews 2:8-9; 9:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; Revelation 19-20

Q50: What will Jesus Christ do upon his return?

A50: Jesus Christ will judge the whole world. He will raise the dead, the just to eternal life and the unjust to eternal condemnation.

Acts 17:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; Revelation 19:11-21; 20:11-14

Q51: What is the destiny of the unjust?

A51: The unjust, who through impenitence and unbelief in their earthly life refused to accept God's mercy, will spend eternity in everlasting, conscious punishment in the lake of fire.

Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:41-46; Revelation 20:11-15

Q52: What is the destiny of the righteous?

A52: The final destiny of the righteous saints is the new heaven and the new earth, where God will dwell with humanity for all eternity, and God's glory will radiate through all creation.

Revelation 21-22

Conclusion:

Q53: How does true doctrine motivate me?

A53: True doctrine is vital for life, godliness, and sanctification. True doctrine encourages us, nourishes our souls, inspires us towards love and good deeds, drives us to evangelize and make disciples, produces fruit in us and the church, and causes our hearts to approach God in humble, joyous worship to his praise, glory, and honor.

Romans 11:34-36; Ephesians 4:11-14; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:4, 11-16; 2 Timothy 2:1-7; 4:1-5; Titus 2:1; 1 Peter 1:22-25

Appendix: Memorization Verses

1. Concerning the Scriptures

- a. **2 Timothy 3:16** — All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

2. Concerning the One True God

- a. **Jeremiah 10:10** — But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure his indignation.

3. Concerning God the Father

- a. **1 Corinthians 8:6** — yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

4. Concerning God the Son

- a. **John 14:6** — Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

5. Concerning God the Holy Spirit

- a. **John 14:26** — But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

6. Concerning Humanity

- a. **Romans 5:12** — Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

7. Concerning Marriage & Sexuality

- a. **Mark 10:6-9** — “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

8. Concerning Salvation

- a. **Ephesians 2:8-10** — For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

9. Concerning Evangelism and the Great Commission

- a. **Matthew 28:18-20** — “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

10. Concerning the Church

- a. **Ephesians 1:22-23** — And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

11. Concerning Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

- a. **Matthew 28:19** — “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit[.]”
- b. **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** — For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

12. Concerning Angels

- a. **2 Corinthians 4:4** — In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

13. Concerning the Lord’s Triumph

- a. **Matthew 25:46** — And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Appendix B: Theological Influences

ABWE exists downstream from a rich body of orthodox, Protestant, evangelical, and Baptist tradition, both ancient and modern. Our doctrinal statement is the sum of these various influences and is but one expression of the tapestry of the great biblical heritage we are privileged to possess.

We encourage all who belong to the ABWE family to familiarize themselves with the creedal and confessional heritage we cherish. In this vein, we both celebrate and recommend the following supporting readings:

- The Apostles' Creed
- The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (commonly known as the Nicene Creed)
- The Athanasian Creed
- The Chalcedonian Definition
- The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)
- The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith (1833)
- The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)
- The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy
- The Nashville Statement on Biblical Sexuality
- The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood
- The Dallas Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel

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