

Statement of Doctrine

Key Biblical and Theological Convictions of Village



Village Bible Church
DISTINCTIVES

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Statement of Doctrine

THIS STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE expresses what we believe true Christians must affirm. It is not meant to represent all that Christians should believe but includes the essential truths that we believe authentic Christians must not deny.

Sec. A. The Scriptures

The Bible, composed of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, was written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit, is God's revelation to humanity and is our final, absolute authority, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Having been given by God Himself, the Scriptures are fully and verbally inspired. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free from error in all it teaches. Each book must be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord Who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide for all Christian practice and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation or worldly wisdom. All doctrine, whether in creed, confession or theology, must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, Who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:18-19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:25,44-45; John 5:39; 10:35b; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23,25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Sec. B. God

There is only one living and true God, Who is a spiritual and personal Being. He is the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is infinite in holiness, love and all other perfections. He is all powerful, all knowing, all wise and present everywhere. His knowledge is perfect and extends to all things, past, present and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence and obedience. The eternal and unchanging Triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

The Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures and human history according to the purposes of His grace. He involves Himself mercifully in human affairs, hears and answers prayer and saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. He is faithful to every promise, in all things works for the good of those who love Him and in His unfathomable grace gave His Son Jesus Christ for our redemption.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15,28-29; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:13-15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:14-17; 1 John 5:1-4.

Christ is the eternal and only Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and in His very nature He is fully God in bodily form. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of the Father, taking upon Himself human nature and identifying Himself completely with humanity, yet without sin. In His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of human beings from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the same person Who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of the Father, where He is the only Mediator, being fully God and fully man. Through Him believers are reconciled to God. He will

return in power and glory to judge the world and to bring His redemptive mission to completion.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9;; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, is to be respected, honored and worshipped as God, the third person of the Trinity. Through the proclamation of the Gospel He persuades people to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. He brings about the new birth, unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, baptizes them into the Body of Christ and dwells within them. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals believers for the day of redemption. His presence in believers enables them to grow in Christlikeness. He leads the Church into a right understanding and application of the truths of God's Word. He came to glorify the Son, Who in turn came to glorify the Father.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; 20:22; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3-4; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,28,39; 10:44; 11:16-17; 13:2,4; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 6:19; 12:3-11,13; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 5:5; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-8; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

Sec. C. Humanity

Humanity is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation, that they might have fellowship with Him. In the beginning humans were innocent of sin and were endowed by their Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice Adam rebelled against God,

bringing sin into the human race. As a consequence of Adam's sin, all human beings are estranged from their Maker, yet are still responsible to Him. All humanity is subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. All people are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ. Nevertheless, because they still possess the divine image, every person of every race has full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:7,18-22; 3:1-24; 9:6; Psalms 1:1-6; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:12-18; 8:29-30; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

Sec. D. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely to all who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In its broadest sense salvation includes election, regeneration, justification, sanctification, perseverance and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; Romans 1:16; 10:9-10,13; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; Colossians 1:9-22; Hebrews 5:8-9; 9:24-28.

Election is the gracious purpose of God, settled before the foundation of the world, on the basis of which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies and glorifies sinners. Election is consistent with the free agency of human beings and is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; Matthew 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; John 6:44-45,65; 15:16; 17:6; Romans 8:29-30; 11:5-7,26-36; Ephesians 1:4-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2; 2:4-10.

Regeneration, or the new birth, is the work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit's work in regeneration is not the result of water baptism or of any outward ritual. It is a change of heart brought about by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, in which sinners respond in

repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. And true Biblical faith means more than simply believing certain facts. It means accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and committing one's entire being to Him as Lord. It calls for a total response involving the believer's mind, emotions and will.

Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Ezekiel 11:19; John 1:12-14; 3:3ff.; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Eph. 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3.

Justification is the act of God by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins and confess Him as Lord. It is granted apart from any human virtue or good works and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ and of His righteousness to us.

Genesis 15:6; Luke 24:44-48; John 3:16; 5:24; Acts 13:39; Rom. 1:17; 3:21-28; 4:1-25; 5:1, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 3:24.

Sanctification is the ongoing experience, beginning in regeneration, by which believers are set apart for God's purposes, and are enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the power of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in them. Growth in grace should continue throughout the believer's life.

John 17:17,19; Acts 20:32; Romans 6:1-23; 8:1-17; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:19-20; Galatians 2:20; 5:22-25; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:13-16, 22; 1 John 1:6-2:11.

Perseverance to endure to the end is promised to all true believers. Those whom God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but will persevere to the very end of their earthly lives. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, thereby grieving the Spirit, bringing reproach to the cause of Christ and coming under the Lord's discipline. Nevertheless, God's promise is sure: He who began the work of salvation will be faithful to see it through to completion.

John 10:27-29; Romans 8:28-39; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 2:19.

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed state of the redeemed as they abide in God's presence for all eternity.

Matthew 13:43; Romans 8:18-23,30; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Ephesians 1:18; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Peter 5:1; 1 John 3:2.

Sec. E. The Church

All who come to Jesus Christ in faith are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church, the bride of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. The Father by His Word and Spirit creates the church, calling sinful people into the fellowship of Christ's body. And by the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity.

The universal church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, it is made up of all those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ. The church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. This involves a commitment to see the Gospel preached and churches planted throughout the world. The ultimate mission of the church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the Gospel. As God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women should, through baptism, enter into the fellowship of a local church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper and prayer. In this context they are called to live out the New Covenant as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the Kingdom of God. The church's members are to work together in love and unity, exercising their spiritual gifts, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ.

Matthew 16:18; 18:17; 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-47; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 14:26; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:11-16; 5:23; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Sec. F. Angels

Angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped. Although they are a higher order of creation than humanity, they are created to serve God, to worship Him and to care for those who will inherit salvation.

Satan, originally the greatest of the angels, rebelled against God, taking with him a host of angels (also referred to in scripture as demons). He was cast out of God's presence and, as a usurper of God's rule, established a counter-kingdom of darkness and evil. He is the "father of lies" and the great deceiver. Therefore Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and of humanity. He is the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Although he presently controls all the powers of darkness, he will be eternally punished in the lake of fire.

Genesis 3:1-15; Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 4:1-11; 25:41; Luke 2:9-14; 10:18; John 10:10; 12:31; 16:11; Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 6:10-17; Colossians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Timothy 2:26; Hebrews 1:6-7,14; 2:6-7,14; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Revelation 5:11-14; 12:1-14; 19:10; 20:2,10.

Sec. G. The Return of Christ

At a time known only to God, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven, and all believers - both those who have died in Christ and those who are still alive - will meet Him in the air. This hope produces in us a sense of constant expectancy and motivates us to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Every human being who has ever lived will one day be raised bodily from the dead. In judgment and condemnation, unbelievers will be consigned to eternal conscious punishment in hell, while believers will enter into eternal blessedness and joy. In the new heavens and the new earth, Christ's Kingdom will come to full fruition as the redeemed, in gloriously renewed bodies, dwell with Him forever, serving Him, reigning with Him and giving Him unending praise and glory.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 8:12; 10:28; 13:49-50; 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:34; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:5,40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; 23:42; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1,8,10; Philippians 1:23; 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7-13; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 6-7,14; Revelation 1:8; 2:7; 3:11; 19:16; 20:1-22:13.