

Statement of Faith

Revised Copy

What we believe is as important as what we do, because our actions will be influenced by our beliefs. This truth can be seen when the Apostle Paul takes the first eleven chapters of his letter to the Romans to teach doctrine before moving into application in chapter twelve. The Bible does not teach doctrine in isolation; it is always given to change how we live..

This principle is also true for the church. The ministry and function of *Blue Ridge Bible Church* will revolve around the basic core of truth that we teach. We call this core of biblical truth our *Statement of Faith*.

This *Statement of Faith* contains the fundamental beliefs which we hold to be non-negotiable, and which must be the commitment of all that hold membership in *Blue Ridge Bible Church*. They are grouped into the following areas:

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|--------------|-----------------|
| Bibliology | (Bible) |
| Theology | (God) |
| Anthropology | (Man) |
| Soteriology | (Salvation) |
| Ecclesiology | (Church) |
| Angelology | (Angels) |
| Eschatology | (Future Events) |

DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURES: Bibliology

We believe God has chosen to reveal Himself to man. This revelation is seen in a general sense in creation (Romans 1:20) and in a specific sense through the Scriptures (John 5:39; Hebrews 1:1-2; Luke 24:27).

We believe the Scripture, which is comprised of the sixty-six books of the Bible, is the objective (I Peter 1:10-11) and final (Hebrews 1:1-2) revelation of God to man, until we see Him face to face (I Corinthians 13:8-12; Jude 3).

We believe these Scriptures are the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God (II Timothy 3:16) in the original manuscripts. We therefore hold this collection of Scripture, known as the Bible, as our ultimate and only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18, 7:24-27; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17).

We believe the Scriptures, though written by and through the agency of man, were inspired and superintended by God, the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20-21), so that the writers were protected against error (John 17:19).

We believe the Scriptures were given to be understood and obeyed by man; therefore we consider the literal, historical, grammatical method of interpretation to be the proper method for determining its meaning. Thus, we believe the Genesis account of creation as a six literal-day account (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

We believe that the Scriptures are the only standard of morality that is binding on the consciences of all believers. Therefore we strive to handle the Scriptures with humility, seeking always to improve our understanding of what God's standards are for our daily lives (Acts 17:11). We furthermore seek to diligently identify and root out personal tastes, opinions, and

other forms of human wisdom which either add to or subtract from the pure message of God's Word (1 Cor. 1:10-25; Romans 14:1-15:13) so that they are not confused by the consciences of believers as if they were on the level of God's commands and wisdom.

DOCTRINE OF GOD: Theology

We believe the Scriptures reveal God as the living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:6), eternally existing in three persons. This is called the "Trinity" and consists of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

Furthermore, we believe the Scriptures reveal that God has attributes and that these attributes are shared equally by all three persons of the Godhead (Matthew 28:19).

We believe that all three members of the Trinity were involved in the creation of the space-time continuum that we perceive with our senses and study with science (Genesis 1 & 2; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 11:3). We believe that the best understanding of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 from the standpoints of Scripture and science is that the universe and earth were formed by God's spoken word in six literal days.

We believe the Scriptures teach the Trinity as being involved in the divine plan of salvation such that each Person has a unique aspect and function (II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2), while working together as one.

God the Father:

We believe the Scriptures reveal God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, as the originator of the acts of God. He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9), and the pursuer of man in salvation (Ephesians 1:3-14; I Peter 1:2-5). God and God alone possesses the power of being in Himself (Rev. 4:11), further, He is the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe. He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalms 103:19; Romans 11:36). In His sovereignty, God is neither the author nor approver of man's sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), further, God holds man responsible to obey His Law.

God the Son:

The Scriptures also proclaim that Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, is uniquely the Son of God, equal to, and one with, the Father (John 10:30). His equality is seen in His relationship to God and in His relationship to time and matter (John 1:1-4).

We believe the Scriptures make it clear that while He is fully God, He also became fully man (John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-8). His humanity was by conception of the Holy Spirit through the virgin birth (Matthew 1:2-23). Therefore He lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; II Corinthians 5:21).

We believe that He died on the cross, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day (Luke 24:36-40) and that He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) forty days after His resurrection where He is now seated at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33) to intercede for His people (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34).

We proclaim that the purpose of His incarnation was to accomplish the redemption of His elect through the shedding of His blood and atoning death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; Hebrews 9:12; I Peter 2:24).

God the Holy Spirit:

We believe the Scriptures reveal the Third Person of the Godhead to be the Holy Spirit, who possesses full deity (Acts 5:3-4). He is revealed as a Person, not a force. He possesses intellect (I Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), and a will (I Corinthians 12:11). He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), omnipotent (I Corinthians 12:11), omnipresent (Psalms 139:7-10), and omniscient (Isaiah 40:13-14). He is also the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13), and was involved in creation (Genesis 1:2).

We believe the Scriptures teach that He was active in both the Old and New Testaments, but that His activity concerning the church began on the day of Pentecost when He came in fulfillment of the promise of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:49). During this church-age His ministry focuses on regeneration (I Peter 3:18; Romans 8:11), and baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ at the moment of salvation (I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9). He desires to continually fill all believers today (Ephesians 5:18). The purpose of His work is to exalt and glorify Jesus Christ (John 16:13-15).

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit is the bestower of gifts to the church. These gifts were given for the perfecting of the saints and edification of the body. We further believe that these gifts are given sovereignly according to the will of God the Holy Spirit and that some gifts were foundational to the early church with the Apostles (tongues, healing, miracles, etc.), while other gifts are permanent throughout the church-age (pastor-teacher, prophecy, service, exhortation, etc.). It seems clear from Scripture that the “sign” gifts ceased with the completion of the New Testament canon because they were no longer needed to confirm the message of God to the Jewish nation (Act 10:44-45; I Corinthians 1:22) through the early believers (Mark 16:14-20; I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4; I Thessalonians 5:11).

DOCTRINE OF MAN: Anthropology

We believe the Scriptures teach that Adam, the first man, was created by God in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27), that he was sinless, and that he had fellowship with his Creator. Through the exercise of his will, he partook of the forbidden fruit (rebelled against his creator), plunged the entire human race into sin, and brought God’s just condemnation upon all mankind (Genesis 1:31; 2:16-17; 3:1-24; Romans 5:12, 18).

We believe the Scriptures teach that man’s entire nature is now depraved and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or responding in righteousness to God (Jeremiah 17:9-10; Romans 3:10-18). Furthermore, we believe that man’s depraved condition has hopelessly enslaved him and that there is no help for the sinner apart from salvation which is graciously provided through the Person and work of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:19-28). All men abide under the wrath of holy God unless they repent of their sin and trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:10-12; 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; I Timothy 2:13-14; I John 1:8).

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION: Soteriology

We believe the Scriptures teach that salvation is wholly of God (John 3:16). Man, being dead in sin, would be forever lost apart from the mercy and grace of God in calling and bringing people to Himself (Ephesians 2:1-5).

We believe the Scriptures teach that God has provided one, and only one, way of salvation that being through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 14:6). We believe that this salvation is the result of the sacrifice of God's Son on the cross, a sacrifice which provided the wrath of God an object for punishment in substitution for sinful man (II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 1:18-19). Further, we believe that this salvation is only available through faith apart from any work or merit on man's part (Ephesians 2:8-9). We observe that the Scriptures speak of this salvation in three tenses, past (justification), present (sanctification), and future (glorification) (Ephesians 2:8; I Corinthians 1:18; Romans 5:10 and 8:29-30).

Justification:

We believe that the believer is, upon genuine conversion, declared righteous (justified) by Holy God on the basis of Christ's righteousness (Romans 5:1; II Corinthians 5:21) and that this justification is made sure by Christ's literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:38-39; Romans 4:25; 8:34). The believer is then reconciled to God (Romans 5:10-11), is adopted into His family (Romans 8:15-17), and has passed from spiritual death into spiritual life (John 5:24). He has been set apart, or sanctified, positionally before God the moment he embraces Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior. (I Corinthians 1:30; 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:10, 14)

Sanctification:

It is also clear from Scripture that the believer is being set apart progressively in his daily walk as he grows in grace toward Christlikeness. This growth is by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:13), by the application of the Word of God, by the fellowship and appropriation of the church (Ephesians 4:11-16), and by the continual use of the means of grace such as self-examination, watchfulness, prayer, yielding to the Spirit, etc. (II Peter 3:18; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 5:12-14; I John 3:3; Romans 12:1-2). We believe the Scriptures teach that this salvation provides the believer with the very life and power of God through His abiding presence. This is a guarantee for the Christian of the process of Christ-like character change (Ephesians 2:1-10; Philippians 2:5). This process of progressive sanctification is both the result of the sovereign work of God (John 17:17; Romans 8:28-29), and the proof of the reality of salvation (Colossians 1:21-23; I John 2:19). While salvation is totally of God, it results in the obedient cooperation and submission of the believer with the Lord (Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:12b, 4:22-24; I Timothy 4:7b; I Peter 1:10).

Glorification:

We believe that the believer is to be set apart prospectively from the very presence of sin. This is the final sanctification that is completed at the coming of Christ for His church. (I John 3:2; I Thessalonians 3:13; 5:23) The Scriptures teach that not only do believers share His glory now, (John 17:22-24) but are assured of future glorification (Romans 8:30).

We further believe that, based on the testimony of Scripture, all true believers are secure in their salvation (I John 5:11-13) and can be assured that their salvation will never be lost;

consequently, by the grace of God, they will persevere to the end (John 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 31-38).

Election:

We believe that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We understand that God's election of sinners to Himself does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 10:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). We believe that sovereign grace includes the enablement necessary for the sinner to receive the gift of salvation. Those whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

We teach that the favor of God upon sinners is unmerited, is solely by the sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2), and that God's will and purposes are always consistent with His actions and character as manifested in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9).

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH: Ecclesiology

We believe the Scriptures teach that the church, which is distinct from Israel (I Corinthians 10:32), is comprised of sinners who have repented of their sin (Acts 17:30; 26:20) and placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone to be their personal Lord and Savior. They thereby comprise the unique spiritual fellowship which is the body of Christ on earth (Ephesians 2:11-3:6), and of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Its beginning was on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:1-47) and will be removed from the earth at the rapture (I Thessalonians 4:13-17). We further believe that the universal church which is comprised of all believers in Christ (Acts 5:14) is manifested on earth in local assemblies or congregations of believers (Galatians 1:2; Romans 16:1). Membership should be maintained (Hebrews 10:25) by those who confess and believe that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10).

We believe the Scriptures give the church two ordinances: Water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36-39; I Corinthians 11:23-29). These confer no grace or merit.

We believe the Scriptures provide the local church with two offices. Elders (or pastors) who are to shepherd and oversee the spiritual direction of the flock while deacons are involved in the outworking of the ministries of the local church (Acts 6:1-6; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-15).

We believe the Scriptures teach the priesthood of all believers (I Peter 2:5), so that every believer has immediate access to the throne of God through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:18-22; I Timothy 2:5).

DOCTRINE OF ANGELS: Angelology

We believe the Scripture teaches the existence of angels, which are living spiritual beings, created by God for His pleasure and service (Hebrews 1:13). Scripture also makes clear that some of the angels rebelled and, under the leadership of Satan, opposed the person and program of God (Ezekiel 28:11-19). We believe the Scriptures teach that the head of the kingdom of

darkness is Satan (II Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 12:24). He incurred the judgment of God by his rebellion (Isaiah 14:12-17) and persuaded numerous angels (now called demons) to join his rebellion (II Peter 2:4; Matthew 25:41).

We believe that Satan and his demons have been actively involved in deceiving men since the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-15; John 8:44; Revelation 12:9) and continue to oppose God's work today (Acts 13:10; I John 3:10), even with counterfeit miracles (II Thessalonians 2:9). The Bible teaches his defeat by Christ at the cross (John 12:31; 16:11; 14:30) and his public disgrace at our Lord's return (II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 20:10).

We believe the Scriptures also teach the existence of angels who did not rebel. They worship and serve God their Creator (Hebrews 1:6-7; 2:2). Although they minister for Him, they are not to be served, sought after, or worshipped as God (Revelation 19:10; 22:9).

DOCTRINE OF FUTURE EVENTS: Eschatology

While we currently holds a pretribulational position regarding the rapture of the church and the subsequent tribulation and earthly reign of Jesus Christ, we recognize that there are numerous views about the Lord's return none of which are considered essential doctrine.

The following are, in our opinion, the fundamental truths which are non-negotiable regarding last things:

- We believe the Bible teaches the physical, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth.
- When He comes, Jesus will separate the true saints, both those who have died during the tribulation period as well as the those who are alive at His coming, to be glorified in Himself.
- It is also clear that Satan is to be bound for a 1,000 years and Christ will reign over the earth during this time after which He will destroy the earth with fire, and judge humankind at the Great White Throne judgment. This will be followed by the creation the new Heavens and the new Earth over which God will rule forever and ever.
- Finally, we believe the Scriptures teach that the purpose of God in revealing end-time events is to warn unbelievers so that they may be prepared (John 15:28-31; 16:1-4; Revelation 1:1-3) and to encourage believers to live holy lives (II Peter 3:10-13).

Second Revision by Pastor Peter