

Statement of Beliefs and Faith
Rev. Jeremy D Spence

The Bible/Scripture

I believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament, is the Word of God, which came from Him by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through men and women. It is the final and supreme authority on all matters of faith and practice as a Christian. As such, it is useful for teaching, correcting, rebuking, training, and living in this world. I believe the Bible is accurate, is truth, and does not contradict itself in any manner and represents God's revelation to people. (Matthew 4.4; John 21.25; John 17.17; 2 Timothy 3.16-17; Hebrews 1.1-4; Hebrews 4.12; 2 Peter 1.20-21)

God

I believe that God is the creator of all things, whether seen or unseen, whether discovered or undiscovered. I believe that God is one, but manifests himself in three persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus I believe in the Trinity. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and is everywhere, though He is not in everything nor is everything God. I believe that God's character and nature is unchanging though he chooses to show Himself differently at times. God is equally holy, just, perfect, loving, faithful, gracious, merciful and cannot be contained by nature. He has chosen to make himself known to creation, desires a perfect relationship with people, and through Christ also giving each person a plan for life. I believe the whole story of Scripture is about God and His desire to interact with people. All of creation declares that God exists so that no one is without excuse to know Him. (Genesis 1; Genesis 3; Exodus 7-13; 1 Kings 8.27; Psalm 139; Isaiah 40.25; Jeremiah 29.11; Malachi 3.6; Matthew 28.19; John 10.30; John 11; Acts 17; Romans 1; Hebrews 4.13; James 1.17; Revelation 21-22).

Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is the perfect physical representation of God. Christ is the only way to God and salvation through him is free to all. Christ is the perfect lamb that fulfilled all the sacrificial requirements of the Old Testament as well as the fulfillment of all Scripture. I believe that Jesus was present in the beginning. I believe that Christ was born of a virgin, Mary, and lived a perfect and sinless life. I believe that currently Christ is serving as our High Priest and Mediator before God, while also preparing a place for us in Heaven. I believe that it is only through Christ and His grace that forgiveness is granted. I also believe that sometime in the future He will come back for those who believe in Him and take them to Heaven. Christ is the heart of the Gospel and Kingdom of God and shows all people what it means to live a missional-incarnational life. I believe that Christ died for the sins of the world and was resurrected proving he is God. It is the desire of God and Christ that all people come to know the power of the Gospel and the love of Christ. (Matthew 1.22; Matthew 5.17; John 1; John 10.10; John 14.6; John 14.18; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 2; Colossians 1.15-23; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18; Hebrews 1.1-4; Hebrews 4.15; Hebrews 7; Revelation 22.12-16)

The Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit is God. Christ promised that someone exactly like Him would come and named him the Holy Spirit, Encourager, and Advocate. The Holy Spirit is given to every believer and indwells the believer thus allowing us to complete the mission of God. I believe the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life of every believer, empowers the Christian to obey the commands of Christ and God, gives gifts to each believer, intercedes on our behalf, convicts, guarantees our inheritance, encourages and comforts. (Genesis 1; Genesis 41.38; Numbers 27.18; Isaiah 40.13; Psalm 014.30; Psalm 139.7; Job 33.4; Matthew 28.19; John 14; Acts 1.8; Romans 8. 1-5; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5; Ephesians 1.1-14; Ephesians 4.11-13; 2 Peter 1.21)

Humanity

Statement of Beliefs and Faith

Rev. Jeremy D Spence

I believe that in the beginning God created humans as man and woman in his image. I believe in the sacredness of all life and the value of all life. I believe that all individuals are equal. I believe that Adam and Eve rebelled against God and since then all have done the same, which the Bible calls sin. People are broken physically, emotionally, sexually, mentally, relationally, and spiritually. Due to the brokenness and sin of humans, creation, the entire world is broken. I believe that on our own I deserve and would choose to be away from God; the Bible calls this place Hell. Yet, as a Christian, I believe I am called to love and live by the Scripture empowered by the Holy Spirit. I believe that no one is perfect, including myself. I believe that once a person dies he/she faces judgment by God. (Genesis 1-3; Romans 1; Romans 3.23; Romans 6.23; Hebrews 9.27-28).

Salvation

Salvation is found only in and by Jesus Christ. I believe that there is no other salvation but through Him. I believe that salvation is a gift of God and no one can boast about being saved because it is the work of God. I believe that salvation is available to all who seek it. I believe I do not earn salvation but by my actions I show my response to the free gift of grace. (Luke 14.27; John 1.20; John 14; 1 Corinthians 11; Ephesians 2.8-10)

The Church

The head of the Church is Christ and the church must be centered on and obedient to Christ. The Church advances the Kingdom of God. I believe that Christ birthed the Church as his representatives in the world. I believe the church functions best when it is counter-cultural to the World and thus is set apart for God's purpose. I believe the Church is made up of every person who responds to faith in Christ Jesus regardless of where or when they receive Christ. I believe the mission of church is to continue the work of redemption Christ started, to bring His forgiveness to others, and to be a witness of God's story. I believe that every church has a unique calling from God for its existence. I believe the church is mandated to love God, love others, and make disciples. I believe that every person who is a Christian should be part of a local church. (Matthew 16.18; Matthew 28; Mark 12.29-30; Acts 2; Colossians 1.8)

Individual Soul Liberty

I believe the Bible teaches that each individual Christian is able to interpret Scripture under the guidance, influence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is known in Christian communities as the priesthood of all believers. I believe that each individual Christian has direct access to God through Christ, and does not need another mediator besides Christ. However, I also believe that each individual believer should try to interpret Scripture within the context of community. (Matthew 27.51-53; Hebrews 10.25; 1 Peter 2.9)

Ordinances of the Church

As Baptists I believe in two ordinances instituted by Jesus: Lord's Supper and believer's baptism. The Lord's Supper, known as Communion or Eucharist, is a powerful symbol that reminds us of Christ's sacrifice while also pointing us to the future when Christ will come again. Communion is open to all those who have professed Jesus as King and Lord regardless of church membership or affiliation. In regards to baptism, I believe in baptism by immersion as an outward expression of the personal decision to join the Kingdom of God as manifested in the local church. Baptism is after profession of faith in Christ. Similar to the Lord's Supper, baptism is a symbol picturing the death of Christ and His resurrection. As such, the individual is dying to his or her old self and being raised up as a new creature in Christ. (Matthew 3.16; Matthew 26. 17-30; Matthew 28.19; Mark 1.9-11; Acts 2.38; Romans 6.1-14; 1 Corinthians 11; 2 Corinthians 5.17)

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Marriage

I believe that Scripture teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman. The intention of marriage is to be a commitment for life. I believe that marriage is a covenant made primarily before God and not primarily a legal contract or union. Marriage is a powerful symbol of Christ's love of the Church and all Christians. I believe Scripture teaches that a Christian/Believer should marry another Christian/Believer. Within marriage, I believe that husband and wife are equals and as such should treat one another with love and respect as Christ loves us. I believe that those who are not married are equals. Marriage does not elevate a person in status within the church. (Genesis 2; Matthew 19.3-12; 1 Corinthians 7; 2 Corinthians 6.14; 2 Corinthians 11.2-3; Ephesians 5.22-33; Revelation 19; Revelation 21)

Pastors and Clergy

I believe that God calls certain individuals to be the shepherd of a local church. The pastor is someone who has been called by God for the purpose of edifying the church. The pastor is not superior to others but instead is an equal. However, the pastor should lead by example the Christian life in all matters of faith, purity, and conduct. The pastor is to equip the members of the church to do the work of the Church and to fulfill the mission of the church. (1 Corinthians 4.6; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4; Philippians 3; 1 Timothy 3; 1 Timothy 4.11-12; Titus 1)

Church Members/Laity

I believe in the priesthood of all believers and as such each member has the responsibility to live out Scripture faithfully within the context of the local church. Each member should use his or her gifts as the Lord has given. I believe that all members are equals in Christ. (Matthew 25; Acts 4; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4.11-13; Philippians 2; 1 Peter 4.10)

Local Church Autonomy and Power

As an extension of the individual soul liberty doctrine I believe the local church has the final authority on matters of practice in the church. I believe that no denomination, Christian organization, nor government can dictate practices, doctrines and beliefs, or structure to the church. The members of the church have final say on these matters. The local church should not be isolated and independent but instead should gather with other churches and the broader Christian community to help fulfill the mission of the church and bring the Gospel of Christ to others. At times the local church may choose to partner with other faiths in order to seek justice, religious freedom, and the betterment of the community as a witness of God's redemption power and the work of the Gospel. (Proverbs 27.17; Ecclesiastes 4.12; John 17; Acts 17)