

# **On the Authority of Scripture, Grace & Salvation, and the Sacraments**

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## **Authority of Scripture**

My view of the Bible, God's Word found in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is best summarized in my agreement with The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy:

### **A SHORT STATEMENT**

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms, obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

## **Grace and Salvation**

My beliefs on grace and salvation are consistent with Classic or Reformed Arminianism and can be summarized by the acronym FACTS:

Freed by grace to believe - through God's prevenient grace in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Atonement for all – Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is sufficient for the sins of the whole world, though He saves those who receive Him by faith.

Conditional election – God in His sovereignty has chosen to save those who have faith in Christ. God has foreknown from eternity which individuals would believe in Christ.

Total Depravity - Humanity was created in the image of God, good and upright, but fell from its original sinless state through willful disobedience, leaving humanity sinful, separated from God, and under the sentence of divine condemnation. If anyone is to be saved, God must take the initiative by His prevenient grace, convicting of sin and revealing Christ Jesus as the Savior.

Security in Christ - Since salvation comes through faith in Christ, the security of our salvation continues by faith in Christ. Just as the Holy Spirit empowered us to believe in Christ, so He empowers us to continue believing in Christ.

- I believe in the eternal security of the believer, but I now hold that belief with an open hand, as I can see how the Scriptures may teach the possibility of apostasy.

## **Sacraments**

Baptism is a Sacrament of the Church, instituted by Christ, whereby through the visible sign of water, a public proclamation is made of one's identification with Jesus Christ and His Church. Baptism is a Sacrament, not because it imparts the grace of God, but rather because it communicates the grace of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in a very real and spiritually present manner.

- Though I prefer believer's baptism, I can see and even somewhat agree with a Biblical case for paedobaptism as a covenant sign of God's prevenient grace in Christ on the children of believers.
- Though my most comfortable mode of baptism is immersion, I do not believe the mode or amount of water matters according to the text of the Holy Scriptures.

Holy Communion is a Sacrament of the Church instituted by Christ using the visible signs of bread, representing His body, and wine, representing His blood. When partaken, we remember the death of our Lord Jesus. During this sacrament, we acknowledge His presence with us, but not specifically in the elements of Communion, which remain unchanged. Communion is a Sacrament, not because it imparts the grace of God, but rather because it communicates the grace of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in a very real and spiritually present manner.