

Statement of Faith and Practice

The Bible

The Bible—all 66 books of the Protestant canon—is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God in the original writings. Today we have a reliable copy of the originals, and we use it as the final authority for our faith and practice.

1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Pet 1:21.

God

There is one eternal God existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three, distinct in personhood, are yet one God, and share precisely the same divine nature.

Matt 28:19; John 10:30; 15:26; Eph 4:4-6.

God the Father

God the Father is the divine source of all creation, the sovereign ruler, compassionate reconciler, and the Father of God the Son, Jesus Christ. It pleased the Father to show his love for the world by offering his Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Gen 1-2; Exod 20:11; Deut 10:14; Prov 3:19; Isa 53:10; Dan 4:34-35; Matt 3:16-17; Mark 9:7; John 1:29; 3:16; 1 John 4:9.

God the Son, Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is God the Son; truly human and truly divine. He is virgin-born, led a sinless life, performed miracles, died on a cross, resurrected bodily, and ascended to the Father. He will one day return to earth in glory to judge the nations and establish his sovereign power over all things in his eternal kingdom.

Dan 7:13-14; Matt 1:23; John 1:1-4, 29; Acts 1:11; 2:22-24; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:3-4; Phil 2:5-11; Heb 1:1-4; 4:15; Matt 25:31-46; Rev 5:13; 20:1-6.

God the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit convicts the unbelieving world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. To the new believer at the moment of faith, he grants spiritual life, baptizes into the church (the body of Christ), and indwells. The Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts among believers according to his choosing for the express purpose of growing and edifying the church.

John 3:6-8; 16:8; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 12:4-13; Eph 1:13-14; 2:22; 4:30; Tit 3:5.

Angels

There exist a multitude of angels created by God of various orders and ranks, both good and evil. The good angels worship God, serve as messengers, and minister to believers on earth. The devil (Satan) led an angelic rebellion. Evil angels and demons seek to deceive, steal, kill, destroy, rule over nations and individuals, and work contrary to the purposes of God. Jesus has complete power over all angels and will ultimately punish Satan and the rebellious angels eternally in the lake of fire.

Gen 3:1-6; Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:12-19; Dan 10:13, 20-21; 12:1; Matt 4:1; Mark 5:9; John 10:10; Eph 2:2; 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 1 Tim 5:21; Heb 1:14; 12:22; 2 Pet 2:4; Rev 5:11-12; 20:2, 10.

Humanity

God created humanity to rule the earth on his behalf as image bearers. Nevertheless, because of Adam's sin, every human is born spiritually lost, sinful by nature and by choice, under the holy wrath of God, and facing the dual threats of physical death and eternal damnation. Human life is sacred from conception to its natural end.

Gen 1:26-28; 3:17; Ps 139:13; Rom 3:10-12, 23; Eph 1:7; 2:8-9; Tit 3:4-7.

The Only Way of Salvation

The only way to avoid eternal damnation is by salvation through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ results in the believer being reconciled to God, spiritually born again, having their sins forgiven, granted eternal life and entrance into God's eternal kingdom, and relational unity with God the Father through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. No good deed, ordinance, or moral reformation no matter how great can help the sinner take even one step toward salvation.

Matt 26:28; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom 3:20, 23; 5:6-9; 6:23; Eph 2:8-9; Col 2:13-14; Tit 3:5.

The Church

The church universal consists of all born again believers in Jesus Christ, Jew and Gentile, in one body under Christ her head, from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until the rapture of the church to heaven. It is the privilege and duty of each believer to join and serve in a local church. Each local church is led by biblically qualified and appointed elders and deacons. The purposes of the church include edifying the saints, evangelizing the lost, exalting God, and exhibiting God's manifold wisdom to the unseen realm. The church practices two sacraments: water baptism as a visible sign of entry into the covenant community of the church, and communion as a memorial of Christ's atoning sacrifice and a reminder of his coming kingdom.

Matt 28:18-20; Eph 2:11-22; 3:10; 4:11-13; Luke 22:15-20; Acts 2:28; 1 Cor 12:12-13, 27; Col 1:18; 1 Tim 3:1-13.

Last Things

At a time known only to himself, God will launch his end-times program which includes both judgment (removal of the wicked) and salvation (exaltation of the faithful). The dead will be resurrected, and Christ will physically return to earth and establish his eternal kingdom. Everyone saved by faith through all the ages will rule and reign with him forever on the new heaven and earth. The unsaved are sentenced to eternal damnation in the lake of fire, without any opportunity to change their everlasting destiny.

Isa 10:22; Ezek 20:35-38; 34:16-22; Dan 2; 7; 12:1-2, 13; Joel 3:2-4; Zeph 3:8-11; Zech 13:8-9; Mal 3:17-18; Matt 25:31-46; Rev 20-22.

Marriage and Sexuality

God created male and female as two distinct and complementary sexes which are biologically and genetically recognized. Any attempt to change one's sex or disagreement with one's biological sex is sinful and offensive to God. God instituted marriage to be an exclusive lifelong covenantal relationship between one male and one female. No other union constitutes marriage because human marriage reflects the relationship between Christ and his church. Human sexuality is only to be expressed within the context of marriage.

Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-9; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9; Eph 5:25-33.

The Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation

inNERV8 aligns itself with the Protestant tradition in holding to the five solas:

Sola Scriptura (“Scripture Alone”)

This principle affirms that the Bible alone is the ultimate and final authority for Christian faith and practice. All doctrines, teachings, and traditions must be tested against Scripture.

Acts 17:11; 2 Tim 3:16-17.

Sola Fide (“Faith Alone”)

Salvation is received through faith alone, not by works or human effort. It emphasizes that believers are justified (made righteous) before God solely through trusting in Christ’s finished work.

Eph 2:8-9; Rom 3:28.

Sola Gratia (“Grace Alone”)

Salvation is a gift of God’s grace, not something humans can earn or deserve. God’s unmerited favor, given through Christ, is the only means by which people are saved.

Rom 3:23-24; Tit 3:5.

Solus Christus (“Christ Alone”)

Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity. Salvation is found in Christ alone, and His sacrificial death and resurrection are the only sufficient grounds for redemption.

John 14:6; Acts 4:12.

Soli Deo Gloria (“To the Glory of God Alone”)

All of God’s purposes in creation, including judgment and salvation, exist for God’s glory. This sola is rooted in the Reformation’s rejection of any glory or merit attributed to humans, saints, or institutions for salvation. Instead, all praise and honor are directed solely to God.

Rom 9:15-23; 11:36; Eph 1:5-6; Rev 4:11.

Interpretive Methodology

Following are the principles in NERV8 uses when interpreting the Bible:

Author's intended meaning

The reader does not generate his or her own meaning. The task of the reader is to accurately determine the author's intended meaning.

Context, context, context!

The reader must understand and use the context to determine the author's intended meaning. If the interpreter cannot explain how a verse fits the surrounding context, there is great risk of misinterpretation.

"A text deprived of its context becomes a pretext for a proof text. Proof texting (using a single verse to support a doctrine) is not a sound methodology."

Literal interpretation

Employ consistent literal interpretation. "Literal" means grammatical-historical, whereby the meaning is determined by normal rules of grammar according to the genre and language of the text at the time it was written ("historical"). Literal interpretation recognizes literary devices such as figures of speech. Literal interpretation runs contrary to allegorical interpretation, whereby the reader generates some imaginative meaning not evident in a grammatical-historical reading of the text.

Stability of meaning

The author's intended meaning is stable. A later text referencing an earlier text does not—indeed, *cannot*—change the original author's intended meaning of the earlier text.

Original audience

Avoid placing the modern reader “into” the text. Recognize each biblical book was written to an original audience for an intended purpose. No one today is that original audience. Begin by asking, “What was the message to the original audience? How did the author intend his original audience to respond?” Then account for similarities or differences between the contemporary reader and the original audience before trying to apply the text in a modern setting.