

Full Doctrinal Statement for James Pittman

The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. We believe that God's Word has been divinely preserved in the English language and commonly known as the Authorized King James Version. Therefore the Authorized King James Version shall be the official and only translation used by the church. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:20-21).

The Church

1) We believe that the Scriptures teach that a Baptist Church is a local, visible, assembly of baptized believers, associated by covenant, faith and fellowship of the Gospel. A church is to observe the ordinances of Christ and is governed by His laws. Members of the local church are to exercise the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word. The only scriptural offices of the church are pastor (elders, bishops), and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the New Testament. The true mission of each church is found in the Great Commission which includes the making of individual disciples, building the church by baptizing believers, and to disciple the saved. This order cannot be reversed. Each church has the absolute right of self government, free from the interference of any outside entity. The one and only Head of each church is Jesus Christ. It is Scriptural for churches of like faith and order to co-operate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel. Every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its co-operation and in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence, the free will of each church is final (Acts 2:41-42 & 47, 5:11; I Corinthians 4:17, 5:5,11; 11:2 & 23; II Corinthians 8:5, 23-24; I Timothy 3:5,15; II Thessalonians 3:7; Romans 16:17-20; Matthew 18:15-20; 28:19-20; John 14:15; 15:10; I John 4:21; I Thessalonians 4:2; II John 6; Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23, 15:22-23, 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9;

Ephesians 1:22,23, 4:11; I Corinthians 12:4,8-11; Acts 6:5-6; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24; I Peter 5:1-4; Jude 3-4; I Corinthians 5:11-13, 6:1-3).

2) We believe that the establishment and continuance of churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Matthew 16:18; Acts 13:1-3, 14:27, 20:17, 28-32; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).

3) We recognize water baptism and the Lords Supper as the Scriptural and only ordinances of the church.

Scriptural Baptism

We believe the Scriptures teach that the only proper mode of baptism is the immersion. Believers are to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is conducted only under the authority of the local church. The purpose of baptism is to show forth our faith in our crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, It further testifies of our death to sin and our resurrection to a new life in Christ. It is a pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership. Infants are Gods little ones, whether children of Christian or non-Christian parents, and are safe in Christ until the age of moral accountability is reached. This makes the baptizing of infants unnecessary. We will only receive or recognize baptism administered by other Baptist churches of like faith and practice. We will not recognize for membership any baptism administered by a church that is not a Baptist church of like faith and practice with us (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41, 8:12,13,26-39, 18:7-11; Colossians 2:12).

Lord's Supper

We believe the Scriptures teach that the elements of the Lord's Supper are to be unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. The two elements are symbols of Christs body and shed blood. These are partaken of by the members of a church, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord, and in hopeful anticipation of His return. We practice what is commonly referred to as "closed" or "restricted" Lord's Supper. Thus, only those members of this church, in good standing with this church, may partake of the supper with us. (Matthew 26:27-30; Mark 14:20-26; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 10:16, 11:2 & 17-34).

Separation

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Saviour. Separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded of God (Romans 12:1-2, 14:13; II Corinthians 7:1; II Timothy 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11).

The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that "blessed hope," the personal, imminent return of Christ who will rapture all believers prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom, which was promised to the nation of Israel (Psalm 89:3-4; Daniel 2:31-45; Zechariah 14:4-11; I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10, 19:11-16, 20:1-6).

The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

1) We believe that all the redeemed are kept by the power of God and are thus secured in Christ forever (John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I Peter 1:4-5).

2) We believe that it is the privilege of every believer to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation based on the promises of God's Word. The scriptures, however, clearly forbid the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

Salvation

1) We believe salvation is the gracious gift of God. This free gift is secured through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10; I Peter 1:18-19). The free gift of salvation is available to all who will receive it by faith. We reject the error commonly known as "Calvinism" which teaches that only the elect may be saved. Salvation is available to whosoever will receive it.

2) We believe that in salvation believers are born again. This new birth brings about a new creation in Christ Jesus. The new birth is instantaneous and not a process. In regeneration the one who was dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature. The new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by the transforming work of man, but wholly and solely by the

power of the Holy Spirit. It comes as a result of having received the gospel and it is evidenced in the fruits of repentance and newness of life.

3) We believe that the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ is justification. Justification includes the pardon of sin, the gift of eternal life, and the imputation of righteousness. It is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the blood of Christ.

4) We believe that repentance and faith are required to rightly receive the gospel. When we are convicted of our sin and condemnation, we must turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy. In addition, we must sincerely receive the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confess Him as our only and all-sufficient Saviour. (John 3:3; II Corinthians 5:17 & 19; I John 5:1; Luke 5:27; John 3:6-7; II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; John 1:12-13; Ephesians 5:9; Acts 13:39; Romans 8:1; Romans 5:9; Romans 5:1; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Romans 4:1-3; Hebrews 10:38; Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13; Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9-11).

The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the likeness and image of God. Nevertheless, in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God, resulting in man's total depravity. Man is utterly unable to remedy his own lost condition. (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23, 5:12, 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-19)

The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit

1) We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. He is the Supernatural Agent of regeneration and indwelling, sealing the believer unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14).

2) We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers in understanding and appropriating the Scriptures. It is the privilege and duty of every believer to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 1:17-18; 5:18; I John 2:20 & 27).

3) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowing of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses pastors and teachers in equipping believers for the work of the local church. (Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:7-12).

4) We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues is not the common or necessary sign of the filling of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate deliverance

of the body from sickness awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection. However, God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (I Corinthians 1:22, 13:8, 14:21-22; James 5:15).

The Person & Work of Christ

1) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary that He might reveal God to man and redeem sinful men. (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14:2; II Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-8).

2) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice. Our justification is made sure by His literal and physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:18-36; Romans 3:24-25; I Peter 1:3-5, 2:24; Ephesians 1:17).

3) We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He acts as our great High Priest, He fulfills the offices of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 7:25, 9:24; Romans 8:34; I John 2:1-2).

The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; John 14:10 & 26).

Creation

We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11).

The Eternal State

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all the saved who die in Christ. (Rom. 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 2:13-14).

Human Sexuality

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and

pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Genesis 2:24, 19:5, 13, 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1: 26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; I Thessalonians. 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until the death of one's spouse. Although divorced and remarried persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; I Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, inexcusable taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5, 139: 14-16; Isaiah 44:24, 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5, 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

Lawsuits Between Believers

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians, or the church, to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (I Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

Giving

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to Him, is obligated to support his church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:28; I Timothy 5:17-18; I John 3:17).