

JC Cares Theological Statement

God

There is one true God (YHWH) who always was, who presently is, and who forever will be. He is knowable only because He has revealed Himself to mankind in a way that is comprehensible for our limited capacities. Both His written revelation (Holy Scripture) and His general revelation (creation) tell us of His eternal power, invisible attributes, and unfailing love. He is eternal, self-existent, immutable (unchanging), all-powerful, all-knowing and perfect. He exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons are of the same essence. They are in unity with one another in their true essence, and yet they are each distinct in personality and role. They are co-eternal in being and nature, and they are co-equal in power and worth. They exist together in perfect and unbroken fellowship as one essential being (Deuteronomy 6:4,13; Matthew 4:10; Hebrews 1:1-2; Romans 1; Colossians 1; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Psalm 139:4; Isaiah 46:9-10).

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is the eternal only begotten son of God. He is fully man and fully God. Jesus was the agent of creation and the creator of all things. He was before all things and holds all things together. He is the visible image of the invisible God, who became like man in every respect except for sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a perfect, obedient life and died on a cross as the penal substitute for mankind. Absorbing the complete righteous wrath of the Father towards sin, He simultaneously upheld God's justice and love. Through His death, man can be freed of guilt and reconciled to God. After being dead and buried for three days, Jesus' body was physically raised from the grave, overcoming death and its power. Through His resurrection, Jesus validated His deity, His life, and His mission. He ascended and now sits at the right hand of the Father and serves as the perfect mediator between God and man. A time will come when Jesus Christ will return to earth in bodily, physical form just as He ascended following His resurrection. His personal return is imminent and will be unexpected such that no one can predict it. Through exertion of His supreme authority, Jesus will consummate His promise of an everlasting Kingdom and reign eternally over the universe (John 1; Ephesians 1; Colossians 1; Hebrews 1; Romans 5:8; 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Philippians 2:5-8; Matt. 24:29-30, 25:14-46; Thess. 4:15-17; 5:2; Rev. 19:11; 20; 21).

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is co-equal with the Father and Son for all eternity. He is a helper, adviser, strengthener, encourager, ally, and advocate. He is a person, distinct from the Father and Son. He enlightens, regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals,

empowers, transforms, and gifts all believers in Christ at the point of faith in Christ. He helps believers understand, interpret, and apply God's Word to their lives. He is the proxy on earth for the resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ. He is the seal and the down payment for the believer's future inheritance. He indwells believers, convicts them of sin, and enables them to be conformed to the image of Christ (Matthew 28:19; John 3:3-7; John 16:7-15; Titus 3:5; I Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:9, 15-17; I Corinthians 2:12; 3:16-17; 12:13; Ephesians 1:13- 18; 4:30; 5:18; Galatians 3:14; Galatians 5:16).

The Scriptures

The Scriptures (39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament) are the inspired Word of God. In their original form they are without error in all they proclaim. They are completely sufficient and authoritative because of the Spirit who breathed them out and because of the true story they tell. They are to be read, studied, proclaimed, and applied by the Church as a foundation and guide in all of life. They are the canon "rule" by which all theology, wisdom, mission, and vision should be measured (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Psalm 33:6; Psalm 119; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 1 Timothy 5:18).

Man

God made humans, both male and female, in His own image with the purpose of glorifying Himself through enjoyment and fellowship with man. Tempted by Satan, Adam and Eve rebelled against God and fell from their sinless state. As a result, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and choose to sin against God. The depravity of man finds every human being severed from the Creator and subject to His divine wrath, alienated from other human beings, utterly hopeless and unable to be restored to his original state without God's radical intervention (Romans 2:2-3, 5; Ephesians 2:8-9; Genesis 1:27; 9:6; Romans 3:23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1).

Salvation

Salvation is the free gift of God, by grace alone and through faith alone in the person of Jesus Christ and His work on behalf of mankind. It cannot be earned through good works. Man's response to God is founded in the eternal working of the triune God who predestined, called, justified and glorified all believers. All who believe are declared righteous in Christ, completely forgiven of the debt of their sin, adopted as children of God, and made co-heirs with Christ for all eternity. Biblical faith is marked by repentance and a changed life. Union with God initiates a reorientation of one's affections away from self and toward God and others (Ephesians 2:1- 10; Romans 5:15; 6:23; 8:30-31; Hebrews 9:15-20; Galatians 3:15-4:7).

Male and Female as Image Bearers and the Implications for Marriage

God creates each person as male or female, as two distinct, complementary genders who together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). These distinctions are divinely inspired and are essential to fully understanding the nature of God. However, we are fully fallen – physically, emotionally, and psychologically – and this brokenness can affect our personal understanding and expression of gender.

But by God's sovereignty and through His grace, gender is also being redeemed from the pathway of self-determined expression to God's intended design of male and female as image bearers. We believe that this redemptive process is full of hope and healing. Conversely, disagreement with one's biological sex or God's boundaries for sexual expression leads to spiritual confusion and emotional chaos (Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that marriage is originally and continues to be defined by God in Scripture as the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive, covenant commitment for a lifetime (Gen. 2:18-25). Furthermore, it is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (Matt. 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-12).

It is through this marital union that God provides a framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual delight according to Biblical standards, the means for procreation, and the foundation for raising godly children. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman in the sacred context of marriage (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4; Malachi 2:15). Sexual immorality, defined by any sexual activity outside the boundaries of this relationship, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord (Matthew 15:19, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4).

Church

The church is God's redeemed people whom He protects, guides, and nurtures. God created His church by calling sinful people into a relationship with Himself, and into unity with Christ and each other. In the world, this one church exists in two aspects: universal and local. The universal church is the full elect company of believers, baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body, whereas the local church is seen in local congregations of believers who join together in love to worship God with praise and thanksgiving. The church exists to worship God (with heart, mind, soul and strength), build up the body of Christ (through gospel-centered community) and to proclaim the gospel in word and deed to the entire world. Its mission is to bear witness to its Head, Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel among all nations, and to glorify Jesus Christ through an aggressive effort to disciple others through the preaching of the Gospel and the exercise of spiritual gifts. The church should always be committed to teaching, fellowship, prayer and the Lord's Supper, and its members are to be a committed and vital part of a local church. (Eph. 2:18-23, 3:15; 4:6; 5:16-19, 24-30; 2 Tim. 2:19; Col. 1:28, 3:16; Matt. 28:19; John 10:16; 1 Pet. 5:2-4; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9-27; 1 Cor. 3:16; 12:4-13, 27).

Sanctification

Sanctification is the progressive, continuing process of being conformed to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Sanctification is pervasive, transforming every part of our being including our thoughts, desires, words and actions. Throughout this process, which begins at conversion, the work of the cross is applied to the life of every believer as the Holy Spirit works to make us more free from sin and more like Jesus. Every believer is promised positional, progressive, and ultimate sanctification. Positional sanctification, based on the death of Christ, occurs at conversion when the believer is set apart and adopted into the family of God. Although indwelling sin remains a constant reality, the power of Sin has been broken and no longer has dominion over us. Through the continuing work of the Holy Spirit, the believer undergoes a progressive transformation of character in which every part of our being is transformed (including our thoughts, desires, words and actions). Although sinlessness cannot be obtained in this life, by the work of the Holy Spirit, Christians are moving closer to that reality which will one day be fulfilled; ultimate sanctification will only occur when the believer sees Christ and becomes like Him (Rom. 6:11-18; 8:29; 12:2; 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10, 14; John 17:15-17; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 1 John 3:2; Eph. 5:26-27).

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit empowers the church with spiritual gifts as means of equipping God's people to do kingdom ministry until Christ returns. These gifts are essential to carrying out God's mission and ministry. The various gifts are distributed throughout the church by the Holy Spirit according to His will and are intended to be used in a controlled and orderly manner with weighted emphasis given to God who bestows the gifts rather than man who receives them (John 14:12; 1 Cor. 1:7; 12:4,11,28; Eph. 4:1-16; Rom. 12:6-8; Heb. 2:4; 1 Pet. 4:8-11).

Angels and Demons

Angels are created spiritual beings that serve as messengers of God. They are highly intelligent, personal, moral creatures with the capacity to either worship God or sin against him. They are spiritual, although at times they take on physical representation to fulfill God's purposes. Angels are not created in God's image and therefore lack some of the abilities and attributes of humans. Unlike God, they are bound by location and do not exhibit his attribute of omnipresence. Angels' primary functions are to worship God, minister to believers, and to battle against Satan. Angels have great power, and for a while are made higher than humans, but at the return of Christ, Christians will be raised to a higher position than that of angels. Humans should respect and appreciate them but should never pray to or worship them. (Gen. 3:24; Num. 22:31; 2 Kings 6:17; Ps. 18:10; 34:7; 91:11; Ezek. 10:1-22; Dan. 10:12-14; Matt. 28:2,5; Luke 1:26, 2:13; Acts 12:6-11; 1 Cor. 6:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:14; 13:2; 2 Pet. 2:11; Jude 6; Rev. 12:7-8).

Demons are fallen angels who joined Satan's rebellion against God and were cast out of heaven to await final judgment. They are corrupt and hostile towards God and man, permanently intent on opposing the will of God and the welfare of mankind; they have real power and freedom of movement, though it is limited. (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Satan is the leader of the demons and primary accuser and tempter of God's people. He is a created being, more powerful than humans but not divine. Though he has much knowledge and power, he is neither omniscient nor omnipotent, nor is he omnipresent (though he can move around in superhuman ways). Having no more power than God allows him, he can do nothing apart from God's permission. He is already-defeated opponent of God; Christ has triumphed over him and he is destined for the lake of fire (Matt. 4:3; 12:29; 1 Thess. 3:5; Rev. 12:9-10; 20:10).

Eternity

There will come a day when every person will stand in judgment before the throne of Jesus, and each will be individually judged according to what he has done during his life. This judgment is conducted with unchallenged authority by Jesus. Those who have experienced forgiveness and new life through repentance and faith in Jesus will be with God forever in heaven. All those who are not found to be true believers and followers of Jesus will be punished. The punishment for those who do not know God is hell- a real place of torment, destruction and eternal separation from God (Matt. 13:49-50, 25:41-46; Mark 9:43; Luke 16:19-26; John 3:16; Rom. 6:23, 14:10-12, 19:1-2, 21:8; 2 Thess. 1:8-9; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 1:17; Rev. 20:11-15).

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