

The Nazareth Handyman Statement of Faith

ON THE HOLY TRINITY:

God is one is essence (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6), but eternally exists as three distinct Persons (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

ON GOD THE FATHER:

God is not corporeal, but spirit in nature (Num. 23:19; Jn. 4:24). He is all-knowing, and His omniscience includes exhaustive knowledge of the future (Isa. 41:26-27; 48:3). He is all-powerful (Gen. 18:14; Lk. 1:37), and present in all places at once (Ps. 139:7-10). He is personal in His triune nature, and unchanging in His perfect being (Ps. 102:26-27; Jas. 1:17). God is infinite (1 Ki. 8:27), and thus independent of space and time.

ON GOD THE SON:

Jesus Christ is the eternal, only-begotten Son of the Father, without beginning or end (Jn. 1:1-3; 3:16; 8:58; Rev. 1:17). He became incarnate (1 Jn. 1:1-3), was born of the virgin (Isa. 7:14; Lk. 1:34-35), died on the cross for our sins (1 Peter 2:24), was buried, was physically raised from the dead on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4), and ascended into Heaven, where He now sits at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33). He is fully divine (Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:19), and fully human (Lk. 2:52; Heb. 2:17). He is one, eternal Person, yet having two distinct natures (one human and one divine).

ON GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT:

The Holy Spirit is the eternal Third Person of the Trinity (Matt. 3:16-17). He exists in full divinity (Acts 5:3-4) and Personhood (Rom. 8:26-27). The Holy Spirit worked miraculously in the lives and hearts of people in the Old Testament age (Jdg. 15:14; Mic. 3:8), but He indwells believers in the New Testament age (Rom. 8:11; Eph. 1:13). All believers are born of the Spirit (Jn. 3:8) and thus baptized in the Spirit (Acts 1:5) from the moment of regeneration (Acts 10:44, 48).

ON HOLY SCRIPTURE:

Since all Scripture is God-breathed, its plenary and verbal inspiration by the Holy Spirit guarantees that it is infallible and inerrant (Prov. 30:5; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:16). That the Bible is infallible means that it is without error in any of its propositional truth claims. That the Bible is inerrant means that it is wholly without error of any kind. Since the Bible is the Word of God, it is the ultimate and sufficient source of authority in all matters of Christian life and practice (Deut. 29:29; Ps. 119:99; Acts 17:11).

ON CREATION:

Being independent of His creation, God created the world out of nothing (Heb. 11:3), not out of any innate need of His own, but as an act of sheer delight in His own glory and sheer grace towards human beings and other creatures. His creative act was accomplished through the agency of all three persons of the Trinity (Gn. 1:1-2; Jn. 1:1-3), and it was finished in six literal days, approximately six thousand years ago (Exod. 20:11; Lk. 3:23-38). Prior to Adam's fall into sin, the creation was "very good" and free from all physical decay and physical death (Gn. 1:30-31; Rom. 8:20-21).

ON MANKIND:

Mankind is uniquely created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). To be created in the image of God involves both: (i) a unique charge of dominion over, and stewardship of the creation (Gen. 1:28; 2:5, 19; 1 Cor. 6:3); and (ii) a unique intellectual and relational capacity to worship God (2 Cor. 3:18). The image of God was tarnished by sin, but is restored to perfection in the Person of Christ (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). Both men and women are created equally in God's image (Gen. 1:27), and in God's magnificent design, the image of God in men and women exhibits a harmonious and wonderful dynamic of male headship and female submission, which mirrors the Father-Son relationship in the Trinity (Gen. 2:23; 1 Cor. 11:7-10).

ON THE NATURE OF SIN:

Sin is a displacing of God through idolatry and a violation of His holy commandments (Gen. 3:4-5; Rom. 1:21ff.). The first humans, Adam and Eve, sinned when they were tempted by the serpent in the Garden. The wages of sin is death (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23), which includes being cast out from the presence and goodness of God (Gen. 3:24). All sins condemn, but there are also varying degrees of sin (Matt. 11:21-24; Lk. 12:47-48; 17:2; Jn. 19:11; Jas. 3:1).

ON MANKIND'S DEPRAVITY:

Adam's sin marred the image of God in him, but did not destroy it in him, nor in his progeny (Gen. 9:6). Adam both represented humanity in sin and cast humanity into a state of perpetual guilt before the God of holiness (Rom. 5:12-14). Another way of saying this is that Adam's sin cast the human race into a state of depravity, in which all humans are born alienated from God, with a sinful nature, craving sin, spiritually dead, and living as children of wrath (Rom. 3:10-18; Eph. 2:1-3). Furthermore, Adam's sin cast the natural creation into a state of decay and death (Gen. 3:17-19) and destroyed perfect love between human beings (Gen. 3:16).

ON THE ATONEMENT:

The atonement of Christ is sufficient to pay for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2), but applied for salvation only to those who are being saved (Rom. 9:27). It is cosmic in scope, in that through the atonement of Jesus the whole created order will be healed upon His establishment of the New Heavens and the New Earth (Rom. 8:22).

ON SALVATION:

Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:8-9). Obeying God's Law is not a means of salvation because all have transgressed against God's Law and even a single transgression merits everlasting condemnation (Jas. 2:10). Therefore, the only righteousness that can save is a foreign righteousness: the imputed righteousness of Christ Jesus, which is credited to a man's account by faith (Gen. 15:6; Phil. 3:9; Tit. 3:5). Through faith alone a man is justified (declared to be righteous) on the merits of Christ's own righteousness and His substitutionary death in his stead (Rom. 3:20-30; Gal. 3:8, 11, 24).

Other religions are unable to save because they are, by definition, idolatrous, and they deny the biblical truth that besides the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth there is no other name under heaven given among men by which anyone can be saved (Acts 4:12).

The operative commands in salvation are twofold: "repent" and "believe" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9). True repentance means turning away from one's wicked idols and evil deeds, turning to God, and, after being born anew, doing works worthy of repentance (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20). True faith has God, and thus Christ Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, as its sole object, even as it trusts in Christ by believing upon His saving Word (John 5:24; 1 Peter 1:21). God's sovereignty does not preclude the true involvement of man's free will in conversion (Ezekiel 33:11).

Spiritually, the believer, upon conversion, experiences regeneration, justification, adoption and union with Christ all at once (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5, 2:6; Tit. 3:5). Sanctification inevitably follows salvation, though only gradually and not in a perfect or completed way until Heaven (Rom. 7; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 10:14). Assurance of salvation is offered to every believer (Rom. 8:38-39; 1 Jn. 5:13), but there is also the unspeakable danger of false assurance of salvation in the life of an unbeliever (Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 6:4-5; 1 Jn. 2:19). Those who truly belong to Christ, who are being sanctified, will persevere in their faith until the end of their lives and, subsequently, will be glorified (Rom. 8:30; Heb. 10:39).

ON MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE:

Marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman in a covenant relationship before God; therefore, heterosexual immorality is vile, and homosexuality is an abomination (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27). The nuclear family, in fellowship and cooperation with the local church, is designed by God and blessed by God to be the primary place of Christian education and discipleship for children (Deut. 6:4-9; Eph. 6:1-4). Procreation within marriage, which is commanded by God, is a blessing from God; contraception is thus immoral (Gen. 1:28; 38:9-10; Ps. 127:3-5; Mal. 2:15). All children, from conception in the womb and onwards, are precious image bearers of God and are thus to be protected from murder (including all forms of abortion), harm, deception and abuse (Lk. 1:44; Matt. 18:6). True believers visit orphans and widows in their distress (Deut. 16:14; Jas. 1:27).

ON THE CHURCH:

The universal church is composed of all believers from all epochs of history, and it is the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32; Rev. 19:5-9). The essential elements of the local church include: the preaching of the Word of Christ and the worship of the triune God; corporate prayer; believer's baptism (by immersion); the celebration of the Lord's Table; the offices of pastor/elder and deacon; the presence of church discipline (when necessary); evangelism and discipleship; and care for the persecuted and the poor. In church governance, local churches are governed first by Christ, through the authority of His Scriptures, and then by their pastors (1 Cor. 16:15-16; Heb. 13:17), who are to be obeyed, so long as they submit, obediently, to the Word of God (Acts 5:29).

ON THE FUTURE STATE:

Upon Christ's bodily return to earth, He will resurrect the faithful from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; Rev. 5:9), judge the wicked with great wrath (Rev. 6:12-17), and usher in the millennial age of justice and peace (Rev. 20:1-6). At the end of the millennial age, Satan will be released to gather the nations for the final battle (Ezek. 38-39; Rev. 20:7-10). After Satan is defeated and cast into the lake of fire, where he will be tormented forever and ever, God will raise all people, believers and unbelievers, in the second resurrection. Those who are believers will enjoy everlasting bliss in the New Heavens and New Earth (which will be physical, perfect, and without sin, pain or death), while those who are unbelievers will be raised to everlasting, conscious punishment in Hell (Isa. 25; Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:11ff.). And God, our Lord, and His Christ shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 11:15). Amen.