



Doctrinal Position, Covenant of Faith

Doctrinal Position

Purpose

Grace Theological Seminary exists for the purpose of preparing dedicated men and women for effective ministries in the exposition of Holy Scripture. This purpose is accomplished through quality instruction in the biblical literature including the original languages, the study of various systems of theological thought, exposure to past and present movements in Christian history and intercultural ministries, the development of communicative and administrative skills, the cultivation of spiritual life, and encouragement in various kinds of Christian service. The objective is to provide pastors, teachers, missionaries, evangelists, and other leaders for evangelical Christian ministries throughout the world.

In accordance with the specifications of the original charter of the seminary corporation, the following contributing ideals are to characterize the life of the school: (1) a Bible-centered curriculum, (2) a competent and believing scholarship, (3) a spiritual and prayer-charged environment, (4) a missionary and evangelistic spirit, (5) a premillennial hope and viewpoint, (6) a Spirit-filled and separated life, and (7) an expository preaching and teaching ministry. In accordance with these purposes, the privileges and advantages of Grace Theological Seminary are cordially extended without discrimination to worthy and properly qualified students from all evangelical churches and denominations.

Importance

It is recognized that every doctrinal statement is but a fallible human attempt to summarize and systematize the riches of an infallible divine revelation. Nevertheless, the Board of Trustees, administrators, and faculty members at Grace Theological Seminary believe that it is essential to have a statement of faith that sets forth the position of the institution with regard to the major biblical doctrines and also carefully specifies its theological distinctives.

It is understood that students with various denominational backgrounds may not be in agreement with every statement, in particular with those that relate to denominational practices.

Although neither applicants nor graduates are required to sign this affirmation of faith, it does provide a doctrinal framework for the curriculum and instruction at Grace. All applicants are expected to be in essential agreement with the basic doctrines it affirms.

The Covenant of Faith

The Scriptures . . .

We believe in the Holy Scriptures, accepting fully the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the very Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God, altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35, 16:13, 17:17, 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).

The One Triune God . . .

We believe in the One Triune God, who is personal, spirit, and sovereign (Mark 12:29; John 4:24, 14:9; Ps. 135:6); perfect, infinite, and eternal in His being, holiness, love, wisdom, and power (Ps. 18:30, 1147:5; Deut. 33:27); absolutely separate and above the world as its Creator; yet everywhere present in the world as the Upholder of all things (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 104); self-existent and self-revealing in three distinct Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 5:26; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14), each of whom is to be honored and worshiped equally as true God (John 5:23; Acts 5:3–4).

The Lord Jesus Christ . . .

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the second Person of the triune God, the eternal Word and only begotten Son, our great God and Savior (John 1:1, 3:16; Titus 2:13; Rom. 9:5); that, without any essential change in His divine Person (Heb. 13:8), He became man by the miracle of virgin birth (John 1:14; Matt. 1:23), thus to continue forever as both true God Man, one Person with two natures (Col. 2:9, Rev. 22:16); that as man, He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15; John 8:46); that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself in death upon the cross bearing the sin of the world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead (Isa. 53:5–6; Matt. 20:28; Gal. 3:13; John 1:29); that He arose again from the dead and was glorified in the same body in which He suffered and died (Luke 24:36–43; John 20:25–28); that as our great High Priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and Intercessor (Heb. 4:14, 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

The Holy Spirit . . .

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is the third Person of the triune God (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3–4), the divine Agent in nature, revelation, and redemption (Gen. 1:2; Ps 104:30; 1 Cor. 2:10; 2 Cor. 3:18); that He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8–11), regenerates those who believe (John 3:5), and indwells, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches, and sanctifies all who become children of God through Christ (1 Cor. 6:19, 12:13; Eph. 4:30, 3:16; Rom 8:14; John 14:26; 1 Cor. 6:11).

The Creation and Fall of Man . . .

We believe in the creation and fall of man; that he was the direct creation of God, spirit and soul and body, not in any sense the product of an animal ancestry, but made in the divine image (Gen. 1:26–29, 2:7 and 18–24; Matt. 19:4, 1 Thess. 5:23); that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, man became a sinful creature and the progenitor of a fallen race (Gen. 3:1–24, 5:3), who are universally sinful in both nature and practice (Eph. 2:3; Rom. 3:23, 5:12), alienated from the life and family of God (Eph. 4:18; John 8:42–44), under the righteous judgment and wrath of God (Rom. 1:18, 3:19), and have within themselves no possible means of recovery or salvation (Mark 7:21–23; Matt. 19:26; Rom 7:18).

Salvation by Grace through Faith . . .

We believe in salvation by grace through faith, that salvation is the free gift of God (Rom. 3:24, 6:23), neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man (Titus 3:5; Rom. 4:4–5, 11:16), but received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 6:28–29; Acts 16:30–31; Eph. 2:8–9), in Whom all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness, and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish (1 John 5:13; Rom. 3:22; Gal. 3:26; John 5:24; Eph. 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3; John 10:27–30); that this salvation includes the whole man, spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23–24); and apart from Christ there is no possible salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Righteous Living and Good Works . . .

We believe in righteous living and good works, not as the procuring cause of salvation in any sense, but as its proper evidence and fruit (1 John 3:9–11, 4:19, 5:4; Eph. 2:8–10; Titus 2:14; Matt. 7:16–18; 1 Cor. 15:10); and therefore as Christians we should keep the Word of our Lord (John 14:23), seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1), walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3:8), and especially accept as our solemn responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world in order that we may bear much fruit (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:19; John 14:16); remembering that a victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who learned they are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14), and who in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God have presented themselves wholly to Him for His service (Rom. 12:1–2).

The Existence of Satan . . .

We believe in the existence of Satan, who originally was created a holy and perfect being, but through pride and unlawful ambition rebelled against God (Ezek. 18:13–17; Isa. 14:13–14; 1 Tim. 3:7); thus becoming utterly depraved in character (John 8:44), the great adversary of God and His people (Matt. 4:1–11; Rev. 12:10), leader of all other evil angels and spirits (Matt. 12:24–26, 25:41), the deceiver and god of this present world (Rev. 12:9; 2 Cor. 4:4); that his powers are supernaturally great, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God, who overrules all his wicked devices for good (Job 1:1–22; Luke 22:31–32); that he was defeated and judged at the cross, and therefore his final doom is certain (John 12:31–32, 16:11; Rev. 20:10); that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God and by the blood of the Lamb (Eph. 6:12–18; Rev. 12:11).

The Second Coming of Christ . . .

We believe in the second coming of Christ; that His return from heaven will be personal, visible, and the glorious blessed hope for which we should constantly watch and pray, the time being unrevealed but always imminent (Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Mark 13:33–37; Titus 2:11–13; Rev. 22:20); that when He comes He will first by resurrection and translation remove from the earth His waiting church (1 Thess. 4:16–18), then pour out the righteous judgments of God upon the unbelieving world (Rev. 6:1–18:24), afterward descend with His church and establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years (Rev. 19:1–20:6; Matt. 13:41–43), at the close of which He will rise and judge the unsaved dead (Rev. 20:11–15), and finally as the Son of David deliver up His messianic kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24–28), in order that as the eternal Son He may reign forever with the Father in the new heaven and the new earth (Luke 1:32–33; Rev. 21:1–22:6).

Future Life, Bodily Resurrection and Eternal Judgment . . .

We believe in future life, bodily resurrection, and eternal judgment; that the spirits of the saved at death go immediately to be with Christ in heaven (Phil. 1:21–23; 2 Cor. 5:8), where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His second coming, when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20–21; 2 Cor. 5:8), where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His

second coming, when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Cor. 15:35–58; 1 John 3:2), at which time their works shall be brought before the judgment seat of Christ for the determination of rewards, a judgment which may issue in the loss of rewards, but not in the loss of the soul (1 Cor. 3:8–15); that the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgment (Luke 16:19–31; 2 Peter 2:9 ASV), at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave, they shall be judged according to their works, and cast into the place of final and everlasting punishment ((Rev. 20:11–15, 21:8; Mark 9:43–48; Jude 13).

The One True Church . . .

We believe in the one true church, the mystical body and bride of the Lord Jesus (Eph. 4:4; 5:25–32), which He began to build on the day of Pentecost (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47), and will complete at His second coming (1 Thess. 4:16–17); and into which all true believers of the present age are baptized immediately by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12–13 with 1:2); that all the various members of this one spiritual body should assemble themselves together in local churches for worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, united testimony; and the observance of the ordinances of our Lord (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:41–47), among which are the following: the baptism of believers by triune immersion (Matt. 28:20), the laying on of hands (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6), the washing of the saints' feet (John 13:1–17), the Lord's Supper or love feast (1 Cor. 11:17–22; Jude 12 ASV), the communion of the bread and cup (1 Cor. 11:23–24), and prayer and anointing for the sick (James 5:13–18).

Separation from the World . . .

We believe in separation from the world; that since our Christian citizenship is in heaven, as the children of God we should walk in separation from this present world, having no fellowship with its evil ways (Phil. 3:20 ASV; 2 Cor. 6:14–18; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:11), abstaining from all worldly amusements and unclean habits which defile mind and body (Luke 8:14; 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 Peter 2:11; Eph. 5:3–11, 18; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 6:19–20), from the sin of divorce and remarriage as forbidden by our Lord (Matt. 19:9), from the swearing of any oath (James 5:12), from the use of unbelieving courts for the settlements of disputes between Christians (1 Cor. 6:1–9), and from taking personal vengeance in carnal strife (Rom. 12:18–21; 2 Cor. 10:3–4).

We understand that the above articles do not by any means exhaust the content of our creed which is the whole Word of God, and they are not intended to set a limit beyond which faith cannot go within this Word; but we do believe that in so far as these articles extend they are a true presentation of the sound doctrine taught in the Scriptures, and therefore binding upon us as Christian believers.

