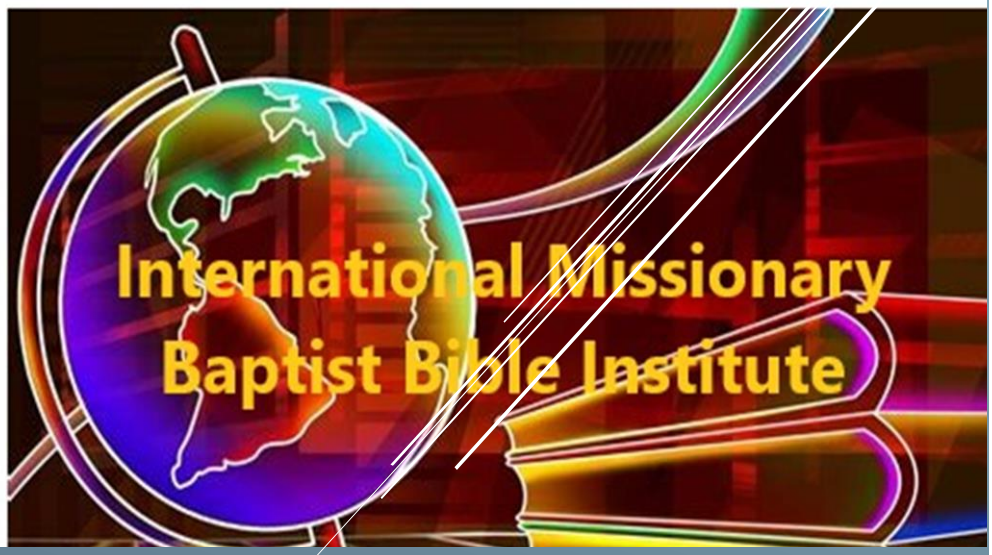
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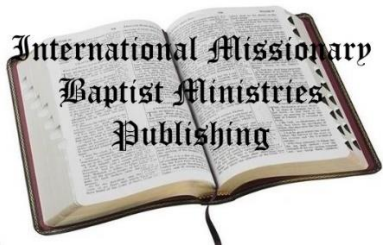
CARDINAL DOCTRINES

OF A

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

(What We Believe as Missionary Baptists)



Cardinal Doctrines of a New Testament Church

by Joseph F. Roberts

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Cardinal Doctrines of a New Testament Church

(What We Believe as Missionary Baptists)

Introduction

Most of the time when you ask people what they believe, they will willingly tell you. Then if you ask them why they believe that most of them cannot tell you. Sometimes they will give an answer such as,

"That's what my daddy or mommy believed."

"That's what my pastor believes."

"That's what my spouse believes."

You may receive many different answers except the one that you are seeking. It is not good enough for you to know what you believe, but it is also important that you know why you believe it. I do not stop there: I believe that it is also important to be able to tell others what you believe and why. Then and only then do you really know what you believe: you know what you believe, and you can tell others why you believe it.

The majority of people who call themselves "Christian" cannot tell you what they believe and why. I do not want any of you to be in that category. I want you to know what you believe and to be able to tell why you believe it. To that end, these lessons are developed and put into a book form. We will be going into detail concerning these doctrines.

I am not a Baptist because my parents were. I am not a Baptist preacher because my dad and my grandfathers before me were. I am a Baptist because I believe that many Baptists believe what the scriptures teach. I am a preacher because the Lord called me to be one.

I believe the Bible and regardless of what denomination anyone is part, it is more important to believe the Bible than what a denomination teaches. That is why it is important to know what you believe and why.

The majority of people do not bother to find out what a denomination teaches because that is what they grew up in and all their families were in it as well. Most do not care to stand up for what they believe because they do not really know what they believe.

What we are going to consider is a Statement of Faith, a written list, with supporting Scripture, of what we believe.

Luke said this in Chapter 1, beginning with verse 1:

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

Statement of Faith

Declaration #1

1. **We believe that love one for another as Jesus loves the believer manifests our discipleship, proves our love for God and symbolizes our authority as New Testament churches. Love is therefore the great commandment of the LORD Jesus Christ upon which all others are dependent.**

We have several passages of Scripture that are offered as the proof-text for this statement. The first that we will consider is Matthew 22:35-40. Unless otherwise noted, all passages of Scripture will be from the King James Version.

35 Then one of them,* which was *a lawyer, asked* him a question, *tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which* is *the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second* is *like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

These passages of Scripture lay the foundation for all the rest of the statements of faith. Without love, all else is but a sham. Jesus says that this is the greatest commandment of all other commandments: loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind. You will notice that three things are mentioned with which we are to love (agapa) Him. Note the following definition: the word for *heart* is *kardia*.

the center and seat of spiritual life

1. the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors
2. of the understanding, the faculty and seat of the intelligence
3. of the will and character

4. of the soul so far as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions

The word for soul is *Psuche (psoo-khay').* Note the following definition for this word:

1. breath
    a. the breath of life
        1. the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing 1a
    b. of animals 1a
2. of men
    a. life
    b. that in which there is life
        1. a living being, a living soul
3. the soul
    a. the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul etc.)
    b. the (human) soul in so far as it is constituted that by the right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life
    c. the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death (distinguished from other parts of the body)

The next word that Jesus used was the word "mind." The transliterated word is *dianoia (dee-an'-oy-ah)*. Note its definition:

1. the mind as a faculty of understanding, feeling, desiring
2. understanding

3. mind, i.e. spirit, way of thinking and feeling
4. thoughts, either good or bad

You will note that all of mankind is mentioned except for the physical. You should also note that all three of these are the parts of triune man that do not die, they are eternal. These are what really composes a person. The physical is just the means to house these three. That is why Jesus said this commandment is the first and greatest.

The second greatest commandment is for us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus uses the same word for love as He did to for us to love Him. Only because of the usage of the word in verse 39 is it inferior to the love that we are to love Him. In other words, we are to love God with a Godly love that will put Him first above all else while we are to love our neighbor just slightly less that we love God. We can only imagine what life would be like if all of God's children would follow these commandments.

The importance of this is give in verse 40, that all other commandments hang on these two. So, we must draw this conclusion: if we cannot love God the way that we should, we will not be able to love our neighbor as we should, AND if this is true, then we will not be able to serve Him as we should. We must get this right if we are to please Him.

The next passage that is listed as a proof text for this Declaration of Faith is John 13:34, 35.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

The setting of these verses is on the night that Jesus observed a supper that was just for the apostles. This was the night that Jesus washed their feet, demonstrating how they should forgive others just as the Father forgives them. He reveals that it is Judas Iscariot that will betray Him but none of them seem to realize it except for John.

Immediately after Judas leaves, Jesus then gives the apostles the commandment mentioned in verse 34. He uses the same word for "love"

that was used in the Matthew reference. He uses Himself as an example as to how we are to love our neighbor. Then He proceeds to inform them that how they love one another is how that the world will see they we are His disciples. Sadly, this is not demonstrated very well anymore.

The next verse to consider is found in John 15:12. ***This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.***

This is essentially a repeat of what He said earlier in the Book of John. You will notice that Jesus does not give it as a request or a choice, He gives it as a commandment. This is emphatic. It is something that we are to do whether we like it or not.

The next reference is from I John 4:7-21.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

The words used for “love” and “loveth” all come from the same family of words as *agapa*. In these passages we have a comparison of those with God’s love and those without God’s love. God’s love is completed in us (vs 12) and this is how that we know that He dwells within because of the Holy Spirit abiding in us. Because He dwells in us, we also dwell in Him.

The Greek word used for “dwell” is *meno* which means to abide or remain. Consider this definition:

to remain, abide

in reference to place: to sojourn, tarry, not to depart, to continue to be present, to be held, kept, continually

in reference to time: to continue to be, not to perish, to last, endure

of persons: to survive, live

in reference to state or condition: to remain as one, not to become another or different

Why are many so afraid these days? It is because that God’s love is not complete in them. Verse 17 illustrates to us that when our love is complete, we may have boldness in the day of judgment. Because our love is complete in God, we will not be afraid. Verse 18 relates to us that complete love casts out fear. Fear has torment and any child of God that is living in fear does not have God’s love completed in them.

John goes on to relate to us that if a person says that he/she loves God but does not love his/her brother, then he/she is a liar. Remember, the Rule of Interpretation reveals that John is writing to saved church members. Therefore, this is a profoundly serious charge to be laid against a person.

The next proof text is from 1 John 5:1-3.

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and

keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Once again the word "love" is in the same family of words from *agapa*. Again, John relates that anyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been saved. The word that is used for "believeth" is a strong word. Consider this definition for it:

1. to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, place confidence in
    a. of the thing believed
        1. to credit, have confidence
    b. in a moral or religious reference
        1. used in the NT of the conviction and trust to which a man is impelled by a certain inner and higher prerogative and law of soul
        2. to trust in Jesus as able to aid either in obtaining or in doing something: saving faith
        3. mere acknowledgment of some fact or event: intellectual faith
2. to entrust a thing to one, i.e. his fidelity
    a. to be entrusted with a thing

Our final proof text comes from Revelation 2:4, 5.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Yet again the word for "love" is *agapa*. Jesus is telling the Church at Ephesus that they have lost the love that they once had for Him. He is simply telling them in verse 5 that if they do not repent and return to their love for Him, He will remove the candlestick. This means that they would cease to be a Scriptural New Testament Church. They might still exist, but they would no longer belong to Him. There are not many cases where

Jesus has threatened to remove the candlestick, but this is the most prominent.

Conclusion to Declaration #1

I believe that we can see from all these passages just how important our love for God really is. I believe that we can also see why all the other Declarations are based upon this first one. Without the proper love for God, the remainder do not matter.

Declaration #2

2. We believe in the infallible, verbal inspiration of the whole Bible and that the Bible is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Before we look at any proof texts for this deceleration, let us define some of the words in it. Without knowing what the words mean we cannot begin to understand what it is saying.

The first word is "infallible." Simply put this word means that it is all without error. There are no mistakes to be found in the smallest way. There can be nothing against it, it is pure.

The next word to consider is "verbal." This word simply means it is audible, to be able to be heard.

The word "inspiration" means literally *God breathed*. We will examine this word when we consider the second proof text.

Our first proof text is from Psalms 119:160.

Psalms 119:160 KJV ***160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.***

This passage relates to us that God's word has been true from the very beginning of time. His judgements are always right and forever.

The second proof text is in II Timothy 3:16, 17.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV ***16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.***

When Paul wrote these words to Timothy, the New Testament was still being written. Therefore, of necessity the "all scripture" mentioned by

Paul meant the Old Testament. Some of the New Testament was already written but nothing had been compiled as yet. The word "inspiration" means "God breathed." The Holy Spirit so "superintended" the writing of the Bible that not one mistake was made yet each writer was able to use his own words and construction of sentences that was normal to him.

Let us look at some more words in these verses. The understanding of the word "profitable" is "advantageous" or beneficial. The word "doctrine" carries with it the meaning "the instruction (the function or the information):--doctrine, learning, teaching." The word "reproof" means "proof, conviction:--evidence, reproof." "Correction" is the next word to consider. It means "a straightening up again, i.e. (figuratively) rectification (reformation)." Then there is "instruction." The definition is "tutorage, i.e. education or training; by implication, disciplinary correction:--chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture."

Verse 17 lets us know that the man (and the word is masculine) will be completely equipped to do what God would have him to do. The inference is that it is applicable to only a man. Then, what about the woman? Other passages indicate that she is to be taught by the man. To proceed further, the older women is to teach, instruct, the younger women concerning the things relating to being a woman, keeping a home, etc. The spiritual instruction is to come through the man. This man is to be surrendered to God. Thus, the "umbrella of protection" is complete. This "downline" would be like this: God, Jesus, the man (husband), the woman (wife), and then the children. Anyone of these getting out from under the "umbrella of protection" brings reproof, etc., that is talked about in verse 16.

Conclusion to Declaration #2

Here is what you need to know concerning this Declaration: The whole Bible is inspired by God and is without mistake so that it is everything we need to live our lives for Him and is everything the church needs to be and to function as a true local, New Testament church.

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