

NEWCOMERS CLASS

Doctrine & Ordinances

THE PRIORITY OF DOCTRINE

Why make a big deal about doctrine? Is a statement of faith really that useful or necessary?

Doctrine Matters to God

▶ Doctrine reveals his glory

- He gave us a *picture* in creation (Ps 19)
- He gave us a *Person* in the Incarnation (Heb 1)
- He gave us a *proclamation* in the word (2 Tim 3, 2 Peter 1)

Doctrine Matters for the Believer

- ▶ Right Doctrine is part of our sanctification (John 17:17; Eph 4:14)
- ▶ Right doctrine is essential to fruitful ministry (Eph 4:15-16)
- ▶ Right doctrine protects from error and the Enemy (Eph 6)

Doctrine Matters for the Church

- ▶ A resource for instruction (Titus 2:1; 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- ▶ A foundation for unity (1 Cor 1:10)
- ▶ A tool for evaluation of teaching and teachers (Acts 17:11; Col 2:8)

Our Doctrinal Statement:

- ▶ **Essentials We Believe** – truths that are necessary for biblical orthodoxy. Departing from these truths takes you outside the historic Christian faith.
- ▶ **Distinctives We Uphold** – what we teach on matters that are important but not primary essentials of the faith.

Essentials We Believe

- ▶ Doctrine of Scripture
- ▶ Doctrine of the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit)
- ▶ Doctrine of Salvation (by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone)
- ▶ Doctrine of the Future (return of Christ, eternal heaven and hell)

Distinctives We Uphold

- ▶ Doctrine of Creation
- ▶ Gender, Marriage, Sexuality
- ▶ Election
- ▶ The Church
- ▶ Sanctification
- ▶ Spiritual Gifts
- ▶ Angels
- ▶ Last Things

Creation

We teach that the **six-day account of creation in Genesis is to be accepted literally** and not allegorically or figuratively. We teach that the first man and woman, **Adam and Eve, were created directly by God**, in His image and did not develop from lower to higher forms. We teach that all living creatures were made directly by God according to their kinds and were not produced by an evolutionary process.

Gender, Marriage, & Sexuality

We teach that God designed specific gender distinctions between **men** and **women** and that these **distinctions are set at birth**.

Therefore, changing or disguising one's gender transgresses God's design. We teach that marriage was instituted by God as an **exclusive, lifelong, covenantal union between one man and one woman**. We teach that God designed sexual intimacy to be reserved for marriage and that **any form of sexual intimacy outside the marriage relationship is sinful** and offensive to God.

Election

We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, **He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates and saves.** We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and believe and that all men, including the elect, are lost until they individually and personally exercise saving faith in Jesus Christ. We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is **not related to any initiative on their own part or to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of God's sovereign grace and mercy.** We teach that God exercises His sovereignty in election in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love performing His will in a manner consistent with His character as God. We teach that election does not minimize a believer's responsibility to evangelize or pray for the salvation of the lost but rather encourages it.

Spiritual Gifts

We teach that spiritual gifts are God-given capacities for service that every believer receives at salvation to edify the church for the glory of God. These gifts include both temporary sign gifts (gifts of miracles, healings, tongues and interpretation of tongues) and permanent speaking and serving gifts (gifts of teaching, prophecy, exhortation, utterance of knowledge, utterance of wisdom, ministry, giving, administration, mercy, faith, and discernment). We teach that **during the apostolic era, sign gifts were given to confirm the authenticity of the apostles' message during the formation of the church. With the passing of the apostolic era, the establishment of the church and the completion of the Scriptures, the miraculous sign gifts are no longer necessary.** Scripture alone now functions as the sole test of authenticity of a man's message.

Last Things

... We teach the **imminent, personal appearance of Jesus Christ to catch away His Church prior to a seven-year tribulation on earth.** This appearance of Jesus Christ initiates the resurrection of believers in which the soul and body of every believer will be reunited and glorified in Christ and will appear before Him to be rewarded for their work. We teach that **at the end of the tribulation, Jesus Christ will physically return with His saints to establish His Kingdom on earth for one thousand years,** fulfilling his promise to restore the nation Israel both spiritually and physically ...

Going Deeper

- ▶ Read our statement in full and check supporting scriptures at rhlawrence.org/doctrine
- ▶ See our sermon series from 2017 titled “Doctrine”
- ▶ Access our Adult Sunday School series on Theology (2021-2022)

QUESTIONS

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of teal and blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a layered, modern aesthetic. The colors range from light, airy blues to deep, saturated teals. The overall composition is clean and professional, with the word 'QUESTIONS' centered in a bold, sans-serif font.