

A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation

Article One: The Gospel

We affirm that the Gospel is the good news that God has made a way of salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for any person who repents and believes. This is in keeping with God's desire for every person to be saved.

We deny that only a select few are capable of responding to the Gospel while the rest are predestined to an eternity in hell.

Article Two: The Sinfulness of Man

We affirm that, because the fall of Adam, every person inherits a nature and environment inclined toward sin and that every person who is capable of moral action will sin. Each person's own sin alone brings the wrath of a holy God, broken fellowship with Him, ever-worsening selfishness and destructiveness, death, and condemnation to an eternity in hell.

We deny that Adam's sin resulted in the incapacitation of free will in all people or rendered all people guilty before they have personally sinned. While no one is even remotely capable of achieving salvation through his own effort, no sinner is saved apart from a free response to the Holy Spirit's drawing through the Gospel.

Article Three: The Atonement of Christ

We affirm that the penal substitution of Christ is the only available and effective sacrifice for the sins of every person.

We deny that thus atonement results in salvation without a person's free response of repentance and faith. We deny that God imposes or withholds this atonement without respect to an act of the person's free will. We deny that Christ died only for those who will be saved.

Article Four: The Grace of God

We affirm that grace is God's generous decision to provide salvation for any person by taking all of the initiative in providing atonement, in freely offering the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in uniting the believer to Christ through the Holy Spirit by faith.

We deny that grace negates the necessity of a free response of faith or that it cannot be resisted. We deny that the response of faith is in any way a meritorious work that earns salvation.

Article Five: The Regeneration of the Sinner

We affirm that any person who responds to the Gospel with repentance and faith is born again through the power of the Holy Spirit. He is a new creation in Christ and enters, at the moment he believes, into eternal life.

We deny that any person is regenerated prior to or apart from hearing and responding to the Gospel.

Article Six: The Election to Salvation

We affirm that, in reference to salvation, election speaks of God's eternal, gracious, and certain plan in Christ to have a people who are His by repentance and faith.

We deny that election means that, from eternity, God predestined certain people for salvation and others for condemnation.

Article Seven: The Sovereignty of God

We affirm God's eternal knowledge of and sovereignty over every person's salvation or condemnation.

We deny that God's sovereignty and knowledge requires Him to cause a person's acceptance or rejection of faith in Christ.

Article Eight: The Free Will of Man

We affirm that God, as an expression of His sovereignty, endows each person with actual free will (the ability to choose between two options), which must be exercised in accepting or rejecting God's gracious call to salvation by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel.

We deny that the decision of faith is an act of God rather than a response of the person. We deny that there is an "effectual call" for certain people that is different from a "general call" to any person who hears and understands the Gospel.

Article Nine: Security of the Believer

We affirm that when a person responds in faith to the Gospel, God promises to complete the process of salvation in the believer into eternity. This process begins with justification, whereby the sinner is immediately acquitted of all sin and granted peace with God; continues in sanctification, whereby the saved are progressively conformed to the image of Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and concludes in glorification, whereby the saint enjoys life with Christ in heaven forever.

We deny that this Holy Spirit-sealed relationship can ever be broken. We deny even the possibility of apostasy.

Article Two: The Sinfulness of Man

We affirm that the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His church to proclaim the good news of salvation to all people to the ends of the earth. We affirm that this proclamation is God's means of bringing any person to salvation.

We deny that salvation is possible outside of a faith response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.