

# BIOLA UNIVERSITY'S THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS

The Articles of Faith, presented here as originally conceived by the founders of the organization, have been and continue to be the stated theological position of Biola University and are an essential part of the Articles of Incorporation of the university. Where "man" is used referring to the human race it includes both genders.

## Articles of Faith (p. 1)

Inasmuch as the university is interdenominational and yet theologically conservative, the Articles of Incorporation contain a doctrinal statement which is given below:

The Bible, consisting of all the books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, a supernaturally given revelation from God Himself, concerning Himself, His being, nature, character, will and purposes; and concerning man, his nature, need, duty and destiny. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are without error or misstatement in their moral and spiritual teaching and record of historical facts. They are without error or defect of any kind.

There is one God, eternally existing and manifesting Himself to us in three Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Our Lord Jesus was supernaturally conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin — Mary, a lineal descendant of David. He lived and taught and wrought mighty works and wonders and signs exactly as is recorded in the four Gospels. He was put to death by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate. God raised from the dead the body that had been nailed to the cross. The Lord Jesus after His crucifixion showed Himself to be alive to His disciples, appearing unto them by the space of forty days. After this, the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, and the Father caused Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church.

The Lord Jesus, before His incarnation, existed in the form of God, and of His own choice laid aside His divine glory and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. In His pre-existent state, He was with God and was God. He is a divine person possessed of all the attributes of Deity, and should be worshiped as God by angels and man. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." All the words that He spoke during His earthly life were the words of God. There is absolutely no error of any kind in them, and by the words of Jesus Christ the words of all other teachers must be tested.

The Lord Jesus became in every respect a real man, possessed of all the essential characteristics of human nature.

By His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus made a perfect atonement for sin, by which the wrath of God against sinners is appeased and a ground furnished upon which God can deal in mercy with sinners. He redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse in our place. He who Himself was absolutely without sin was made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. The Lord Jesus is coming again to this earth, personally, bodily and visibly. The return of our Lord is the blessed hope of the

believer, and in it God's purposes of grace toward mankind will find their consummation.

The Holy Spirit is a person and is possessed of all the distinctively divine attributes. He is God.

Man was created in the image of God, after His likeness, but the whole human race fell in the fall of the first Adam. All men, until they accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior, are lost, darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, hardened in heart, morally and spiritually dead through their trespasses and sins. They cannot see, nor enter the kingdom of God until they are born again of the Holy Spirit.

Men are justified on the simple and single ground of the shed blood of Christ and upon the simple and single condition of faith in Him who shed His blood, and are born again by the quickening, renewing, cleansing work of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God. All those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and their Lord, and who confess Him as such before their fellow men, become children of God and receive eternal life. They become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. At death their spirits depart to be with Christ in conscious blessedness, and at the second coming of Christ their bodies shall be raised and transformed into the likeness of the body of His glory.

All those who persistently reject Jesus Christ in the present life shall be raised from the dead and throughout eternity exist in a state of conscious, unutterable, endless torment and anguish.

The Church consists of all those who, in this present dispensation, truly believe on Jesus Christ. It is the body and bride of Christ, which Christ loves and for which He has given Himself.

There is a personal devil, a being of great cunning and power. "The prince of the power of the air." "The prince of this world." "The god of this age." He can exert vast power only so far as God suffers him to do so. He shall ultimately be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and shall be tormented day and night forever.

## Statement of Biblical Principles (p. 1)

### Preamble

In continuity with centuries of Christians before us, we believe God's vision for humanity, as embodied in the person of Jesus Christ and illuminated by the Holy Spirit through Scripture, is a source of great joy and provides the best understanding of life's meaning and human flourishing.

From this overarching belief flow the affirmations of our unchanging Articles of Faith — which fix us inextricably to our doctrinal core — as well as the following biblical principles, which express Biola University's convictions about how a biblically faithful university in the 21st century should manifest the gospel of Jesus Christ in how we live, learn and serve in God's world.

In articulating our community's biblical principles, categorized below in three sections, we acknowledge that some propose different ways to understand the Bible. We respect and protect the freedom of communities in a pluralistic society to differ on these matters. We do not seek to impose our convictions on other communities, and we also expect others will respect and protect the freedom of our community to believe and live as we do.

Biola University is a Christian community. Everything we do is framed by the reality that the Triune God, who reigns supreme over the immense universe, desires a personal relationship with us. He makes this possible by offering salvation that is initiated by the Father, secured by the Son and applied by the Spirit.

Two words sum up the Good News that has guided Biola University since our founding in 1908: Jesus saves. The implications of these words are both intimate and vast. Jesus saves us individually, but Jesus also saves the world. Nothing in creation is too broken, too depraved, too ruined to be redeemed by Jesus. In Christ, and in Him alone, there is new hope, new life, new creation.

Jesus saves. They are the words that hold us, Biola University, together as a community of faith united in Christ, clear on who we are to be and how we ought to live.

## I. God's Intentional Design for Life

We believe God created all things and set in place the laws of nature, not according to random chance but according to His perfect, miraculous and purposeful plan. Our understanding of the origin of life is enhanced by scientific observation, but not limited to material processes. The existence of the world cannot be explained adequately apart from the intelligent exercise of God's supernatural power.

God created the natural world and called it "good," and after he created male and female he declared his creation "very good." The man, Adam, was formed by the Lord God from the dust of the ground and not from living ancestors, and God breathed into him the breath of life so that Adam became a living being. The woman, Eve, was created from Adam's side with both made in the image of God.

We recognize that part of God's good design is the way he created male and female in his image to flourish in community. In the beginning, God designed marriage as a covenantal bond between one man and one woman, which is affirmed by Jesus in the New Testament. It is in this marriage union that God blessed a special spiritual, emotional and sexual intimacy for joy, satisfaction and procreation. Further, we believe God's intent for sexual intimacy is to occur only in the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman.

## II. God's Sacred Value for Life

We believe that our biblical calling to be good stewards of creation involves cultivating a sense of awe and reverence at the sacred mystery of human life made in the image of God. God is glorified by the rich mosaic of human cultures and ethnicities since men and women reflect His image and are equally precious in his sight. All human beings are created with intrinsic dignity and importance. There are no exceptions.

This understanding of human worth begins with the recognition that conception marks the start of human life and full personhood. Each person possesses a right to life and protection from harm. We uphold the value God has given to humanity by protecting the worth of persons from their beginnings until their final breaths. We are opposed to the taking of innocent life, from abortion to euthanasia.

Seeing human life as a seamless tapestry, we affirm the personhood and dignity of those who are medically and socially marginalized. Our vision of social justice is rooted in a biblical calling to care for vulnerable members of our society.

## III. God's Final Plans for Life

God is the sovereign author of history. He is working all things toward the promise of Christ's return to earth in power and glory as He judges the world in righteousness to bring an end to evil and to rule and reign in the new heaven and new earth as the eternal dwelling place for the redeemed. As the redeemed, we faithfully live out God's calling to grow in Him, to obey His commands, to delight in Him, to steward His creation and to make disciples of all nations.

Because of our new life in Christ, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit and compelled by the hope of Christ's return to live with purpose and urgency to fulfill His mission. God's great love for the world calls us to proclaim in word and deed the good news of salvation through faith in Christ. We also live out the fullness of life in Christ by working for justice, peace and reconciliation in His name. As the Body of Christ — the Church — we seek to bear witness to the coming Kingdom of God in every dimension of our lives as part of the gospel announcement that Jesus saves.

## Teaching Position on Eschatology (p. 2)

Biola University holds to the following teaching position on eschatology:

In fulfillment of God's historical purpose for humanity to rule and establish God's kingdom on earth (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:4-8; Matt. 6:10; Heb. 2:6-9), the Scriptures teach a millennial reign of Christ with His saints on earth following His literal return. The nation of Israel, having been redeemed, will play a central role in bringing the blessings of salvation to all nations during the millennium in fulfillment of biblical prophecies (e.g., Is. 2:1-4; 11:1-12; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 37; Amos 9:9-15; Zech. 14; Matt. 19:28; Acts 1:6; 3:19-21; Rev. 20:4-6). Following the millennium, this kingdom will be merged into the eternal kingdom (I Cor. 15:22-28).

Before these millennial events, the believers will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:13-17). The time of this "rapture" is unknown, and thus believers are to live constantly watchful and ready.

## Teaching Biblical Studies (p. 2)

Academic study of the Bible differs from other disciplines in a university setting in that the primary text is God's Word, which underscores the importance of making instruction relevant to faith, learning and living. At Biola, every effort is made to be academically credible, theologically orthodox and practically relevant. Whether engaged in a critical discussion of the text, or a theological debate about a particular doctrine, the discussion must finally come to the meaning for life today.

Though faculty members in all departments share a commitment to the convictions reflected in the university doctrinal statement, they reflect a healthy diversity regarding other contemporary issues and interpretation of specific passages. Whether a divergent view is held by others on campus or not, care is taken to represent opposing positions fairly, so that students can decide for themselves in a genuine educational environment.

In practice, the task of teaching biblical studies is not limited to those within that department. Rather, the integration of Christian thought into all fields of inquiry is the goal of the entire teaching faculty. In this

sense, it is desired that every course contribute to the development of a Christian worldview for the Biola graduate.