

ARTICLES OF FAITH OF BAPTIST CHURCH PLANTERS

I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written. We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and that it is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions shall be tried (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). We believe that the Word of God is preserved in the copies of the original manuscripts not limited to a single translation.

II. THE TRUE GOD

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Exod. 20:2, 3; I Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11).

III. JESUS CHRIST

A. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God, the Son (Gen 3:15; Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14).

B. RESURRECTION AND PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us (Matt. 28:6, 7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6, 51; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:6; 12:2; 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; 5:9, 10).

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, helps, and distributes service gifts to the believer, but that sign gifts were restricted to the Apostolic Period (John 14:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5, 6; Eph. 1:13, 14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26, 27; 12:6-8; Hebrews 2:3-4).

V. THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; and that he was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator, that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of eternal justice in the lake of fire (Mark 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10).

VI. CREATION

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, "each after its own kind" by an immediate, ex nihilo creative act and not the process of evolution. We believe the six days of creation were literal, 24-hour solar days (Gen. 1, 2: Col. 1:16, 17; John 1:3; Heb. 1:2).

We believe that God created both male and female in His image and after His likeness, and that He designed gender distinctions between men and women, including the biblically-defined and distinctive role of husband and wife. Since gender distinctions are rooted in divine order, changing or disguising one's inherited biological sex (and correlated gender) reflective of this order transgresses God's design. We believe in the sanctity of life of all human persons, including the unborn, ailing, disabled, and aging (Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 139:13-16; Ex. 4:11).

VII. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God) under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and happy state, and all men sinned in him, in consequence of which all

men are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature, are sinners by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 3:10-19; 5:12, 19; 1:18, 32).

VIII. SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honored the divine law by His personal obedience, thus qualifying Himself to be our Savior; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and is an integral part of saving faith (Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom 3:24, 25; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7, 8; Heb. 2:14-17; Isa. 53:4-7; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24).

IX. GRACE AND THE NEW BIRTH

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20-33; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13; John 3:8).

X. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood (Rom. 3:24; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

XI. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner; first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior; second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return (Heb. 10:10-14; 3:1; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 5:23, 24; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24, 25; Rev. 22:11).

XII. THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6; John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:35-39; Jude 1).

XIII. THE CHURCH

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers as pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

We believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final (1 Cor. 11:2; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 2:41, 42).

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Eph. 1:22, 23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23; Col. 1:18; Acts 15:13-18).

XIV. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our identification with the crucified, buried and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He come, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe that the Biblical order of the ordinances is baptism first and then the Lord's Supper, and that participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers (Acts 8:36, 38, 39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41, 42).

XV. SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness, ecclesiastical apostasy, and neo-evangelicalism (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11).

XVI. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is both the only Lord of the conscience and the coming King of kings (Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29; 4:19, 20; Dan. 3:17, 18).

XVII. ISRAEL

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people; that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ; that she will be regathered in the Holy Land; and that, after the completion of the Church, she will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37).

XVIII. RAPTURE AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

We believe in the pre-tribulational rapture of the Church, an event which can occur at any moment; and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 51-54; Phil. 3:20, 21; Rev. 3:10).

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom (Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29, 30; Rev. 20:1-4, 6).

XIX. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the lake of fire (Mal. 3:18; Gen 18:23; Rom. 6:17, 18; 1 John 5:19; Rom. 7:6; 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34-41; John 8:21; Rev. 20:14, 15).

XX. THE CHRISTIAN HOME

We believe that marriage is ordained of God for mankind's welfare and happiness; that the institution of marriage is honored by the Lord Jesus Christ; that marriage can only be the covenant union of one man and one woman, that the marriage bed is honorable; and that, for the believer, marriage is to be "in the Lord," only to another believer. God's order in the Christian family is Christ the Head, followed by the husband, then the wife, and finally the children, each living in obedience and subjection to Christ (Gen. 1:28; 2:18; 23, 24; John 2:1-11; Heb. 13:4; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-28; 6:4).

We believe it is totally against the command and teaching of the Word of God to change or pervert in any way this order; that homosexuality, lesbianism, or any other sexual relationship outside of marriage is contrary to the Word of God. We do not accept these as alternate lifestyles, nor do we recognize so-called "same sex marriage" as marriage (Rom. 1:18-32).