

ARTICLES OF FAITH

ARTICLE I — SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was completely and verbally inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men; therefore, it is truth without mixture of error. We believe that it is the true center of Christian union and the only infallible rule for all human conduct, creeds and opinions, and has salvation for its end (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

ARTICLE II — GOD

SECTION ONE: TRINITY

We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

SECTION TWO: GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth, Who is perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, and measureless in power. We rejoice that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer; and, that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Genesis 1 & 2; John 17:20-26; Ephesians 1:3-10).

SECTION THREE: GOD THE SON

We believe in the absolute deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; that He is divine as no other man can be, being very God of very God, existing from all eternity with the Father and the Spirit; that He never ceased to be God for one instant and that His humiliation did not consist in laying aside His deity; and, that as a man He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 John 5:20; Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26-38).

SECTION FOUR: GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with the Father and the Son and of the same substance and nature; that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment, bears witness to the truth, is the agent of the new birth and that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies and helps the believer, indwelling and giving service gifts to every true child of God. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16-17; Romans 8:14-27; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 13:8-10; Hebrews 2:3-4).

ARTICLE III — SATAN OR THE DEVIL

We believe in the distinct personality of Satan; that he is the god of this age, author of all the powers of darkness and sin, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire; that he was originally created a holy and perfect being but, through pride and unlawful ambition, rebelled against God thus becoming totally depraved in character, that he is the great adversary of God and His people, leader of all other evil angels and spirits, and the deceiver; that his powers are supernaturally great but strictly limited by the permissive will of God; that he

was defeated and judged at the cross and, therefore, his final doom is certain; and, that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God and by the blood of the Lamb (Isaiah 14:13-14; Job 1:1-22; Ezekiel 28:13-17; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 22:31-32; Matthew 12:24-26; 25:41; John 8:44; 12:31-32; 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:12-18; 1 Timothy 3:7; Revelation 12:9-11; 20:10).

ARTICLE IV — CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally; that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life (“*each after its own kind*”) by a direct act and not by evolution or any other process. We believe the Genesis “day of creation” to be a literal twenty-four hour day and that man was created directly in God’s own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1:1, 2, 26, 27; Exodus 20:11; John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 1:16-17).

ARTICLE V — MAN

SECTION ONE: FALL OF MAN

We believe that man, in the person of the first Adam, was created in innocence and in the image of God, and was free from sin but, by voluntary transgression, fell into sin thus plunging the whole race into condemnation and death, so that now all mankind is conceived and born in sin and shapen in iniquity and expresses that sinful nature by personal choice and is without excuse before God (Genesis 3; Romans 5:10-19).

We believe in the total depravity of man and that because of this depravity he has within himself no means of recovery or salvation (Matthew 19:26; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 7:18; 3:10-20; Genesis 1, 2, and 3; Psalm 51:5; Proverbs 14:12; Ecclesiastes 7:20-29; Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:18; Ephesians 2:1-10).

SECTION TWO: FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- A. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).
- B. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the scriptural leadership of her husband even as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including scriptural corporal correction (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalms 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians. 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

SECTION THREE: HUMAN SEXUALITY

- A. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that actions such as homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one’s gender by surgery or appearance (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).
- B. We believe that the only scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23).

SECTION FOUR: MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

- A. We believe God gives man the gift of marriage intending this relationship to last until one spouse dies thus modeling Christ's permanent relationship with His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33).
- B. We believe that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16); but, because of man's sin, God does allow divorce when a person is abandoned by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-17).
- C. Although divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service (as long as the sin has been dealt with biblically), they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

SECTION FIVE: LAWSUITS

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

SECTION SIX: ABORTION

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified and unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that sets forth as being acceptable the abortion of pregnancy due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

SECTION SEVEN: EUTHANASIA

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil regardless of the intention. Life is a gift from God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus, we believe that an act or omission which of itself or by intention causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes murder which is contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing life support can be a legitimate choice for medically hopeless situations.

ARTICLE VI — ELECTION

We believe election is God's eternal and sovereign choice of individuals unto everlasting life—not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mercy and grace in Christ—in consequence of which choice they are called, justified, and glorified. We further believe that God elects the saint in His foreknowledge. *“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren”* (Romans 8:29). See also Matthew 22:14; Romans 11:5; 1 Corinthians 1:27-28; and, Ephesians 1:4-7.

ARTICLE VII — ATONEMENT

We believe that the only escape from the condemnation of sin is through the atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ when He voluntarily took upon Himself a human body and nature, yet without sin, and by His suffering, death, and resurrection made full satisfaction to the justice of God for the sin of man; and, that the blessings of this salvation are given on the grounds of grace to all who believe and confess; and, that it is the immediate duty of all to accept these offers of mercy.

We believe that justification is God's gracious and full pardon for sinners. This pardon is based solely on the merits of Christ's death on the cross as He became the only and perfect sacrifice for all men. Completely apart from any human attempt at good works or self-reformation, God's holy justice is satisfied by Christ's death alone.

Trusting Christ as their substitute, sinners are pardoned and given life eternal (1 Peter 1:18-21; Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 10:4-14; Acts 16:30-33).

ARTICLE VIII — SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation from sin and that this salvation is wholly by grace. No works, however good, make this salvation more secure (Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 10:9-13).

We believe regeneration is a change of heart accomplished by the Holy Spirit Who quickens the dead in trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and effectually to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature so that they love and practice holiness. It is the work of God's free and special grace alone.

We believe that saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ. It is accepting Christ and resting upon Him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life. It is worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit and leads to a life of holiness.

We believe that repentance is an evangelical grace wherein a person, being made aware by the Holy Spirit of the manifold evil of sin, humbles himself for it with godly sorrow and self-abhorrence, and purposes to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

We believe that those who have been regenerated are also sanctified by God's Word and the Spirit dwelling in them.

ARTICLE IX — THE CHURCH

SECTION ONE: UNIVERSAL CHURCH

We believe that the church universal is a New Testament institution, unknown to the Old Testament prophets but revealed through the apostles, established by Jesus Christ who is its sole Head. It is empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit and is composed of believers (both Jew and Gentile) in Christ Jesus, who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and called out from the world to be His body for service and His bride in glory. It began with Pentecost and will be consummated at the meeting of Christ in the rapture (Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 1:8; 2:1-13; 2:41-47; 15:14; Romans 16:26; 1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 1:21; 5:23-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

SECTION TWO: LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that the church universal is manifested through the local church which is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in it by His Word; and to each of these churches Christ has given needful authority for administering that order, discipline, and worship which He has appointed. Its officers are bishops or elders (pastors) and deacons; that it has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit and is answerable only to Christ, and that in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline and benevolence, the will of the local church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is final (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:4-5; 7:17; 1 Timothy 3:1-15).

SECTION THREE: ORDINANCES

We believe that there are two church ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion).

- A. Baptism is the immersion of a born-again believer in water and is properly called believer's baptism. It sets forth in a beautiful and solemn way our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effects in

our lives of death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership (Acts 8:36-38; Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-5).

- B. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a memorial service and is the setting forth in a sacred and symbolic manner the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. The Lord's Supper is only for believers who are obedient to the Word, including the matter of baptism, the other ordinance of the local church. The emblems of the communion service are not literally the body and blood of Christ nor do they contain His flesh and blood (1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:19).

SECTION FOUR: AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

- A. We believe that the church is independent and autonomous and must be kept free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; but, it may be associated with other Baptist churches for fellowship and the spread of the Gospel.
- B. We believe in the solemn obligation of majority rule guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

ARTICLE X — THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Only such as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are truly righteous in God's esteem. All who continue in unrepentance and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and are under the curse. This distinction holds among mankind both in and after death with everlasting bliss for the saved and everlasting and conscious suffering for the lost (John 8:41-47; Romans 6:17-23; Luke 6:25; John 8:21).

ARTICLE XI — SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and are eternally secure in Jesus Christ (John 1:11-12; 3:3; 10:28-29; Romans 8:35-39; 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:6).

ARTICLE XII — SEPARATION

SECTION ONE: ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy (2 Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11).

SECTION TWO: PERSONAL SEPARATION

We believe that we are called with a holy calling to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit so that we would not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; however, the flesh is still in us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage and needs to be kept constantly in subjection to Christ or it will surely manifest its presence to the dishonor of His name (Romans 8:12-13; 13:14; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

We believe that separation from all worldly practices and a wholehearted devotion to the cause of Christ are the only scriptural bases for a happy and useful Christian life. Therefore, we believe that believers should avoid all worldly practices specifically mentioned in scripture (i.e., drunkenness, gossip, envy, etc.). In addition, and as important, believers should avoid worldly practices not specifically mentioned in scripture if they violate equally clear scriptural principles.

It is expected of every believer, using Spirit-guided discernment within the bounds of Christian liberty, to: (1) protect the name and cause of Jesus Christ, (2) avoid all appearance of evil, (3) avoid anything which violates conscience (not of faith), (4) avoid causing a weaker brother to stumble, (5) pursue whatsoever things protect and edify the believer's conscience, character, and Christian testimony, and (6) to abstain from activities or actions that might be harmful to the body or mind (Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1; Romans 12:1-2; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 14; Philippians 4:8; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

ARTICLE XIII — RETURN OF CHRIST

SECTION ONE: THE RAPTURE

We believe in the bodily, personal, and premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ; that He will come before the seven-year tribulation period to catch away His church; that He will come only into the air and that following this the judgement of the believer's works will take place in heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1:10; 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8; Revelation 4:1; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; 2 John 8).

SECTION TWO: THE REVELATION

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come, with His church, at the close of the tribulation to judge the living nations and to set up His kingdom on earth and that He will rule and reign for one thousand years (Psalm 72:8; Isaiah 32:1; Zechariah 14:4; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Revelation 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 20:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 19:11-21).

ARTICLE XIV — THE RESURRECTION

SECTION ONE: OF BELIEVERS

We believe in the resurrection of the bodies of believers who die in Christ. They will be raised at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His church and, along with living saints, will receive glorified, incorruptible bodies like unto the Lord Himself, and then be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air to be forever with Him (1 Corinthians 15:23; 15:35-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-5; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).

SECTION TWO: OF UNBELIEVERS

We believe that the wicked dead will be raised at the close of the millennial kingdom and will stand in their bodies at the great white throne judgment to receive their final doom in the lake of fire (John 5:21-30; Psalm 9:17; Matthew 5:22-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:18, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Revelation 20:11-15).

ARTICLE XV — 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, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ (Genesis 13:14-17; Romans 9-11; Ezekiel 37).

ARTICLE XVI — CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment and for the interests and good order of human society; and, that secular authorities are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed except in things directly opposed to the will of God as set forth in His Holy Word. Furthermore, we believe in the separation of

church and state in the spirit of the First Amendment of The Constitution of the United States of America which states: “*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...*” We must remember the distinct roles of church and state; but, we believe we have the freedom to lovingly and courageously influence the government and culture and to appeal to our legally granted civil rights (2 Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22; Daniel 3:17-18; Matthew 22:21; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29; 23:5; Romans 13:1-7).