

ARTICLES OF FAITH

INTRODUCTION

The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, is inspired by God, is infallible, and is the final authority for Christians. God, by direct intervention, created the universe, and more specifically, man. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. God is a Trinity, consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, by His own admission, is the Son of God. Jesus Christ made vicarious atonement for our sins by shedding His blood and dying on the cross, thus bearing the wrath of God that we deserved. He rose again, bodily, the third day, He ascended and now sits at the right hand of God the Father, and He will one day physically return to Earth to judge the living and the dead. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. A Christian experiences the new birth by regeneration through the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion.

I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit controlled men, and therefore has truth without any mixture of error for its matter. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions, shall be tried. (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19–21)

II. OF THE TRUE GOD

We believe there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent 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. (Exodus 20:2, 3; Deuteronomy 6:4; I Corinthians 8:6; I John 5:7; Revelation 4:11)

III. OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice and that all who believe on Him are justified on the grounds of His eternal shed blood. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord and His ascension into heaven at the right hand of God the Father, where He is a high priest, an advocate for us. We believe in the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to catch up His people to meet Him in the air. His return is personal, bodily, imminent, pretribulational, and premillennial.

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 ever be born of woman, and that He is both the

Son of God, and God the Son. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14)

IV. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person; equal with God the Father and God the Son 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, and helps the believer. (John 14:26, 27; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 16:8–11; 3:5, 6; Luke 1:35; Genesis 1:1–3; Acts 5:30–32; Mark 1:8; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Acts 11:16; Romans 8:14–16; 8:26, 27).

V. OF THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, and the ruler of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to eternal condemnation in the lake of fire. (Matthew 4:1–3; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 2:10)

VI. OF THE CREATION

We accept the Genesis account of a literal six-day creation and believe that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution. (Genesis 1 & 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3)

We believe that God created male and female with distinct roles; that marriage is between one man and one woman; that God has blessed human sexuality within marriage and condemned it outside of marriage; that perversions of human sexuality such as fornication and homosexuality are antithetical to Christian sanctification (Genesis 2; 1 Cor. 7:1; 1 Corinthians 6; Romans 1).

VII. OF THE FALL OF MAN:

We believe that man was created in innocence under the authority of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. (Genesis 3:1–6 & 24; Romans 1:32; Romans 5:10–19)

VIII. OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement 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 on the third day, He is now enthroned in Heaven. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior. (Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Phil. 2:7; Isaiah 53:4–7; Romans 3:25; I Corinthians 15:3–5)

IX. OF GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

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 partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God. The new creation is brought about 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. Its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life. (John 3:5,8; II Corinthians 5:17,19; I John 3:6,7; Acts 16:30,33; Romans 6:23; Colossians 2:13)

X. OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures such as believe in Him is Justification:

That justification is the declaration of a new and righteous standing in Christ and the pardon of sin; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed to us. (Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Zechariah 13:1; Romans 5:1–9; 8:1)

XI. OF FAITH AND SALVATION

We believe that repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation, and not any human works. (Acts 16:31; 20:21; Ephesians 2:8–9; Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:28)

XII. OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that a local church 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; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are 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 Head is Jesus Christ, 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; on all matters of

membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final. (Acts 2:41, 42; Ephesians 1:22, 23; Acts 20:17–28; I Timothy 3:1–13; Ephesians 5:23, 24; Acts 15:13–29)

XIII. OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; 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 comes; and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. (Acts 8:36–39; John 3:23; Romans 6:3–5; Matthew 3:16; Colossians 2:12; I Corinthians 11:23–28)

XIV. OF THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

We believe that all who are truly born of the Spirit of God are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ. (John 6:35–40; 10:25–39; Romans 8:29–39; I Peter 1:3–4; Jude 1:1, 2)

XV. OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the 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 happiness of the saved in heaven and the everlasting conscious sufferings of the lost in hell. (Genesis 18:23; Romans 8:17, 18; I John 5:19; Romans 6:23; Luke 6:25; Matthew 25:34–41; John 8:21)

XVI. OF 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 things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth. (Romans 13:1–7; Exodus 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Acts 4:19,20; 5:29; Daniel 3:17, 18)

XVII. CONCERNING PROPHETIC EVENTS YET TO COME

We believe in the imminent, personal, and visible, premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:9– 11; James 5:8; I Thessalonians 4:16; 5:6; Philippians 3:20; Revelation 1:7; 20:4)

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to raise the dead in Christ and believers who are alive and both will be caught up together to meet Him in the clouds in the air to lead them to heaven. Only God knows the day and the hour of His coming. Thus Christians will be spared

from the wrath to come in the Great Tribulation Period (I Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13–18; 5:1, 9; Matthew 24:36, 21; Jeremiah 30:7; Malachi 3:2–3).

We believe that the hour is coming when all who are in the graves will hear the voice of the Lord and shall be resurrected. Those who have been redeemed shall come forth in the first resurrection with incorruptible bodies to abide in heaven forever. Those who have not been redeemed shall come forth in the second resurrection to abide in hell forever. (John 5:28–30; Revelation 20:4–6; I Corinthians 15:42–54; Philippians 3:20–21; I John 3:1–2; Revelation 20:12–15; II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1).

We believe Christ will reign on the throne of David as the King of kings for one thousand years on the earth and rule with a rod of iron (Isaiah 9:6–7; 11:1–10; Jeremiah 23:5–6; Luke 1:31–33; Acts 2:29–30; Revelation 19:15–16).

We believe believers will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ for their works which the Holy Spirit enabled them to perform; and that all unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne for their evil deeds (Romans 14:10–12; II Corinthians 5:9–10; Revelation 20:11–15).