

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the *Holy Bible*, consisting of only the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, was verbally and plenary inspired by God and is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks as originally written.

We believe that the Holy Bible reveals all that God wants us to know of Himself and His standards for human conduct, including the principles by which God will judge and redeem us; and therefore is, and shall be to the end of the world, the supreme authority for faith and life by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried including these Articles of Faith.

Ps. 119:89; Matt. 5:18; John 12:47-48; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Rev. 22:18-19.

2. THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Creator, Sustainer, 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 attribute and executing distinct but harmonious offices, as in the great works of creation and redemption.

Gen. 1:1-2; Ex. 20:2-3; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 6:3; Mark 12:30; John 1:1-3, 4:24, 6:44, 16:8; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 4:11.

God the Father

We believe that *God the Father* is spirit, and is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

*Deut. 32:4;
Ps. 27:13, 90:2; Isa. 6:3; John 4:24; Rom. 11:33; James 1:17.*

God the Son

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal *Son of God*, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other man was ever born or can be born of a woman.

Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2,14; Phil. 2:6-8.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a life of absolute sinlessness, and that His death on the cross as the Lamb of God was a voluntary, substitutionary sacrifice to pay the full penalty for our sins and thus redeem fallen and sinful men.

Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:22, 24, 3:18; 1 John 2:2.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ arose bodily from the dead, and ascended into Heaven where He now sits exalted at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, ever interceding for us, and that He will come again to take all believers to live with Him in a place He is preparing for us in Heaven.

Matt. 28:6; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Heb. 6:20, 7:24-25, 12:2; 1 John 2:1.

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that *God the Holy Spirit* convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He is the Agent in regeneration Who baptizes all believers into the body of Christ, indwells them and preserves them unto the day of redemption. We also believe that the Holy Spirit provides believers with service gifts for the equipping of the saints and to build up the body of Christ. He also gave temporary sign gifts to the early church (prophesying the future, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing) that have ceased.

John 14:16-17, 16:7-13; Rom. 8:9, 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-14, 28-30, 13:8-12, 14:3; Eph. 1:13-14, 4:7-11.

3. CREATION

We believe that God created the physical universe, angels and man; that the Genesis account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical record of the direct, immediate creative acts of God; that man was created in the image of God by a direct work of God, and that all of mankind have descended from Adam and Eve.

Gen. 1 & 2, 3:20; John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17.

4. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in holiness and lived in fellowship with his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state; in consequence of which all of mankind are now totally depraved sinners by nature and by choice, utterly void of that holiness required by God, inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to everlasting hell without defense or excuse.

Gen. 1:31, 2:16-17, 3:6-24; Rom. 1:18-20, 3:23, 5:12; Eph. 2:3.

5. ELECTION

We believe that God, in accordance with His eternal purpose, graciously chose (ie, *elect*) all who will be saved. This election is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and love, and therefore excludes all boasting while being perfectly consistent with the free will of man. We also believe that the effects of election should be seen in the lives of all who truly believe the Gospel, and that it is the foundation of Christian assurance.

Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:4-6; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Pet. 1:10.

6. SALVATION

We believe that the *salvation* of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the will of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, thus

qualifying Himself in every way to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient 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 as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust; that He bore our own sins in His body on the cross, and having risen from the dead is now enthroned in Heaven.

Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 John 4:10.

Faith

We believe that *faith*, a gift of God, is the medium through which Christ is received by the soul as Savior. It is an assent of the mind and consent of the heart, consisting of belief and trust; the testimony of God is implicitly accepted and believed as true, while Christ is unreservedly trusted for salvation; by it the believer is brought into vital relationship with God, freely justified, and lives as seeing Him Who is invisible. Faith reveals Christ to the soul as a willing and sufficient Savior, and commits the heart and life to Him.

John 3:16; Rom. 1:16-17, 5:1, 10:10; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 11:1.

Repentance

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. It is a personal act, and consists of a godly sorrow for sin, as offensive to God and ruinous to the soul; that it is accompanied with great humiliation in view of one's sin and guilt, together with prayer for pardon; also by sincere hatred of sin and persistent turning away from all that is evil and unholy. Since none are sinless in this life, when we sin we need to repent.

Isa. 55:7; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 1:8-9.

The New Birth

We believe that to be saved, sinners must be born again; that *the new birth* is a new creation in Jesus Christ; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth, the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, which is eternally secure, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit. Proper evidence of the new birth is the fruits of the Spirit, faith, and newness of life.

John 3:3-8, 10:28-29; Rom. 6:13,23; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 2:1-5; 2 Pet. 1:4.

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 works 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.

7. 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 as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life of the believer; third, sanctification is completed with the believer's glorification at the Lord's return. Sanctification is promoted as the believer (who is a priest in God's eyes) consistently offers spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, and practices a faithful prayer life and practical study and application of His Word.

John 17:17; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 5:23-24; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5,9; 1 John 3:2-3; Jude 24-25.

8. ETERNAL SECURITY

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for the Lord Jesus Christ; that our salvation is dependent upon His person and finished work, not upon our effort or will.

John 6:39, 10:28-29; Rom. 8:35-39; Phil. 1:6; Jude 1,24.

9. THE CHURCH

We believe that a local *church* is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and purpose; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its scriptural officers are pastors, sometimes called bishops or elders, and deacons, whose qualifications and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe the true mission of the church is to glorify God through faithful witnessing, edification, worship and instruction in His Word. We hold that the local church has absolute right of self-government; that on all matters of membership, procedures, practices, discipline, and benevolence the will of the local church is final; that it is to be 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 such 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.

Acts 2:41-42, 20:17; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 18; 1 Tim. 3:1-13.

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Universal Church, which is both the body and bride of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, regardless of denominational affiliation.

1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 1:22-23, 3:1-6, 5:23-27.

10. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian *baptism* is the single immersion in water of a believer in Jesus Christ to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem his 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 comes again; that the elements of bread and grape juice are symbols to remind us of Christ's body and blood offered on our behalf; and that it should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe that participants in the Lord's Supper should be obedient believers whether members or not.

Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42, 8:36-38; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 11:23-28.

11. SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to *separate* ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy. Scriptural separation is to be practiced in both the individual believer and the church as a whole.

Personal

We believe that every believer should be separated unto God by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and should walk in Christian love and holiness, exhibiting qualities of honesty, integrity, forgiveness, and loving-kindness along with a sincere humility and genuine zeal for the advancement of the cause of Christ. We also believe we are not to love the world nor the things in the world, but rather we are to flee fleshly desires, to avoid every kind of evil, and to refrain from practices that abuse our bodies, destroy one's testimony, offend one's brother, and fail to glorify God.

Rom. 14:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:18-20, 8:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 5:22-25; Eph. 5:7-10, 15-20; Phil. 4:8; 1 John 2:15-17.

Ecclesiastical

We believe that the church should be separated from apostate religious organizations and individuals (those who hold to unscriptural doctrines, and who sanction theological compromise). Ecclesiastical separation is based on God's eternal principle of division between truth and error and His specific command not to be bound together with unbelievers and to withdraw from disobedient brethren. This truth is to be practiced with an attitude of devotion to God, humility, compassion, and yet with conviction.

Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Tim. 6:3-6; 2 John 9-11.

12. THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that the first day of the week is to be set aside unto the Lord for worship, fellowship with others of like faith, instruction in the Word of God and rest from the cares of the world as a testimony both public and private. It is a day of rejoicing together in the resurrection of our Lord by giving significant time and resources to further our evangelistic outreach and personal edification.

Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 10:25.

13. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that *civil government* is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; and that those in authority are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience.

Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-14.

14. ANGELS

We believe in the personal existence of *angels* who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name and to serve Him. Those angels who kept their first estate minister to all who are the heirs of salvation. There are also other angels who fell with Satan who now function in Satan's counterfeit system as rulers of darkness, and are to be resisted by the believer through the armor given by God.

Isa. 6; Matt. 18:10; Luke 1:26-27; Eph. 6:11-12; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; Heb. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:12; Jude 6,9.

15. SATAN

We believe that there is a personal devil, a created angel who through pride became the enemy of his Creator; that he is the "god of this age" and the "prince of the power of the air;" who is full of all subtlety and seeks continually to frustrate the purposes of God and to ensnare the sons of men; and who was conquered by Christ on the cross and condemned to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Isa. 14:12-15; Luke 10:18; 2 Cor. 4:4, 11:13-15; Eph. 2:2; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 12:9, 20:10.

16. COMING EVENTS

Rapture

We believe in the personal, pretribulation and premillennial return of Christ to *rapture* His redeemed ones of the church, an event which can occur at any moment; 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 these shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

1 Cor. 15:51-52; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1-2.

Judgment Seat of Christ

We believe that all saved persons of the Church Age will appear before the *Judgment Seat of Christ* to be judged individually in regard to their service and will receive rewards according to their works.

Matt. 25:21; Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10.

The Great Tribulation and The Millennial Kingdom

We believe that the seven year *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*. We believe that this millennial period will end with the judgment of nations; the resurrection, judgment and punishment of the wicked in hell; and the eternal bliss of the righteous in Heaven.

Matt. 24:21, 29-30; Rev. 20:1-6, 12-15.

Righteous and Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the *wicked*; that those who are justified by faith in the Lord Jesus are truly righteous in the eyes of God; while all who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under condemnation; and this distinction holds among men both in this life and after death, in the everlasting happiness of the saved in Heaven and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the Lake of Fire.

Gen. 18:23; Prov. 14:32; Mal. 3:18; Matt. 25:34-46; Rom. 6:16-18; Rev. 20:12-15, 21:1-27.