

ARTICLE IV ARTICLES OF FAITH

Section I. The Scriptures

- A. We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired of God; that it is truth without any admixture of error for its matter and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union; and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.
- B. By "The Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which as originally written, does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.
- C. By "Inspired" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by bold men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired. Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119:160; Proverbs 30:5-6; Acts 1:16; II Timothy 3:16-17.

Section II. The True God

We believe that 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; and in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. Genesis 17:1; Exodus 15:11; Exodus 20:2-3; Psalm 83:18; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 147:5; Jeremiah 10:10; John 4:24; John 10:30; John 17:5; Romans 11:33; I Corinthians 8:6; I Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:6; Philippians 2:5-6; I Timothy 1:17; I John 5:17; Revelation 4:1.

Section III. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Trinity, 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 judgment, and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; and that He is the agent in the New Birth that seals, endures, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer. Genesis 1:1-3; John 14:16, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:8-11, 13; Acts 5:30-32; Romans 8:16, 26-27; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 9:14.

Section IV. The Devil or Satan

We believe Satan was once holy and enjoyed heavenly honors, but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels. He is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter and the enemy of God and His Christ; the accuser of the saints; the author of all false religions; the chief power behind the present apostasy; the lord of the antichrist; and the author of all the

powers of darkness. We believe Satan is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels. Ezekiel 28:14-17; Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 4:1-3; Luke 22:3-4; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Ephesians 2:2; I Thessalonians 3:5; II Thessalonians 2:8-11; I Peter 5:8; II Peter 2:4; I John 2:22; I John 4:13; II John 7; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-9; Revelation 20:10.

Section V. Creation

We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly; and God's established law was: they should bring forth only "after their kind." Genesis 1:1, 11, 15-16, 20-24; Nehemiah 9:6; Jeremiah 10:12; John 1:3; Acts 17:24-25; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3.

Section VI. The Fall of Man

We believe man was created in innocence under the law of his maker but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state. The consequence of man's choice is that all mankind are now sinners and under just condemnation without excuse or defense. Genesis 3:1-6; Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 1:20, 28, 32; Romans 3:10-19; Romans 5:12; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:1-3.

Section VII. The Virgin Birth

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost 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. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Galatians 4:4.

Section VIII. The Atonement For Sins

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediation offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father freely took upon Himself 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 the 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; and having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender sympathies with divine perfection. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior. Isaiah 53:11; Acts 15:11; John 3:16; John 4:14; Romans 3:24-25; I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2; I Peter 2:24; I Peter 3:18.

Section IX. Grace in the New Creation

We believe 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 sin is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life. John 3:3, 6-7; Romans 6:23; II Corinthians 5:17, 19; Ephesians 2:1; II Peter 1:4; I John 5:1.

Section X. The Freeness of Salvation

We believe in God's election grace; that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and does not prevent the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but it is his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel that involves him in an everlasting condemnation. We do not support the position of unconditional election to salvation, limited atonement of salvation, or irresistible grace at salvation. Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 11:28; John 3:16-18, 36; John 6:37; John 15:6-7; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:13; I Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2: 4-5; I Timothy 1:15; Titus 1:1-2; Titus 2:11; I John 2:2; Revelation 22:17.

Section XI. Justification

We believe that justification is the great gospel blessing that Christ secures to such as believe in Him; that justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; and that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness that we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood. Acts 13:39; Romans 4:1-8; Romans 5:1,9; Romans 8:1; Galatians 3:11; Titus 3:5-7.

Section XII. Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations, inseparable graces, and wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God. Being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, by way of salvation through Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy. At this time we heartily receive the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confess Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior. Isaiah 55:6-7; Mark 1:15; Luke 18:13; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 20:21; Romans 10:9-13.

Section XIII. The Church

We believe a local church is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a 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. We believe the true mission of the church is founded on the Great Commission: First, to make individual disciples; Second, to build up the church; and Third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order. 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. We believe it is scriptural

for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; and on all matters of membership, policy of government, discipline, and benevolence, the will of the local church is final. Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 15:22-23; I Corinthians 8:11-12; I Corinthians 11:2; I Corinthians 12:4; II Corinthians 8:23-24; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:11-12; Colossians 1:18.

Section XIV. Church Ordinances (Baptism and Communion)

A. Baptism

We believe that a Christian's Baptism is the immersion in water as a believer after he is saved, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit), with the approval of the local church. Baptism is a solemn and beautiful emblem, representing our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. We do not believe a Christian is in complete obedience to Christ if he refuses to be baptized. Scriptural Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership. Matthew 3:6, 16; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 8:36-39.

B. Communion

The Lord's Supper is a fellowship wherein believers only, by the sacred use of bread and fruit of the vine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ and the blessed hope of His Second Coming. Communion should be preceded by solemn self-examination. I Corinthians 11:23-28.

Section XV. The Security of the Saints

We believe that those who are born again are secure in the eternal salvation of divine provision and are kept by the unlimited power of God, the unbounded love of Christ, and the unbreakable seal of the Spirit. John 10:28-29; Romans 8:35-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:6; I Peter 1:3-5.

Section XVI. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of God (at the moment of salvation) are truly righteous in His esteem; and all that 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 and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. Malachi 3:18; Matthew 7:13-14; Matthew 25:34-41; Romans 1:17; Romans 6:16-18; Romans 7:6; I John 2:29; I John 3:7.

Section XVII. Civil Government (City, County, State, and Federal)

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 openly 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. Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:7; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-14, 17.

Section XVIII. The Resurrection, Premillennial Return of Christ, and Related Events

A. The Resurrection

We believe Christ rose bodily "the third day" according to the Scriptures; He ascended "To the right hand of the throne of God;" and He alone is our merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. Matthew 28:6-7; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:4-6, 39; John 14:3; John 20:27; I Corinthians 15:4, 42-44; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:2.

B. Premillennial Return of Christ

We believe "That this same Jesus that is taken up from you into Heaven shall come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" bodily, personally, and visibly; that the "Dead in Christ shall rise first;" that the living saints "Shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" "That the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David;" and that "Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness upon this earth until He hath put all enemies under His feet." Luke 1:32; Acts 1:11; I Corinthians 15:25, 51-53; I Thessalonians 4:16-17.

C. Rapture of the Church

We believe in a pre-tribulation rapture of the church. We base this belief on the following:

1. Scripture passages dealing with the Rapture must be interpreted literally, not allegorically.
2. The rapture of the Church is IMMEDIATE. I Corinthians 15:53; James 5: 8-9.
3. The Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are separate events, and the Tribulation is the time that exists between the two events.
4. The Church is not appointed to go through the Tribulation Period. I Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9; Revelation 3:10.
5. The Church is never mentioned or eluded to in any key passages dealing with the Tribulation. This fact is clearly evident in Revelation, Chapters 6 through 19, where the Church is conspicuously absent.

Section XIX. Missions

We believe the command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to every believer. Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." John 20:21: "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you." Mark 16:15: "And He said unto them, Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Romans 10:13-15: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Section XX. The Grace of Giving

We believe that the church tithe consists of ten percent of the gross earnings before any deductions are made and this money is God's portion of our income that He has requested. Any money given above or beyond this is a gift. We believe scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of financial stewardship. II Corinthians 8:7: "Therefore as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." I Corinthians 16:2: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come." Malachi 3:8-10: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, Saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Hebrews 7:2-4: "Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils." Matthew 23:23: "These ye ought to have done." Leviticus 27:30: "The tithe is the Lord's." We believe that the individual believer's attitude toward financial stewardship to the Church is an indicator of their relationship with the Lord.

Section XXI. Family

A. Human Sexuality

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of 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 and 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)
2. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23)

B. Family Relationships

1. 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 the 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)
2. 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 as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a 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; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; I Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Colossians 3:18-21; Hebrews 13:4; I Peter 3:1-7)

C. Divorce and Remarriage

We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one spouse dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. (Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

D. Abortion

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