

## ARTICLES OF FAITH

### **I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the verbally inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We believe that the Holy Spirit superintended the human authors of Scripture so that they composed and recorded without error God's revelation to man (2 Pet. 1:21). The Bible is therefore inerrant in all matters of which it speaks (John 17:17). The Bible is the supreme and final authority in all matters of belief and behavior (Jude 3).

### **II. THE TRIUNE GOD**

- A. We believe in the one true God (Deut. 6:4), forever existing in three Persons - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14). These three persons coequally share the divine essence, attributes, and perfection, and are worthy of the same love, worship, and obedience (Rev. 4:11). While one in essence and purpose, each member of the Godhead has assumed distinct but harmonious roles in creation and redemption (Gen. 1:1-2; John 1:3; Eph. 1:3-14).
- B. We believe that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah of Israel (Matt. 16:16).
- C. We believe that He is fully God (Ps. 110:1; Isa. 9:6; John 8:58; Tit. 2:13), the eternal Son of God (Rom. 1:1-4). In the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:1-2), Christ became incarnate (John 1:14), having been miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:35). During the incarnation Christ subjected Himself to the limitations of humanity (Phil. 2:5-11), lived among us (John 1:14), and was tempted at every point as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).
- D. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, fully God, equal with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4).

### **III. THE CREATION**

- A. We believe that God created the heavens and the earth in six, literal, twenty-four hour days (Gen. 1:1-31). Jesus Christ is the Agent of creation (John 1:3; Col. 1:16), who spoke the universe into existence out of nothing (Ps. 33:6). Christ sustains the universe by His almighty power (Col. 1:17).
- B. We believe that man was created in the image of God by a special act of God Himself (Gen. 1:26; 2:7) and that Eve was created from Adam (Gen. 2:21-22). As a result, the dignity of human life, the basis of gender roles, and the sanctity of marriage were all established by God Himself (Gen. 2:23-24). We believe that God made humanity responsible stewards over creation (Gen. 1:28-31). God created the world morally perfect (Gen. 1:31).
- C. We believe that God also created angels (Ps. 149:5; Col. 1:16). These angels are spirit beings, created by God to accomplish His will and purpose (Heb. 1:14).

#### **IV. THE FALL**

We believe that Lucifer, a cherub, was the first creature to rebel against God (Ezek. 28:11-16) and that he led a third of the angels in rebellion with him (Rev. 12:4). Appearing in the form of a serpent, Satan deceived Eve, who in turn led Adam to knowingly violate the expressed command of God (Gen. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:14). The effects of the Fall are threefold. First, the sin of Adam was immediately imputed to the race, resulting in physical death (Rom. 5:12). Second, as Adam and Eve began to procreate, each child descended from them was conceived with a sinful human nature (Ps. 51:5), spiritually dead before God (Eph. 2:1-3). Third, because of our depravity, human beings commit acts of sin (Rom. 3:23). As a result of the Fall, every aspect of human nature has been affected, rendering man incapable of doing any spiritual good (Rom. 3:10-11). The ultimate consequence of sin is eternal separation from God (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:15).

#### **V. REDEMPTION**

We believe that Jesus Christ, the God-man, provided a substitutionary atonement sufficient for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:19). By His death and the shedding of His blood, Christ satisfied the wrath of God toward sin (1 John 2:2), paid the price to release fallen humanity from the bondage and burden of sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19), and removed the enmity between humanity and God caused by sin (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

#### **VI. RESURRECTION**

We believe Christ arose from the dead in the same body, now glorified, in which He had lived and died (Matt. 28:5-6). The resurrection validated Christ's claim to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4), and guaranteed the forgiveness of our sins through faith (Rom. 4:25). He now lives as our sympathetic High Priest and Mediator before the Father (Heb. 4:14-15; 7:25-27).

#### **VII. FREENESS OF SALVATION**

- A. We believe that salvation is offered by God freely to all humanity (John 3:16). The gospel message is that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died in our place for our sins and rose again (1 Cor. 15:1-11). The Holy Spirit works in conjunction with the proclamation of the gospel to convict the world of the truthfulness of its message (John 16:7-11; Acts 5:30-32). All one must do to be saved is humble oneself before God, turn from one's sins, and trust in the gospel (Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8-9). The lost are responsible for their lack of salvation through rejection of the truth and unbelief (Rom. 1:18-20).
- B. We believe a person is not saved by works (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:2-5). Faith alone in Christ alone is the only way of salvation (John 14:6; Eph. 2:8-9). When a person trusts the gospel, they are acquitted of divine condemnation and declared righteous (justified, Rom. 3:23-26), as well as sanctified positionally before God (Phil 1:1).

## **VIII. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE FREE WILL OF MAN**

We believe that divine sovereignty in salvation is perfectly consistent with human choice and responsibility. We believe that divine election is an expression of God's love based on His mercy and grace (Eph. 1:4-5). God freely chose certain human beings to be saved in accordance with His foreknowledge (Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Pet. 1:1-2). He has predestined that the elect are to be adopted as sons (Eph. 1:5), become like Christ (Rom. 8:29), and bring praise to Him (Eph. 1:11-12).

## **IX. SANCTIFICATION**

We believe that spiritual maturity is the life of Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21) reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18) in response to the Word of God (John 17:17), prayer (1 Th. 5:17), and the edifying influence of the local church (Eph. 4:7-16). The Holy Spirit is essential to the process of sanctification, in that He helps the believer understand the Scriptures (John 14:25-26), guides (Gal. 5:16), and empowers the believer (Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18). The Holy Spirit progressively produces the fruit of godliness in the believer's life (Gal. 5:22-23).

## **X. ETERNAL SECURITY**

- A. We believe that a genuine believer will freely persevere and advance in the faith by the grace and power of God (1 Peter 1:3-5, Phil. 1:6).
- B. We believe that God initiates our salvation, continues it, and guarantees its consummation whereby all believers in Christ are eternally secure (John 10:27-29).

## **XI. THE CHURCH**

- A. We believe that the church began at Pentecost in Acts 2 and will continue until the Rapture. With Christ as its head, local churches from around the world form the church universal (Col. 1:18).
- B. We believe that membership in a local church should be restricted to those who have a credible testimony of saving faith, who have been baptized by immersion (Acts 2:41-42) and who concur with the biblically-based doctrine of the church (Eph. 4:4-6; Jude 3).
- C. We believe that the leadership of the church should be committed to spiritually qualified men (1 Tim. 3:1-13). There are two offices in the local church - Elders/Pastors, who exercise spiritual oversight and care for the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:1-4), and Deacons, who assist the Elders/Pastors in their tasks by ministering to the physical and material needs of the congregation (Acts 6:1-6).
- D. We believe that the local church is an independent body accountable to Christ, the head of the church (Col. 1:18). All human authority for governing the local church resides within the local church (Heb. 13:17). No hierarchy outside the local church may dictate our church's beliefs or practices.
- E. We believe that the church is to bear witness to the Gospel and to share our faith both locally and around the world (Mt. 28:19-20).
- F. We believe that the church is to build itself up in Christ-likeness of character and service through the preaching and teaching of the Word (1 Tim. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:2) and by

encouraging one another to put into practice that which has been learned (Phil. 3:17; 4:9). The church should also build itself up through times of regular, corporate prayer (Acts 2:42; Eph. 6:18) and the exercise of spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). We believe that certain spiritual gifts were temporary ending with the passing of the apostolic age (Eph. 2:20; Heb. 2:3-4). We believe the church should practice two ordinances - water baptism by \*immersion of those who have placed their trust in Christ (Matt. 28:19-20), and the Lord's Supper as a proclamation of the Lord's death until He returns (1 Cor. 11:23-24). \*Other forms of baptism may be accepted given certain physical or medical conditions that may prohibit total immersion.

- G. We believe that God has established both the church and the civil government, and He gave each its own distinct sphere of operation. Neither should control the other, nor should there be an alliance between the two. As believers we are to pray for our governmental leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-3), and submit to our governmental authority (Rom. 13:1-7). However, we must obey God rather than men when government usurps the place of God (Acts 5:29).

## **XII END TIMES**

- A. We believe in a pre-tribulational rapture of the church, meaning that the church will be raptured (caught up or taken away) before the Great Tribulation which is the imminent blessed hope of church-age believers (1 Th. 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14). All church-age believers will then be examined at the Judgment Seat of Christ and rewarded for faithfulness (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15).
- B. We believe that following the rapture, there will be a seven-year period of tribulation on earth during which God will pour out His wrath upon unbelievers (Dan. 9:24-27; Rev. 5:1-18:24). This period will culminate in the Second Coming of Christ, who will visibly and bodily return to earth to inaugurate the kingdom promised to Israel in literal fulfillment of the biblical covenants (Gen. 12:1-3; Deut. 30:1-10; 2 Sam. 7:16; Jer. 31:33-34; Ezek. 37:21-28). This kingdom will last for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-6).
- C. We believe that after the one thousand years (the Millennium), Satan will be released and lead one final rebellion against God (Rev. 20:7-10). The earth will be destroyed by fire, and Satan and the fallen angels (demons) will be cast into the lake of fire (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:7-10). At the Great White Throne judgment the unsaved dead will be resurrected, judged by Jesus Christ, and cast into the lake of fire (Hell) where they will experience conscious, eternal torment (Mt. 25:46; 2 Th. 1:9; Rev. 14:11; 20:11-15). All the saved will then experience the joy of eternal life in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:22:21).