

A Brief History of Our Confession of Faith

Our Confession of Faith is rich in heritage, truth, and practical usage. As early as 1524 our Baptist forefathers were setting forth in simple terms their doctrinal Statements of Belief. In the Gospel of Luke chapter one, the author tells us that it seemed good unto him to write in order unto Theophilus, that he might know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed. In verses one and two, Luke explained the purpose of his gospel was “To Set Forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.” (Luke 1:1-4) Today we need more than ever to clearly teach and proclaim these wonderful truths of our Lord and His Word.

The Confessions of Faith which the majority of Baptists use today are based upon the New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1833 or a revision of it. This confession has been used for many years. The basis of it was the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 and previous to that the London Confessions of Faith of 1644 and 1689. God had blessed its usage and it is vitally important that we continue to declare and stand upon these truths today. Luke said in his gospel that “these things are MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG US.” (Luke 1:1) Sadly today many within our own churches do not even know these doctrines, let alone, most surely believe them.

It is for the purpose of instructing believers in the truths of the Word of God that these statements of our beliefs are prepared. May they be a blessing to all that use them and may they help to prepare many Christians “To be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” (1 Peter 3:15)

To set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us...that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed, we send forth the commonly believed Confession of Faith held among us.

May our Lord richly bless you as you read, study, and live by these wonderful Bible truths in your daily lives.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

In keeping with the earliest copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of Grace Baptist Church of Newark, Texas, dated Nov. 21, 1953, we reaffirm our commitment to the Holy Scriptures as our authority in all matters of faith and practice, and to the New Hampshire Confession of Faith as a worthy interpretation of Bible doctrines which reads as follows:

To set forth in order, a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us... that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed, we send forth the commonly believed Confession of Faith held among us, as follows:

I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was verbally and plenary inspired of God; that it has 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.

(Explanatory)

1. By "The Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from genesis to Revelations. which is originally written does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.
2. By "Inspiration" we mean that the books of the bible were written by Holy 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.
3. We believe that the Texts which are the closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the Textus Receptus Greek Text for the New Testament, and that the King James Version of the English Bible is a true and faithful translation of these two providentially preserved Texts.
(II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Psalms 119:160; Psalms 119:130; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44-45; Psalms 119:89; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 3:4; I Peter 1:23; Revelation 22:18-19; John 12:48; Isaiah 8:20; Ephesians 6:17; Romans 15:4; Luke 16:31; Psalms 19:7-11; John 5:45-47; John 5:39.

II. OF THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, and 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 Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (Matt. 28:19; Mark 12:30; John 15:26; Acts 5:3,4; Rom. 11:33; I Cor. 2:10-11).

III. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit 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 bear witness, and that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; and that He bear 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. (Matt. 28:19; mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Rom. 8:14,16; Eph. 1:13-34).

IV. OF THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe that 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; that he is now malignant prince of the power of the air, the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and his Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present, apostasy; the lord of the anti-Christ and the author of all the powers of darkness-- destined, however to final defeat at the hand of God's own son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared fore him and his angels. (Isa. 14: 12-15; Ezek. 28:14-17; Matt. 13:25; Mark 13:21-22; Luke 22:3-4; Rev. 13:13-44; 19:11, 16, 20; 12: 7-9; 20:1-3; 20:10).

V. OF 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 changes 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." (Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Acts 4:24; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; John 1:3; Rev. 10:6; Rom. 1:20; Acts. 17:23-26; Jer. 10:12).

VI. OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence, of which, all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse. (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 5:12; 3:19-20; 1:20).

VII. OF 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 a woman, and that He is both Son of God, and God the Son. (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4).

VIII. OF THE ATONEMENT OF SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by 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 the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is every way qualified to be suitable, a compassionate and a all-sufficient Savior. (Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; John 3:16; I Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:11; I John 2:2).

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 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 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; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life. (John 3:3; Cor. 5:17; I John 5:1; John 3:6,7; Gal. 5:22).

X. OF THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe in God's electing grace; that the blessings of salvation are made free to all the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and not prevent the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity

and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation. (I Thes. 1:4; Col. 3:12; Rom. 8:29-30; Rev. 22:17; John 6:37; I Tim. 1:15).

XI. OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin; and the gift of eternal life on the principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works in righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; His righteousness is imputed unto us. Acts 13:39; Is. 53:11; Rom. 8:1; Titus 3:5-7; Gal. 3:11.

XII. OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that Repentance and faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our soul by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all sufficient Savior. Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Luke 18:13; Rom. 10:13; 9:11.

XIII. OF THE CHURCH

We believe that a church of Christ is a congregation of baptized 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 them by His Word; that its officers or ordination are pastors (Elders and Bishops) whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; we believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission; First, to make individual disciples; Second, to build up the church; Third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal this order; we hold that 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 true churches to co-operate 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 of government, of discipline, of benevolence the will of the local church is final. (Acts 2:41; I Cor. 11:2; Eph.1:22-23; Acts 14:23; 6:5, 6; 15:23; 20:17-28; Eph. 5:23-24; Mal. 3:10).

XIV. OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer; in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church, to show forth in as solemn and beautiful emblem of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effort in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper; in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination. Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:6; John 3:23; I Cor. 11:23-28; Col. 2:12.

XV. OF THE PERSERVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

We believe that such are only real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation. John 8:32; Col. 1:2; I John 2:19; Rom. 8:28; I Pet. 1:5; John 10:28; 10:29; Rom. 8:35-39

XVI. OF 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 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 felicity of the saved and everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Mal. 3:18; Rom 6:17-18; I Pet. 4:18; I Cor. 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 6:16; Gal. 3:10; Luke 16:25).

XVII. 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. (Rom. 13:1,3; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Tit. 3:1; I Pet. 2:13-14 & 17; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 23:10; Rev. 19:16; Phi. 2:10-11; Psa. 72:11.)

XVIII. OF THE RESURRECTION AND RETURN OF CHRIST AND RELATED EVENTS

We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. Of the resurrection, we believe that Christ arose bodily "The third day according to the Scripture" that He ascended "to the right hand of the throne of God;" "That this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven", bodily 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, and the last trump;" "at the Lord Good shall give unto him the throne of His Father David;" and that "Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemy under His feet." Matt. 28:6-7; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:51; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1:9; I Cor. 15:52; 15:42-44; I Thes.4:17; Rev. 20:1-4.

IX. OF MISSIONS

We believe that the command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the churches. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Acts 13:1-4; Rom. 10:13, 14, 15).

XX. OF THE GRACE OF GIVING

We believe that Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the faith. II Cor. 5:7. We are commanded to bring our gifts into the storehouse (Common treasury of the church) upon the first day of the week. I Cor. 16:2. Under grace we give, and do not pay the tithe-- "Abraham GAVE a tenth part of all"--- "Abraham GAVE the tenth of the spoils"—Heb. 7:2-4 and this was 400 years before the law, and this is confirmed in the New Testament; Jesus said concerning tithes, "these ye ought to have done" Matt. 23:23

We are commanded to bring the tithe into the common treasury of the church. Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:10 In the new testament it was the common treasury of the church. Acts 4:34,35, 37.

ARTICLES OF FAITH - SHORT STATEMENT

1. 1.We believe the whole Bible from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, as the verbally inspired Word of God.
2. We believe Jesus Christ was born of Mary the Virgin, and is the Son of God, and God the Son.
3. We believe that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.
4. We believe that he arose from the grave the third day according to the Scriptures..
5. We believe that He, only, is the Great High Priest, and we need not the intercession of any man but the Christ ever liveth it make intercession for us.
6. We Believe that Christ will come again in Person, Bodily, visibly, to establish His Kingdom on the earth.
7. We believe that in order to be saved, the soul must be born again. "Ye must be born again" John 3:3.
8. We believe that every born again should declare his faith by act of baptism (immersion in water) setting forth the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection.
9. We believe that Christ keeps those who are truly born again, (II Timothy 1:12; John 10:28).
10. We believe that all Christians are called unto a life of separation from worldly and sinful practices, and to a life of usefulness for Christ. (II Cor. 6;17).
11. We believe that the church is a body of baptized believers whose only mission is, not to "reform the world," but to preach and teach the Gospel of salvation to the individual soul.
12. We believe that at Christ's coming on the air, the bodies of the dead in Christ shall be raised incorruptible and reunited with the soul and spirit; the bodies of Christians who are alive shall be changed and glorified, and without dying shall be caught up with the Lord. (I Thes.4:13-17; I Cor.15:51-53). The saved then will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be rewarded for their deeds. (II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:11-15). After these things, Christ will bodily and visibly come to the earth with his saints, and shall rule the world in righteousness for a thousand years at the end of which the unsaved dead will be resurrected and their judgment and condemnation shall take place. (Matt. 24:30,31 Rev. 19:11-16; 20:5, 6, 11, 15). The saved will then appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be rewarded for their deeds. (II Cor. 5:10; I Cor. 3:11-15).