

Articles of Faith

The church adopts as a summary of our faith the 1689 London Confession of Faith with minor revisions (see addendum). This Confession of Faith gives a concise statement of Biblical doctrine but is in no way a substitute for the Scripture. The ultimate authority in all matters of faith, order, and morals is and must always be the Bible alone. Believers are bound by the Scripture, by the whole Scripture, and by nothing but the Scripture. However, in order to give a clear statement of what we believe the Bible teaches, we appeal to the historic London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. Also, we recognize the value of the London Baptist Confession of 1646, the Philadelphia Baptist Confession of 1742, the New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1833, and the Baptist Faith and Message of 1963. We find these documents to be a confirmation in faith, a means of edification in righteousness, and an assistance in controversy. In no way are they equal to the infallible authority of the Word of God. A brief summary of what we believe follows:

1. **THE SCRIPTURES** -- The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by the inspiration of God, and are the infallible and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. All Scripture is in its original autographs the very Word of God, and is therefore without error and utterly reliable with regard to fact and teaching, and has been graciously preserved with particular care and providence for our benefit today. Since the Scriptures form our only source of authority there is no need to add to them by apostles and prophets, since they, with the miraculous signs given them, were provided to establish the foundations and seal the revelation of God's Word. (II Tim. 3:16; I Pet. 1:21; John 10:35; Dan. 9:24; II Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:20,21; Heb. 2:4).
2. **DOCTRINE OF GOD** -- There is but one God, the Maker, Sustainer, and Ruler of all things, having in and of Himself all perfections and being infinite in them all. To Him all people owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. (Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3).
3. **THE TRINITY** - God is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. (Matt. 28:19; John 1:14,18; 14:9-11; 15:26; I Cor. 8:6; II Cor 13:14; Gal 4:6).
4. **CREATION** -- God created all things from nothing. Adam and Eve were created by God after His own image in perfect righteousness. The account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 is historical, not mythical; hence evolution is a theory contrary to the teaching of Scripture on creation. (Heb. 11:3; Ps. 33:6; Jer. 32:17).
5. **PROVIDENCE** -- God from eternity decreed all things that come to pass, and perpetually governs all creatures and events. However, He is in no way the author or approver of sin, nor does His decree in any way diminish or violate the responsibility of men. (Jas. 1:13-15).
6. **THE FALL OF MAN** -- Our first parents, Adam and Eve, by disobedience lost the righteousness in which they were created and became corrupt. The guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to all men, who, being his descendants are born in a sinful state and condition, called **ORIGINAL SIN**. From this corrupt nature all transgressions proceed, all men being wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, and opposed to all that is spiritually good in the sight of God. Therefore, although completely responsible to do so, man is unable of himself to repent of sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This is by no means to deny that a vast amount of virtue prevails through the common grace of God; yet man is essentially alienated from his Creator. (Gen. 3:11-13; Rom. 5:12-21; Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-18; Rom. 8:6-8).

7. **THE MEDIATOR** -- Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the divinely appointed Mediator between God and man. Having taken to Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law, suffered, and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. He was buried, rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, at whose right hand He ever lives to make intercession for His people. He is the only Mediator, Prophet, Priest and King of the Church, and Sovereign of the universe. (Matt. 1:23; I Tim. 2:5,6; John 1:14; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; 7:26; II Cor. 5:21; I Cor. 15:3,4; I Tim. 3:16; Acts 1:9-11; Heb. 1:2,3; Rom. 8:34; Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:5,6; Ps. 2:6; Eph. 1:22).

8. **ELECTION** -- Election is God's eternal choice of some persons to eternal life-not because of foreseen merit or faith in them, but because of His mercy in Christ. Those who have been predestined to be saved are called, justified, sanctified and glorified. (Eph. 1:4,11; 2:5; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:30).

9. **EFFECTUAL CALLING AND REGENERATION** -- By His Word and His Holy Spirit God calls us into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ. In so doing He enlightens our minds and renews our wills and affections by the Holy Spirit.(John 3:3-8; Eph. 4:23,24; Col. 3:10; II Thess. 2:14; I Pet. 1:3,23; I John 1:3).

10. **REPENTANCE** -- Repentance is a saving grace. The repentant person, by the Holy Spirit, is convicted of the evil of his sin and humbles himself for it, with godly sorrow, hatred of it, self-abhorrence, and a purpose to endeavor to walk before God so as to please Him in all things (Luke 18:13,14; 24:46,47; Acts 2:37,38; 5:31; 20:21; I Thess. 1:9).

11. **FAITH** -- Faith is a saving grace by which we receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for salvation as He is freely offered to us in the gospel; by which also we believe the Word of God to be true and seek to appropriate its teaching to ourselves.(Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:9-10,17; Rom. 4:3; Heb. 11:6).

12. **JUSTIFICATION** -- Justification is an act of God's free grace whereby He pardons our sins and accounts us righteous in His sight. This is based not on anything we have done but only on the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. (Rom. 3:20-30; 4:5; 8:33; Luke 18:13,14).

13. **ADOPTION** -- For the sake of His only Son, Jesus Christ, God has been pleased to make all justified persons sharers in the grace of adoption, by means of which they are numbered with, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of, the children of God.(John 1:12; Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:15,16; I John 3:1).

14. **SANCTIFICATION** -- Those who are united to Jesus Christ are by regeneration renewed in their whole nature after the image of God, and are set apart by God to share in His holiness; this is definitive sanctification. But because of the remaining effects of the former corrupt nature there is a progressive aspect to sanctification, whereby the Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer, promotes true holiness of life.(II Cor. 5:17; II Cor. 1:2; 6:11; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:16-18; II Thess. 5:23; Phil. 2:12,13; John 17:17; I Pet. 1:2).

15. **PERSEVERANCE** -- Those whom God has accepted in the Beloved and sanctified by His Spirit will never totally or finally fall away from the state of grace but will persevere to the end. (Rom. 8:30; Phil. 1:6; John 10:27-29; Heb. 10:39)

16. **THE CHURCH** -- The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, which is composed of God's elect in every age. According to His commandment, Christians are to gather in local churches. To each of these churches He has given authority and responsibility for administering order, discipline, and worship. The officers of the church are the elders and deacons. (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 1:13; 2:1)

17. BAPTISM -- Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ obligatory for every believer, by immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a symbol of union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. It signifies the washing away of sins and is a prerequisite to church membership. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38,41; Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12; Acts 22:16; I Cor. 1:13).

18. THE LORD'S SUPPER -- The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, and to be observed by His Church until He returns. It is in no sense a re-sacrifice of Christ. Its purpose is to commemorate Christ's death, to confirm the everlasting covenant in Christ's blood, and to strengthen union with Christ in His love as well as union and communion with each other. If there is unforgiveness between members this should be removed before coming to the table. (I Cor. 11:23-26; Luke 22:19,20).

19. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS -- It is the duty of every church and every Christian to extend the gospel to all men everywhere. As faith comes by hearing the Word of God, we are to seek by all methods sanctioned in the Word of God to persuade men to seek Jesus Christ and His salvation. Whereas the apostles were extraordinary officers of Christ and endowed with supernatural gifts for the establishment of the Church, elders, being the ordinary officers of Christ until the end of time, are to rely on preaching and teaching for the discipling of the nations. (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 10:14-17; I Cor. 9:22).

20. THE LAW OF GOD -- God has commanded us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves, which is the summary of the Ten Commandments, and which especially expresses the moral law of God. This law, together with the precepts of Scripture as a whole, and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, provide the Christian with a guide for life. (Mark 12:30,31; Rom. 13:8-10; Matt. 5:17-20; Ex. 20:1-17).

21. THE LORD'S DAY -- The Lord's Day is to be kept holy. It is given for our benefit, which we obtain through resting from our normal occupations and by giving ourselves to the worship and service of God. On this day we remember the finished work of Christ and rest in it. It is a high privilege and obligation for believers to assemble together for worship, fellowship, ministry, prayer, and instruction. (Rev. 1:10; Acts 2:1; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24-25).

22. THE STATE -- Civil government is ordained of God and it is the duty of Christians to obey those who have the rule over them in all matters consistent with the teaching of Scripture. Christians are also to pray for their rulers. (Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:17; I Tim. 2:1,2).

23. THE RETURN OF CHRIST -- We believe in the visible, personal and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt. 24:27,30; Acts 1:11; I Thess. 4:16; Rev. 1:7).

24. RESURRECTION -- The bodies of men after death return to dust but their spirits return immediately to God - the righteous to rest with Him, the wicked to be reserved under darkness until judgment. The bodies of all dead, both just and unjust, will be raised. (Gen. 3:19; Ec. 12:7; Acts 13:36; Luke 23:43; II Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:23; I Cor. 15:35-54; I Thess. 4:13-17).

25. THE JUDGMENT -- God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when everyone shall receive according to his deeds. The wicked will go into everlasting punishment in hell with the devil and his angels. The righteous, with glorified bodies, will live and reign with Christ forever. (Acts 17:31; Heb. 9:27; Rom. 14:10,12; II Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31-46; Mark 9:48; II Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:10-15; 22:3-5).

Addendum to the 1689 London Baptist Confession

1. In chapter 26, paragraph 4, the Pope of Rome is declared to be "the Antichrist", "the man of sin", "the son of perdition." This view, held by the Reformers and Puritans, is not universally held today, not because believers do not deplore the errors of Romanism (and of modern Protestantism for that matter), but on exegetical grounds. Some Christians are prepared to believe and say that the primary reference of "the little apocalypse," as II Thessalonians 2:2-9 is called, is to the Pope; some speak and write otherwise. The various commentaries show that there are reasonable grounds for proposing alternative interpretations, and, in the absence of unanimity, no attempt can be rightly be made to demand an obligatory belief of any one line of interpretation. In the area of prophecy (eschatology) it is particularly needful to be cautious, for only in the consummation of all things will the precise meaning of apocalyptic passages of the Word be made clear. In other words, we are not prepared to claim that the prophetic interpretations made by the Reformers of the sixteenth century and the Puritans of the seventeenth century stand on the same level as their doctrinal affirmations. (From the preface of, *A Faith to Confess: The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, Rewritten in Modern English*, Carey Publications, 1975).

2. We believe that the following statement, prepared by Thomas N. Smith, more accurately reflects the teachings of the New Testament regarding the Law of God and the Sabbath.

1. The Holy Scriptures

a. We affirm our belief in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures. We maintain the infallible, inerrant, and authoritative nature of the sixty-six books of the Bible. (II Tim. 3:15-17; II Pet. 1:19-21; II Pet. 3:16).

b. We affirm the preliminary, partial, and incomplete nature of the Old Testament Scriptures. In affirming this, we do not mean that these Scriptures are lacking in Divine origin or inspiration, nor that they are in any way errant or fallible. We do, however, regard the Old Testament Scriptures as the record of the Promise, and therefore, as they stand alone, incomplete. (Heb. 1:1 ff.; I Pet. 1:1-12).

c. We affirm the full, ultimate and final nature of the New Testament Scriptures. In these documents we have the record of God's Final Word to man and the fulfillment of the Promise made at many times and in many ways before the Final Word and Fulfillment being Jesus Christ. In ascribing finality to the New Testament Scriptures we affirm the truth that the New Testament Church is built upon the foundation of New Covenant Revelation, that is the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the Chief Corner Stone. (Heb. 1:1-2; I Pet. 1:10-12; John 14:26 and 16:12-15; Eph. 2:19-20 with 3:3-6 and 4:11-12).

d. We affirm the authority of the whole of Scripture, Old and New Testaments, to order the faith and life of the believer in the New Age. However, we believe that all of Scripture must be viewed from the vantage point of the Final, Exhaustive Word made in Christ and His Apostles, in other words, from the standpoint of the New Testament Documents. (I Tim. 3:16-17; Matt. 5:17-48; Matt. 22:35-40; I Thess. 4:1-2; Matt. 17:1-5).

2. The Unity of God's Gracious Purpose in Every Age

a. We affirm a unity within the Old and New Testaments as to what constitutes the essence of true and real faith and life. Justification and holiness are essentially one and the same in both portions of Scripture and under every covenantal administration. Justification since the Fall has ever been by grace through faith in God's Word of Promise concerning Christ. Holiness has ever been the faithful and loving response of obedience to God's revealed Will or Law by those saved through grace. (Heb. 11; Rom. 4; Gal. 3:1-14; Ps. 119; Rom. 13:8-10).

b. We affirm diversity within this testamental unity. We affirm that believers under the Mosaic Covenant did not enjoy the full blessings which come to believers in the New Age. Furthermore, the demands of God revealed in certain "ceremonial" and "judicial" aspects of the Mosaic Covenant, are not incumbent upon believers under the New Covenant, while they most certainly were upon believers under the Old Economy. Circumcision was much to Abraham and every saint under the Mosaic Covenant; it is nothing to Paul. (Heb. 8-10; Gal. 3:19-4:7; Heb. 11:39-40; John 16:7; Acts 15:23-29; Gal. 6:15; 5:6; I Cor. 7:19 cp. with Gen. 17, and Ex. 4:24-26; Gal. 4:8-11; Col. 2:16-23).

3. The Law of God

a. We affirm God to be the Lawgiver of His people in every age. He gave commandments to un-fallen Adam in Paradise. He revealed commandments, statutes, and laws to the Patriarchs. He disclosed His Covenant in legal form at Sinai. He enforced His Law through the Prophetic institution. In Jesus Christ and His Apostles, God recovered His Law from Rabbinic perversions, divested it of covenantal and temporal provisions, and established it by the Blood and Spirit of Christ as the rule of life for believers to the end of the Age. (Isa. 32:22; Gen. 1:28; 2:15-17; 26:5; Ex. 20:1-17 with Ex. 34:28; Deut. 18:15-22; Hosea 4:4-10 et. al.; Matt. 5:17-48; 12:1-14; Mark 7:1-13; Matt. 7:12 with 22:34-40; Rom. 3:31 with 8:3-4 and 13:8-10; Matt. 28:1-20 with John 14:15-24).

b. We affirm a distinction between those aspects of Biblical Law which are moral, and therefore of universal and perpetual force, and those which are covenantal and of force only upon those who are under a particular covenant and for the duration of that covenant. An example of moral law is the prohibition concerning murder whereby the sanctity of human life is guarded. Murder was a transgression of moral law from the beginning when Cain murdered his brother. This was affirmed in the covenant made with Noah, was reaffirmed in the Mosaic Law and enforced in the proclamation of the Prophets, and was confirmed by Christ and His Apostles as valid to the end of the Age. Covenantal law may be illustrated in the law concerning circumcision. Circumcision was law with binding force only upon those within the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants and for the duration of those covenantal administrations. Though instituted in the time of Abraham and reinstated in the time of Moses, it ceased to have validity in the coming of Christ. The same might be said of the whole Levitical system and other elements of Old Testament law. In Christ these things were fulfilled and abrogated. They have become "nothing" in terms of the New Covenant. (Gen. 4:1-15; 9:6; Ex. 20:13; 21:12; Ezek. 22; Matt. 5:21 ff; I John 3:15; Gen. 17; Ex. 4:24-26 and Josh. 5:1-9; Gal. 6:15 with I Cor. 7:19; Heb. 8-10).

c. We affirm the Ten Commandments to be the heart of the covenant made by God with the nation Israel at Sinai. As is true of all covenants, so the formal expression of the Mosaic covenant contains that which is moral as well as that which is covenantal law. That the primary thrust of the Decalogue is moral, and therefore of universal and perpetual force, is consistent with the nature of the law contained in the Decalogue itself, with the ethical teaching of Old testament - both before and after the giving of the Decalogue at Sinai -and with the moral demands of the New Testament. Thus, the moral demands contained in the Ten Commandments remain in force through the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lawgiver of the New Covenant, and are ethically binding upon believers in the New Age. (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 9:9-11; Ex. 20:8-11 with Ex. 31:12-17; Gen. 26:5; Micah 6:6-8; Matt. 22:34-40; Rom. 13:8-10; Jas. 2:8-12; Matt. 5:17 ff with Matt. 28:20).

d. We affirm the moral equity of many of the covenantal precepts imposed upon the nation through Moses. Thus, while the Christian is not strictly bound by the literal precept, he receives moral

guidance and direction from these precepts. The New Testament believer sees in the precept, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," not concern over cattle (though "The righteous man is merciful to his beast"), but the Divine provision for financial remuneration of those who labor in the Gospel. In this way, we regard the whole Old Testament as a profitable guide in matters ethical in the New Testament Age. (I Cor. 9:9-10 with Deut. 25:4 and I Tim. 5:18; II Tim. 3:16-17; The Book of Proverbs).

e. We affirm the validity of law in producing conviction of sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is to say God uses an objective instrument (His law or instruction), and a subjective Instrument (His Spirit), to bring conviction of sin. Thus, the effect of the Word and Spirit of God is that of convincing lost men of sin before God's commandment, whether the subjective perception of the particular sinner is the sin of unbelief before the demand of the Gospel or the sin of transgression before the various demands of God's Law. By law is the knowledge of sin. From this perspective the whole counsel of God becomes the instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit of bringing God's elect to a knowledge of sin and condemnation in the proclamation of the Gospel. (Ps. 19:7-14; Rom. 7:7-13; John 16:8-11; Rom. 3:19-20 with 4:15; 7:7-13; Mark 10:17-22; Acts 2:37; I John 3:4; 3:23).

4. We affirm the purpose of the Gospel to be, in part, the establishment of the Law. The Law is established through Christ's own obedience to it as a covenant in His exhaustive obedience to its precept and His exhaustive sufferings under its penalty. The Law is further established in the Christian's life through the work of the Holy Spirit in writing the Law on the heart of the elect and causing him to walk in the righteous precepts of the Law through the obedience of faith. The New Creation (which is the heart of the experience of the Gospel) is the principle of faith working by love which results in the keeping of God's commandments. The Christian is not without law to God and is under law to Christ. He delights in the Law of God after the inward man and considers that Law to be spiritual, holy, just and good. However, he sees a different law or principle at work within him bringing him into a partial bondage to the corruption which is in him through the body of sin and death. His obedience to God's precepts is therefore imperfect, but sincere and acceptable to God through Christ's blood and Spirit. Without this evangelical obedience which is seen in the mortification of sin and the perfection of holiness in God's fear, there is no final salvation. (Rom. 3:31; Isa. 42-53 pass. with Gal. 4:4; Rom 3:22; Gal. 3:20; Phil. 3:9 ("the faith(fulness) of Christ"); Heb. 8:10 with Ezek. 36:25-27; Rom. 8:3-4; Gal. 6:15; 5:6 with I Cor. 7:19; I Cor. 9:21; Rom. 7:14-25 with 8:10 ff; Gal. 5:17; I Pet. 2:5; Rom. 8:13; II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14).

5. The Sabbath and the Lord's Day

a. We affirm the Sabbath of the Old Testament to have been inaugurated in the time of Moses and given to Israel as the sign of the Mosaic covenant. As given, it reflected the demand and promise of God to men of entrance into His own soteriological and eschatological rest typified in the creation rest of God from His works. As the sign of the Mosaic covenant, the Sabbath Institution was to that covenant what the rainbow was to the covenant made with Noah and circumcision was to the covenant made with Abraham. In the same way that the rite of circumcision held a prominent place in the Abrahamic covenant, so the Sabbath sign is prominent in the Mosaic covenant, this covenant having its formal statement in the Decalogue itself. Because the Sabbath is the covenantal sign, it can be covenantal law and yet be set squarely within the heart of the covenant document. The Sabbath Institution being composed of eight various sabbaths including the weekly seventh-day sabbath, and having its distinctive elements drawn from the weekly sabbath, set forth the true rest of God's people as being, not a day or holy day, nor the Land, but God Himself. The culmination of these types was the Christ Himself. As such, when Christ the True Sabbath and Lord of the Sabbath came promising rest to all who come to Him in faith, the shadows of the old Institution passed away into the reality of Christ and His Body - the New Creation of the New Age. The Christian keeps the Sabbath-rest of God when he quits his own works and exercises faith in the promise. There remains a sabbath-rest for the people of God as they continue steadfast in the faith until the End, when they shall enter the Eternal Sabbath at the sound of the Last Jubilee Trumpet. (Ex. 16:22-30; Neh. 9:13-15; Ex. 31:12-17; Gen. 2:1-3

with Heb. 3:7-4:11; Ex. 34:12 ff with Gen. 9:8-17 & 17:1-4; Ex. 20:8-11 with Deut. 5:12-15; Lev. 23 and 25 pass.; Luke 4:16-21; Matt. 12:1-8 with 11:28 ff.; Col. 2:16-17 with Heb. 3:7-4:11; Rom. 8:23 and Luke 21:28 and Eph. 4:30 with Lev. 25:8-34 with I Cor. 15:52).

b. We affirm the first day of the week to be the Lord's Day. On this day Christ arose from the dead and sent His Spirit to the Church on Pentecost, which two events inaugurated the New Age in power and glory. By Christ's resurrection and bestowal of the Spirit the believer is introduced into the realm of Christ's procured rest for His people. While every day is lived by the believer unto the Lord, the first day of the week is a day of special recognition and celebration as it was to the churches of the first centuries. The believer is obligated on this day to remember in a special manner the finished work of Christ and His rest in it; indeed it is his high privilege to do so. This he cultivates by meeting with the saints for worship, fellowship, ministry, prayer, and instruction. (Rev. 1:10; Matt. 28:1; Acts 2:1; 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24-25; I Cor. 14).