

ARTICLES OF FAITH



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ARTICLES OF FAITH

A. Holy Scripture

We believe that all of the Scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are fully inspired (God-breathed), wholly without error in the original manuscripts, the unique Word of God, written by men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21). We believe this Word is truth (John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:15), that its message, the Gospel, is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:15), and that it provides for the instruction, correction, and equipping of the believer (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

B. God

We believe in One living and true God, eternal, perfect, a Spirit (Psa. 90:2; 102:24-27; Heb. 1:12), in Whom all things have their origin, source, support, and purpose (Gen. 1:1; Isa. 45:21; Acts 17:28; Eph. 4:6; Heb. 11:3; 1 Tim. 6:16).

We believe God is holy (Isa. 6:3), omniscient (Acts 15:18; Heb. 4:13), omnipresent (Psa. 139:7; Jer. 23:24; Amos 9:2-3), omnipotent (Gen. 1:1, 26, 35:11; Jer. 10:12-13), sovereign (Dan. 2:20-22; 4:17, 25; 7:14), the Creator (Gen. 1:1, 26; John 1:1-3), the Sustainer (Psa. 104:27-30; Matt. 10:29-30; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3), Who is immutable [unchanging] (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17).

Scripture affirms this God as Spirit (John 4:24) and Person (Gen. 1:26; 3:8-9; 6:6; Ex. 3:14; Psa. 94:9-10; John 3:16; 17:1-26; Acts 14:15; 1 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 3:19 ff).

C. Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is Himself God, the express image of the Father. Being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 3:16; Heb. 1:5-10), He took upon Himself humanity (Heb. 2:14). Being true God and also perfect man (1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 3:5), He was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind (1 John 2:2) as a vicarious, substitutionary (representative) sacrifice (Isa. 53:5-6). We hold that his death effectively saves all who believe (John 1:12; Acts 16:31); that our justification is grounded in the shedding of his blood (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7); and that it is proven by his literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Rom. 4:23-25).

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ rose triumphantly from the grave on the third day. He ascended into heaven, where He now intercedes on our behalf at the right hand of God. From heaven He will come again in visible form to judge the living and the dead and to establish his rule as Lord of lords and King of kings (Matt. 25:31 ff; John 5:22-29; 20 and 21; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Tim. 6:15; 2 Tim. 4:1).

D. The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is divine, eternal, personal, and sovereign (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 5:3-4; Heb. 9:14), a participant in creation (Gen. 1:2) and the author of Scriptures (Acts 4:25; Heb. 10:15; 1 Pet. 1:10-11; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). He came to Earth at Pentecost to perform his special work in the Church (Acts 2:17-18, 33). In this age of grace, He convicts the world (John 16:8-11), and restrains the progress of evil (2 Thess. 2:7). He is the believer's Counsellor/Helper (John 14:16-17) and Intercessor (Rom. 8:26), regenerating (John 3:3, 5; Titus 3:5), baptizing (1 Cor. 12:13), indwelling (2 Tim. 1:14), teaching (1 Cor. 2:10-16), and empowering the believer for life and service (Eph. 3:16).

E. Creation

Chapters 1–11 of Genesis are rightly understood as accurate, literal history as Jesus and the New Testament affirm (Matt. 19:4; 24:37–39; Rom. 5:12–14). God created the universe and all that is in it through direct, immediate activity without macro-evolutionary process (Gen. 1–2; Ex. 20:11; Heb. 11:3).

F. Trinity

We believe in the unity of the Godhead, a Triune God, one essence in three persons, God the Father (Rom. 1:7); God the Son (Heb. 1:8); God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4); that these three are one God, coequal in power and glory, having the same nature, attributes, and perfections (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19), while carrying out distinct functions relating to each other and to all creation.

G. Angels, Satan, and Demons

We believe God created angels as spiritual beings who were righteous and had freedom of choice (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Resulting from Satan's fall, both righteous and unrighteous angels exist. All angels have supernatural powers subject to God's sovereign purposes (Job 1-2).

1. Righteous Angels

We believe righteous angels are ministering spirits or messengers of God (Matt. 13:41, 18:10; 1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:7, 14). Though spirits, they have appeared in visible form to manifest God's power (Gen. 19:1-26; Luke 1:26; John 20:12; Rev. 20:1-10). Angels ministered to Jesus during his earthly sojourn (Matt. 4:1-10; 28:2-70; Luke 22:43; Acts 1:10-11), serve God in executing judgment (Gen. 19:13-15; Rev. 9:1-5, 19:17), minister to those who will inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14), and guard and strengthen God's people (2 Ki. 6:17; Psa. 34:7; Acts 5:19-20, 12:7-11).

2. Satan and Demons

a. Satan

We believe Satan was a sinless being, created by God, who fell from that exalted position (Isa. 14:12-17), and so became the enemy of God and of all good. While he seeks to destroy (Matt. 13:19, 39; Mark 1:13; John 13:2), God limits the scope of his power (Job 1:12; 2:1-6; Lk. 22:31 ff; 1 Cor. 10:13).

b. Demons

We believe many angels fell together with Satan (Rev. 12:7–9), beings the Scriptures now identifies as demons. Though under the direct control of Satan to do his will (Matt. 9:34; 25:41, Rev. 12:9), they are limited by God and ultimately their activities will contribute to the accomplishment of His divine purposes. (1 Sam. 19:9; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 12:7).

At Christ's second coming, Satan will be bound a thousand years and ultimately be cast into the lake of fire where he and his angels will be tormented forever (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

H. Anthropology – Man

1. His Creation

We believe that, by an immediate act of God, mankind was created in his image (Gen. 1:26-27). God intended that mankind should fill and rule the Earth (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:1-2), and should be holy and blameless before him to give him praise (Eph. 1:4-6).

2. His Fall

We believe mankind's loyalty and freedom were tested in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15-17). Adam voluntarily and consciously disobeyed God's command (Gen. 3:1-3, 6), so mankind fell, and his relationship with God was broken (Gen. 3:16-19; 2:16-17). The whole human race was condemned, separated from God and subject to death (Rom. 5:12, 18), the consequence of sin. Mankind is now alienated from God

3. His Redemption

We believe God, consistent with His nature, cannot have fellowship with anyone whose sin has not been judged (Psa. 34:16; Isa. 59:1-2). Jesus Christ, God's Son, offered Himself voluntarily (John 10:17-18) on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin (1 John 2:2), the just suffering for the unjust (1 Pet. 3:18), bearing sin's curse, and tasting death for every man (John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:11-12; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on Earth, except unbelief: his voluntary rejection of Jesus Christ as the substitute for the penalty for sin (John 3:14-16; 3:36; Acts 16:31).

4. His Resurrection

We believe every person will be raised bodily from the dead, the believers to eternal life, the unbelievers to eternal separation from God (John 5:28, 29).

I. Soteriology – Salvation

We believe that salvation is by divine grace alone through faith alone, through Jesus Christ alone.

1. Grace

We believe that God saves us on the basis of grace (unmerited favor), not on the basis of any good work or goodness in us (Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom 5:15; 2 Tim 1:9).

2. Faith

We believe faith (i.e., taking God at His word and acting accordingly – Heb. 11:1) is the means of receiving salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). The sole object of our faith is Jesus Christ, who saves us through his substitutionary death, triumphant resurrection, and ascension (John 14:6; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Only by such faith can one be saved from eternal condemnation (John 5:24; 20:30-31).

3. Repentance

We believe repentance is a response to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11) that leads one to turn from sin to God (Isa. 55:6-7; Acts 3:17-4:4; 1 Thess. 1:9), and is demonstrated by a transformed life (Luke 3:8-14; Acts 26:20).

4. Regeneration

We believe regeneration is the impartation of a new and divine life, a new creation; not the old nature altered or re-invigorated, but a new birth from God (John 3:3-8; Eph. 2:10). At regeneration we are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). The power of the indwelling Spirit then enables the believer to become holy in character and conduct (Rom. 8:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17).

5. Assurance

We believe that every believer can be assured of eternal life from the very day of their salvation, based upon the promises of God in His written Word, not upon one's own worthiness (1 John 5:10-13; John 10:28,29; Luke 10:20; Romans 8:16).

6. Justification

We believe justification is an act of God (Rom. 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who put their faith in Christ alone (Rom. 3:23-24, 28; 4:5). This righteousness is not based on any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:20; 4:6), but involves both the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

7. Sanctification

We believe sanctification, a setting-apart unto God, involves both the work of God and the will of man (Phil. 2:12-13). Sanctification is threefold: positional, progressive, and ultimate. It is positional, for every believer is in Christ and therefore identical with Christ's position before God (1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 10:10). We believe, however, that he retains his sin nature (flesh), which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the believer in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. Therefore, a believer experiences progressive sanctification, growing in grace and becoming changed by the unhindered power of the Spirit (John 17:17; Rom. 6:19; 2 Cor. 7:1). Ultimate sanctification will occur when the believer sees the Lord and becomes "like Him" (1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 2:28-3:3).

8. Eternal Security

We believe all believers will be kept saved forever (1 Pet. 1:5) because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of his love (John 13:1; Rom. 8:29), because of the free exercise of God's grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ (1 John 2:2), because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life (John 5:24), because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1), because of the unchangeable promises of God (John 10:28), and because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved (John 14:16-17; Eph. 1:13-14). We believe that our righteous Father cannot overlook the sin of his children and will, when they persistently sin, discipline them in infinite love (Heb. 12:6). We believe He will finally present every believer faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29-30; Jude 24).

J. Ecclesiology – the Church

We believe the Church, which Christ began to build on the day of Pentecost (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2) and will complete at his second coming (1 Thess. 4:16-17), consists of all regenerate believers (Eph. 2:14). Local churches practice two ordinances, the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-34) and believer's baptism (Matt. 28:19-20), and seek to reconcile wayward members back to Christ and to each other, administering discipline when all attempts at reconciliation have failed (1 Cor.

5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11). Church leaders (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1) shepherd the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4), equipping believers to serve (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-16) in order to move the whole body toward maturity and unity. Believers gather to worship God together, to disciple one another, and to fellowship; they disperse to care for the needs of the body and to bear witness of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 2:42-47).

K. Eschatology – The Last Things

1. The Return of Christ

a. The Return of Christ in the Clouds

We believe in the personal, imminent, premillennial return of Christ in the clouds to “catch away” His Church (Acts 1:11; John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Titus 2:13). This hope of Christ’s coming to receive his own (1 Thess. 4:13-17) is a purifying element in the life of the believer (1 John 3:3) and a warning to the unbeliever (Matt. 24:42; 2 Pet. 3:10). Believers will be judged according to their works to receive rewards or to suffer loss (1 Cor. 3:11-15; 9:25; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 3:11).

b. The Return of Christ to the Earth

We believe that, following the great tribulation (Rev. 3:10; 7:14), Christ will visibly return to the Earth in glory with his saints (Rev. 19:11-16) to defeat the enemies of Israel and to judge Israel (Eze. 20:33-44; Matt. 25) and the nations (Rev. 19:17-21). Following this, He will establish His millennial kingdom (Rev. 20).

2. The Resurrection and Final State

We believe in the eternity of the soul, in the bodily resurrection of the saved and the unsaved (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:22), and in the final judgment of good or evil deeds (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12). We believe that at the resurrection the believer’s body will be made like Jesus’ glorified body (Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:17) to be forever with the Lord. We believe that the unbeliever will be judged at the Great White Throne judgment of God when all not found recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life will face eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 20:11-15).

3. God’s Plan for the Church and Israel

We believe Scripture distinguishes between Israel and the Church and that God will keep his promises to both.

The Anna Hamm Mission Fund

In 2001 the Fellowship received a gift from the estate of former missionary Anna Hamm. This was used to establish the Anna Hamm Mission Fund. The Commission on Missions identified special needs among our FEBC missionaries and provided grants for special projects such as buildings or Bible publication. Additionally, the Commission partnered with many of our Fellowship churches by providing matching funds for pastors on short-term assignments to assist our FEBC missionaries. Some funds were used to assist college students on short-term summer mission assignments. A veteran FEBC missionary church planter was sent to Paraguay to train their church planters.

Now, this fund is almost exhausted. Your gift would help the Commission on Missions to be able to take advantage of unique ministry opportunities that they encounter. And your gift could give strategic ministry help to our FEBC missionaries.

(Contact information is on the back cover.)

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