

ARTICLES OF FAITH OF ABILENE BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

A. The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21); that it is truth without any admixture or error for its matter (Psalm 12:6); and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age (Psalm 12:7; Psalm 119:89; Matt. 5:18), the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried (2 Tim. 3:17).

1. 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 (John 17:17).
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 (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

B. The True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living true God (Deut. 6:4; 1 Tim. 2:5); the infinite, intelligent Spirit (Psalm 90:2; 1 John 3:20; John 4:24), the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6); inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love (1 Tim. 6:15); that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine attribute and harmonious in every work (Matt. 28:19; Jude 20,21).

C. Jesus Christ

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 8:58), fully God and fully man, the only begotten Son of God (John 1:14), in His virgin conception and birth (Matt. 1:18, 22-23), in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood on the cross (1 Peter 1:19, 2:24), in His bodily resurrection (Matt. 28:6), in His pre-tribulational and pre-millennial coming for His saints (Acts 1:10-11;

1 Thes. 4:13-18), and in His return to earth to reign in power and glory (Zech. 14:4-9).

D. 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 (Acts 5:3-4); that He was active in the creation (Gen. 1:2); that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled (2 Thes. 2:7); that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 14:16,17); that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony (Heb. 2:3,4); that He is the agent in the New Birth (John 3:5; Titus 3:5); that He seals and preserves (Eph. 1:13), guides, teaches, witnesses (John 16:13), sanctifies (Rom. 15:16), and gives gifts to every believer (1 Cor. 12:7).

E. The Devil, or Satan

We believe in the existence of Satan and that he enjoyed heavenly honors (Ezek. 28:14-15), but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty (Isaiah 14:12-14), fell and drew after him a host of angels (Rev. 12:9). We believe that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world (Eph. 2:2; John 12:31). We hold him to be man's great tempter (Gen. 3:1-5; 1 Thes. 3:5), the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints (Rev. 12:9-10), the author of all false religions, the chief power behind the present apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1), the lord of the antichrist and the author of all the powers of darkness (Rev. 13)—destined however, to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire, a place prepared for him and his angels (Rev. 20:10).

F. Creation

We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally, not allegorically or figuratively (Gen. 1:4; Exod. 20:11). We believe in a six literal day creation. We believe 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 (Gen. 1:26-27). We believe that all animal and vegetable life was made directly (John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17), and that God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind" (Gen. 1:24-25).

G. The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker (Gen. 2:17), but by voluntary transgression (Gen. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:14), fell from his sinless and happy state. The consequence being that all mankind is born with a sin nature and chooses to sin (Rom. 5:12, 19). The destiny, therefore, of those who reject God's gift of salvation is eternal separation from God in a place of conscious torment. (Luke 16:24; John 3:18; Rev. 20:14-15).

H. Atonement for Sin

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace (Eph. 2:8), through the high priestly office of the Son of God (1 Tim. 2:5), who by appointment of the Father (John 3:16), freely took upon Himself our nature (Phil. 2:6-7), yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). We believe that the Son of God kept the divine law by His personal obedience (Rom. 5:19) and by His death on the cross made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins on the cross (1 John 4:10). Having risen from the dead after three days (Matt. 28:6; 1 Cor. 15:4), He is now enthroned in heaven (Heb. 1:3) and is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior (Heb. 4:14-16).

I. Salvation, Regeneration, and Eternal Security of the Believer

1. We believe that salvation is a gift of God brought to men by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:9-13), whose blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:19). Salvation is solely through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and being a gift, is not earned by any works whatsoever (Eph. 2:9), but is attained through repentance and calling on the Lord for salvation (Luke 5:32; Rom. 10:13). All those who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are regenerated and become sons of God (John 1:12).
2. We believe that the Scriptures teach that regeneration (1 Peter 1:23), or the new birth, is that change in the soul, wrought by the Holy Spirit, through which a new nature and spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). Without this change, salvation is impossible (John 3:3-6; Titus 3:5).
3. We believe that the salvation of every believer is secure for all eternity from the moment of regeneration (1 Peter 1:3-5). This security is guaranteed to each believer by the fact that the life received is eternal life (John 5:24), by the keeping power of God (John 10:27-30), by the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30), and by the interceding ministry of Christ (Heb. 7:25).

J. Sanctification

1. We believe that immediate, **positional** sanctification is that act of God whereby believers are, at the time of regeneration, eternally set apart as belonging to Him by redemption, thereby being placed in the family of God as children and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (1 John 3:1; Rom. 8:14-17).
2. We believe that **progressive** sanctification is the process by which, according to God's will, believers are made partakers of His holiness; that it is begun in regeneration and progresses as the believer yields to the Holy Spirit's control; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit

through the Word of God, self-examination, watchfulness, and prayer (1 Thes. 4:3; 1 John 3:3; Phil. 2:12-13; John 17:17).

3. We believe that **ultimate** sanctification will be the portion of every believer when finally in the presence of the Lord, complete and entire, with soul and spirit united in the resurrected body, free from every trace or effect of sin and rebellion (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Eph. 5:27; Phil. 3:20-21).

K. The Church

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, a living organism made up of all born-again believers including those who have gone to be with the Lord (Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 5:30; Col. 1:18); that this spiritual body is made manifest through the local church (1 Cor. 12:1-31), a congregation of baptized believers (Acts 2:41-42, 47) joined together by common faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ (1 Cor. 11:2), governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:1-13); that it is a body peculiar to the present age and distinct from the nation of Israel; that the local church is autonomous in regards to its faith and practice (1 Peter 5:1-3; Acts 20:28; Matt. 18:17-20); and that the ministries of the church are to be supported through tithes and offerings (Acts 5:3-4, 2 Cor. 9:6-7).

L. Ordinances

We believe that Christ, as Head of the Church, commanded two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Table.

1. Baptism

We believe that baptism, as taught in the Scriptures, is immersion (Mark 1:9-10; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39); that it is not necessary for salvation (Luke 23:39-43); but that it is the privilege and duty of every born-again Christian to follow the Lord in baptism as an open confession of his identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5). It is only for believers, and not for infants (Acts 10:47-48). We believe that baptism is a Scriptural prerequisite to church membership (Acts 2:41).

2. The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is to be observed by born-again, baptized believers in remembrance of Christ's broken body and shed blood; that its observance shows forth His death until He comes and should always be preceded by self-examination (Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

M. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society (Rom. 13:1-3); that magistrates are to be prayed for (1 Tim. 2:1-3), conscientiously honored and obeyed (Ex. 22:28; Rom. 13:1), except in matters opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ (Dan. 3:17-18; Acts 4:19).

N. Gender, Marriage, and Sexuality

1. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male and female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18, 23; Mark 10:6).
2. We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning. Biblical marriage sanctioned by God joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:22-24; Matt. 19:46; Mark 10:7-9; Eph. 5:22-33). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (Gen. 26:8-9; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 7:1-5).
3. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God (Ex. 20:14; Heb. 13:4; 1 Thes. 4:3-8; Gal. 5:19; Gen. 19:5-7, 13; Lev. 18; Rom. 1:26-32).
4. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church or in any of its ministries or who serve as volunteers in any capacity, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly (1 Cor. 5; 6:18-20; Eph. 5:3, 11-12).
5. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and are granted forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Prov. 28:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 John 1:7, 9).
6. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior, speech or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church (Matt. 5:43-45; Rom. 12:17-21; Eph.4:29-32).

O. The Sanctity of Life

1. God's Intention: Creation

Human life is created by God and is good. Since we are uniquely created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and formed by God (Gen. 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 139:13–16), we hold to the sanctity of all human life (Gen. 9:5-6; Matt. 6:26). As best as we understand, human life begins at conception (Psalm 139:13–16; Jer. 1:4–5). It also lasts beyond death into eternity (John 5:28–29; 1 Cor. 15:51–52; Matt. 22:31-32). God gives life and breath to everyone (Acts 17:25), calling us to value equally the dignity of every individual life in its entirety, which compels us to love and have compassion for all peoples of the world (Rom. 1:14-15).

2. Our Distortion: Fall

Sin affects every aspect of human life (Gen. 6:5-6; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 5:12) and devalues life (Amos 2:6–7; James 2:1–4; Gal. 5:14–15). God exposes and condemns these distortions through the life-affirming nature of the Law, as seen in the Ten Commandments that prohibit life-denying practices (Ex. 20:1–17). This degrading of human life leads to dehumanizing practices (e.g., abortion, racism, injustice, abuse, suicide, human trafficking, genocide, murder, and euthanasia). Since each person is made in the image of God, we grieve such practices.

3. Our Redemption: Jesus

Our life-giving mission is to proclaim Jesus in word and deed to the whole world (2 Cor. 5:20; James 1:27). As our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King, Jesus brings new and abundant life (John 3:3, 10:10; 2 Cor. 5:17), which transforms our distorted view of human life (2 Cor. 5:16; Rom. 12:2). We affirm the dignity of all people, especially the vulnerable and overlooked (e.g., the unborn, foreigners, the mentally ill, the poor, the elderly, widows, orphans, and the incarcerated (Ex. 23:9; Matt. 25:36, 40; James 1:27, 2:1–4; Heb. 13:3). As the Church, we proclaim Christ by making disciples, and we express His love by caring for people (e.g., disaster relief, refugee care, assistance for individuals with disabilities, foster care and adoption, community development, and elder care). At every opportunity, we seek to be peacemakers in our world (Matt. 5:9; Rom. 12:18). We advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves (Prov. 31:8–9; Matt. 25:45), protecting and honoring all human life. We affirm the value of every person from the womb to the end of earthly life, without exception. Therefore, the gift of life should be cherished and not taken prematurely. For the terminally ill, the ability to extend life artificially does not create a moral imperative to extend it indefinitely. Such decisions call for discernment as well as trust in the providence of our God. Ultimately, God is the giver of life and numbers our days (Deut. 32:39; Psalm 139:16; Acts 17:25–26).

P. Missions

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned the local church to take the Gospel to the world (Acts 1:8), establish independent churches at home and abroad, and train believers in the Word of God. We believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20): to witness, to make individual disciples; to build up the church (Acts 2:41-42, 47); to teach and instruct as He has commanded (1 Tim. 2:2).