

LEBANON BAPTIST CHURCH

Statement of Faith

We believe the Scriptures (both the Old and New Testaments) are the inspired Word of God, and that they are the final authority in matters of faith and conduct, and are, therefore, the basis for the following articles of faith.

OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible¹ as originally written was verbally inspired² and the product of God speaking through men who were controlled by the Holy Spirit; that it is Truth without admixture of error; that it is, therefore, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; it is the true center of Christian union and the supreme authority by which all human conduct, creed, and opinions should be tried.

OF THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is only one living, true God who is infinite in every excellence, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all worship, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—co-equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices.

OF THE PERSON OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

We believe that He is Absolute Deity; that He is divine as no other man can be, being Very God of Very God, existing for all eternity; that He is co-equal with the Father and the Spirit; That in His voluntary humiliation He did not lay aside His Deity; that at His incarnation He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as no other Man was or ever can be born.³

OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that He is a Divine Person, co-equal with God the Father and Son, and of the same nature; that He was active in creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of judgment, and of righteousness; that He bears witness to and empowers the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that His purpose in this age is to glorify the Son; that He is the agent of the new birth; that He seals, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps believers until the day of redemption; that He never underrates the completeness that is in Jesus Christ by exalting anyone or anything above or as an addition to Jesus Christ; that He gives to the believer, at salvation, gifts of service according to His will to be used only for the edification of the church body; that the sign/revelatory gifts of the Holy Spirit have fulfilled their purpose and are not applicable to the work of the Holy Spirit today.

OF THE DEVIL, SATAN

We believe that Satan is a distinct personality who was once holy and enjoyed heaven's honors; but, through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, he fell; drew after him a host of angels; is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world; is man's great tempter; is the enemy of God and His Christ; is the accuser of the saints; is the author of all false religions and the chief power promoting the present apostasy; is the lord of the Antichrist; is the author of all the powers of darkness; although powerful and to be so acknowledged, is not omniscient, omnipotent, nor omnipresent, and cannot overcome the believer who is submitting in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word in faith; is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's Son because of His death on the cross; is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell—a place prepared for him and his angels.

¹ By the *Holy Bible* we mean that collection of 66 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.

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 inspired and free from error as no other writings have ever been or ever will be.

³ Our Lord Jesus Christ's work in Atonement is seen in Section

OF THE CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly by God, 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 long periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was created directly by God to reproduce "after its own kind."

OF MAN AND HIS FALL

We believe that man was created in innocence; by voluntary transgression, man fell from his sinless and happy state; as a consequence of the fall, all of mankind are now sinners by inheritance from Adam and by individual choice, and, until regenerated, are dead in sin; that man is by nature utterly void of the righteousness required by the law of God, and is definitely inclined to evil. Man is, therefore, under just condemnation, without defense or excuse. Man's only hope of eternal life is through redemption in Jesus Christ.

OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of God's grace; that Christ, in His mediatorial office as the Son of God and by appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, was tempted in all points as we are (yet without sin in nature or deed), honored the Divine Law by His personal obedience, and by the shedding of His blood in His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in merely setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for unjust—Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that, having risen bodily from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven; and, uniting in His Wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way a suitable, compassionate, all sufficient Savior; that the blessings of this atonement are given to all who believe from the heart and confess Christ the Lord as their Savior, and that it is the immediate duty of man to obey the command to accept this offer of mercy.

OF SALVATION BY GRACE

We believe that in order to be saved, all men 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 who is dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the Divine Nature and receives eternal life as the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above comprehension; not by culture, not by character, nor by the 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 by faith in the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruit of repentance over sin, faith in the finished work and Person of Jesus Christ, and in newness of life.

OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures for all who believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life, both of which are based on Christ's righteousness and atonement; that His righteousness is imputed to us, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood.

OF THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe in God's electing grace; that salvation is freely offered to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept this salvation by wholehearted, penitent, and obedient faith; that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; that man's rejection of the gospel involves him in the condemnation of God's wrath.

OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces, solemn obligations, and wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God. Therefore, being convicted of guilt, danger, helplessness, and of the way of salvation of Christ, the believer turns to God with sincere, genuine contrition. At the same time he confesses to God his sin and helplessness, he also heartily receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and all sufficient Savior.

OF SANCTIFICATION

We believe that Biblical sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, the believer is set apart from sin unto Christ. It has three aspects 1) the believer has been set apart *positionally* before God the moment he believes; 2) the believer is being set apart *progressively* in his walk day by day as he grows in grace toward the likeness of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, prayer, and yielding to the Spirit who seeks to bring about Biblical change in the life; 3) ultimately the believer is to be set apart from the very *presence* of sin when his sanctification is completed at his going to be with the Lord in heaven through death or at the coming of Christ for the church.

OF THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER OR PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

We believe that it is the design of God's divine plan that every person, immediately upon acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior receives eternal life and is made at once a son of God; that believers are then kept by the power of God through faith in a state of grace until succeeded by a state of glory; that only true believers actually endure to the end; that a believer's persevering attachment to Christ and His own, and his growth in the likeness of Christ, are the marks which distinguish him from a superficial professor.

OF THE CHURCH

We believe that the church universal is a New Testament institution established by Jesus Christ, who is its sole Head; was revealed through the apostles; is empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit; is His "body" for service and His "bride" for glory; began with the New Testament saints at Pentecost and will be consummated at the second coming of Christ; that the church universal is manifested through the local church, which is a congregation of baptized believers: associated together by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, responsibilities, and privileges invested in them by His work; that its scriptural offices are those of pastors and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. Scripturally, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church; that the true mission of the church is expressed in the New Testament and abbreviated in Matthew 28:19,20 and Ephesians 4:11-16: to make individual disciples; to baptize them into a properly organized and functioning local church; to teach them to obey His Word as He has commanded; that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only Superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit's direction by the Word. It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel. Each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. On all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence, the will of the local church following the Word of God is final.

OF THE ORDINANCES: BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to show forth in a solemn testimony a picture of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior; to declare to the world our death to sin and resurrection to a new life.

We believe the Lord's Supper commemorates the death of the Lord Jesus Christ—the bread symbolizing His broken body and the cup, His shed blood; is to be observed by all believers, after solemn self-examination, until Jesus comes again; that the Biblical order of the ordinances is baptism first and then the Lord's Supper and that participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers.

OF BIBLICAL SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy.

OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who by faith in Christ have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified (or set apart) by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in their standing before God; that all who continue in impenitence and unbelief are, in His sight, wicked and under the curse; that distinction holds true among men both in and after death, in the everlasting blessedness of the saved and in the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. We believe in a literal Heaven and a literal Hell.

OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; that disobedience is permitted only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; that Christ Himself is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth. In this connection we stand firmly for the separation of the church and state.

OF THE FAMILY

We believe that marriage of man and woman is the plan of God and sacred in His sight; that the roles of husband, wife, parent, and child are clearly defined in Scripture; that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God, but God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church; that the husband is to be the leader of the home and to love his wife as Christ loved the church; that the wife is to reverently submit to the husband's headship. Children are to be obedient to their parents, and parents are to train and teach their children with the goal of making them disciples of Christ; that a sexual relationship is sacred and fulfilling only within the bonds of marriage and is condemned outside of the marriage relationship; that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex; that God rejects any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance; that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman; that children are a blessing of God, and that the responsibility for them rests solely upon the parents; they are to be brought up in a loving, structured, controlled environment with conscientious instruction in the truths of God and His principles of life.

OF THE RESURRECTION, RETURN OF CHRIST, AND RELATED EVENTS

We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures on these subjects at their full and face value: Christ's bodily resurrection from the tomb; His ascension to the Father's right hand; His present high priesthood; His second coming. We believe in the personal, physical, pretribulational, premillennial, and imminent return of Jesus Christ. His second coming will take place in two phases. First to take place is the rapture of all true Christians, those dead or alive in Christ. The body of Christ will meet the Lord in the air as He claims His bride. The second phase is the revelation of Jesus Christ as He returns with His bride (the church) before all the nations to establish the millennial kingdom on earth and assumes the promised throne of David in Jerusalem after which He will reign for 1000 years. We believe in the resurrection of the righteous dead; the physical change of the living in Christ; Christ's reign from the throne of David on earth; the believer's works of service will be evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ for reward or loss.