

Baptists firmly believe in the authority of God's Word to determine faith and practice.

Our Statement of Faith reflects this conviction.

1. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation as its purpose, and truth, without any mixture of error for its content. It reveals the principles by which God judges us and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

Scripture references: Isaiah 34:16, 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Hebrews 1:1-2, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Peter 1:20-21

2. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

2.1 God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Scripture references: Genesis 1:1, Exodus 3:14, Psalms 19:1-3, Matthew 6:9 and John 4:24.

2.2 God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Scripture references: Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-21, John 10:30, John 14:29, Romans 5:8, Galatians 4:4-5, Philippians 2:9-11, and Hebrews 4:14.

2.3 God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the time a person trusts Christ as Savior and Lord, he is baptized with the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit continues to dwell in the believer as he matures in relationship with the Lord. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. These gifts are to be exercised humbly and discreetly for the strengthening of the church and should never be exercised in such a way as to be divisive or destructive. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship and equips them for evangelism and service.

Scripture references: Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:1 and 18; John 4:24, 14:26; Acts 1:8, 4:31, 10:44; Romans 8:9, 11, 26-27, 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 12:3, 8-10, 13, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11-13, 30, 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

3. Man

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free

choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence. Therefore all men inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfil the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Scripture references: Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7, 3:22-24; Matthew 16:26; and Romans 3:23, 5:12, 19.

4. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

4.1 Regeneration

The new birth that is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal, based upon His righteousness, of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

4.2 Sanctification

A process that starts with regeneration. The believer is set apart to God's purposes through sanctification and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerated person's life.

4.3 Glorification

The culmination of salvation is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Scripture references: John 1:11-14, 29, 3:14-18, 36; Acts 4:12, 16:31-32; Romans 1:16-18, 8:12-17, 10:9-10, 13; Colossians 1:11-14; and 1 Peter 1:18-19.

5. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their grace and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Scripture reference: Genesis 12:1-3; Jeremiah 31:31; John 15:16; Romans 8:28-30, 8:37-39 and Ephesians 2:1-10

6. Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, scripturally exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation members have equal rights, privileges and responsibilities. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

Scripture reference: Matthew 16:15-19; Acts 2:41-47, 6:3-6, 15:1-12; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 3:16, 12:12-31; and Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:22-24.

7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is administered upon the authority of the local congregation. Believer's baptism is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, proclaim the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Scripture references: Matthew 3:13-17, 26:26-30, 28:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42, 8:35-39, 16:30-33; 1 Corinthians 11:23ff

8. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian principle based upon Biblical teaching to encourage believers to meet together for regular worship, teaching of doctrines, fellowship, praying, and the observance of the ordinances. This day commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be observed by worship and scriptural devotion, both public and private. To enable members to participate in worship, resting from secular employments is encouraged.

Scripture references: Matthew 28:1; Luke 24:1-3; John 29:19-22; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; and Revelation 1:10

9. The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Scripture references: Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2, 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 17:20-21; John 3:3, 18:36; and Colossians 1:13.

10. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Scripture references: Matthew 24:27, 30, 36, 44, 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-26; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, 42-47; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7b-10; and Hebrews 9:27-28.

11. Evangelism and Mission

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit finds expression in a love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerated life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal witness and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Scripture reference: Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 6:1-9a; Matthew 9:37-38, 24:14, 28:18-20; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15; and 1 Peter 2:9-10.

12. Equipping for Ministry (Education)

The church itself is a school. The first followers of Jesus were called "disciples" which means "learners." Jesus told His followers to "make disciples and to teach them to do all things He had commanded them."

It is the responsibility of the church to provide systematic Christian education for the believers which would assist them in living exemplary Christian lives in the community. In addition, for a church to achieve its objective of Christian outreach, it must continually provide training for recognized Christian leaders.

Scripture references: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5, 9, 14, 6:4-9, 31:12-13; Proverbs 4:1-5; 1 Corinthians 1:18-20; Colossians 2:3, 8; 2 Timothy 2:2, 15.

13. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debt to the whole world, a sacred responsibility to spread the gospel and a binding stewardship in all areas of life. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Scripture references: Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 6:19-21, 23:23; Acts 17:24-25, 20:35; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 6:19-20, 16:1-4; and 2 Corinthians 9:7-10.

14. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have not authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Scripture references: Acts 4:32-37, 13:2-3, 15:7-11; and Ephesians 4:11-16.

15. The Christian and the Social Order

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose, in the spirit of Christ, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of goodwill in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Scripture references: Exodus 20:3-7, Deuteronomy 10:12-13, Matthew 5:13-16, Luke 20:25, John 15:12, 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, and Colossians 3:12-17.

16. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. The Church and State should be separate. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The Church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work; including financial and/or human resources. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuits of its ends. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men. The Church will not receive directives from the civil power as to the attainment of its objectives.

Scripture reference: Genesis 1:27, Matthew 22:21, Acts 4:19-20, Romans 13:1-7, Galatians 5:13, 1 Timothy 2:1-2, and 1 Peter 2:12-17.

17. War and Peace

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to promote peace.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love.

Scripture references: Isaiah 2:4, Matthew 5:9, Romans 12:18-19, Hebrews 12:14, James 4:1-4
