

ARTICLES OF FAITH OF EAST WENATCHEE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Having placed our faith totally in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and practices of Baptists and in the distinctive principles for which they have always stood; we join ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and adopt for our official papers the following articles:

THE SCRIPTURES

Men divinely inspired wrote the Holy Bible. Authored by God, its purpose is salvation, and is truth without any mixture of error. It reveals the principles by which God will judge us. Therefore it is, and always will be, the true center of Christian union, and the standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tested.

THE TRUE GOD

There is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth. He is indescribably glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are equal in every way, but perform distinct, harmonious functions in the great work of redemption.

THE FALL OF MAN

Man was created in holiness under the law of his Maker; but by choosing to sin, fell from that holy state. As a result all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but by choice. Being by nature utterly devoid of the holiness required by the law of God, they are positively inclined to evil and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners. It demonstrates God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable. It excludes all boasting, and promotes humility, love, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy. It encourages the greatest devotion; that its effects will be evident in all who truly believe the Gospel. It is the foundation of Christian assurance, and that assurance demands and deserves the maximum effort to live a life pleasing to God.

THE WAY OF SALVATION

Salvation of sinners is totally of grace, through the shed Blood and the mediation by the Son of God. Christ obeyed the will of the Father and although He was without sin, received our punishment and by His death made a full atonement for sins. Having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven; and He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

REGENERATION

Regeneration, or the new birth, is the change brought about in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It imparts a new nature and spiritual life. The person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus and a holy disposition is given to the mind, the will subdued, the power of sin broken, and desire changed from love of sin and self, to a love of holiness and God. The change is instantaneous, brought about solely by the power of God, in a manner incomprehensible to reason. The evidence of it is found in a changed temperament, the fruits of righteousness, and a newness of life. Without it salvation is impossible.

REPENTANCE

Repentance is a personal act, prompted by the Spirit; and consists of a godly sorrow for sin, as offensive to God and disastrous to the soul. It is accompanied by prayer for pardon, by sincere hatred of sin, and a persistent turning away from all that is evil and unholy.

FAITH

Faith, brought about by the Spirit, is the means through which Christ is received by the soul as its sacrifice and Savior. It is an assent of the mind and consent of the heart, consisting mainly of belief and trust. The testimony of God is unconditionally accepted and believed as true, while Christ is completely trusted for salvation. By it the believer is brought into a vital relationship with God, freely justified, and lives aware of His constant presence. Faith reveals Christ to the soul as a willing and sufficient Savior, and commits the heart and life to Him.

JUSTIFICATION

Making the guilty blameless is what Christ gives to those who believe in Him. Justification includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life. It is bestowed, not through any good acts that we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood. By virtue of that faith, His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us, bringing us into a state of peace and favor with God, and securing us every other blessing needed for time and eternity.

ADOPTION

Adoption is a gracious act, by which the Father, for the sake of Christ, accepts believers to the estate and condition of children, by a new and spiritual birth. The Spirit of adoption is sent into their hearts, whereby they become members of the family of God and heirs of an inheritance reserved in heaven for them.

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we share in His holiness. It is a progressive work that began at regeneration and is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter. Sanctification is accomplished by the continual application of the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, prayer; and in the practice of disciplines and duties.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS

Those who are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and finally perish, but will endure unto the end. Their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark that distinguishes them from those who only profess to believe. God specially watches over them and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

A local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by the covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word. Its officers are pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. The true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. The local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit. 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, of policy, of government, of discipline, and of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ, in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a beautiful illustration of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior and picture of our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and juice as symbols of Christ's body and blood, partaken of by the members of the church, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord. It demonstrates their faith and participation in the merits of His sacrifice and their hope of eternal life through His resurrection from the dead. Observance is to be preceded by faithful self-examination.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

Civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society. Public officials are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is above all and over all. Civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with, religious matters.

RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED

There is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Only those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of God are truly righteous in His esteem, while all those who continue in unrepentance and disbelief are, in His sight, wicked and under the curse. This distinction holds among men both in this life and after death.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST AND THE RESURRECTION

We believe in the bodily, personal, premillennial return of Jesus Christ and that He will come before the seven year tribulation period to catch away His church. His coming will be only in the air, and that He will come with His church at the close of the tribulation to judge the living nations and to set up His kingdom on earth. I Thess. 4:13-18; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21.

The bodies of the dead will be resurrected. Believers who sleep in Jesus will be raised at the coming of Christ for His church and caught up with transformed living saints to meet the Lord in the air. The wicked dead will be raised at the close of the Millennial kingdom and stand in their bodies at the Great White Throne of judgment to receive their final doom. John 5:21-30; I Thess. 4:16; Rev. 7:9-17.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Marriage was ordained by God at creation as the sacred union of one Man and one Woman. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that union. Christian marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His Church. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:24; Matthew 19:1-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:22-23; Hebrews 13:4; Proverbs 6:27-33; I Corinthians 6:18

Like any of the sexual sins outside of marriage, homosexuality is an unrighteous lifestyle choice that is inconsistent with the life of a believer. I Corinthians 6:9-11; 1John 3:9, 10; Romans 1:26-27; Genesis 19:1-13; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13.

Children are a blessing from the Lord. Thus, all human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception. Psalms 127 and 128; 139:13-16 Psalms 22:9-10; Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 94:21-23; II Kings 24:4; Proverbs 6:17.

MISSIONS

The command to give the Gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the churches. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt. 28: 18-20).

THE GRACE OF GIVING

Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the faith.

We are commanded to bring our gifts into the storehouse (common treasury of the church) upon the first day of the week.

Under grace we give, and do not pay, the tithe - Abraham GAVE a tenth part of all - Abraham GAVE the tenth of the spoils (Heb. 7:2,4) and this was four hundred years before the law, and is confirmed in the New Testament; Jesus said concerning the tithes,

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices: mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law: justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. (Matt. 23:23).