

Cosperville Baptist Church

Articles of Faith (2018)

About the Bible:

We believe that every word^a of every part^b of Scripture, that is all of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, in the original autographs is God-breathed.^c Thus the Bible is fully inerrant,^d authoritative,^e infallible,^f and sufficient.^g It is the perfect rule of all faith and practice.^g

We believe that Scripture should be interpreted in an historical-grammatical manner, which seeks to discover the meaning of the passage as the original author would have intended and as the original audience would have understood.

(^a 1 Corinthians 2:11-13; ^{bcg} 2 Timothy 3:16-17; ^{bc} 2 Peter 1:21; ^d Psalm 119:160; ^e John 10:35; ^f Isaiah 55:11; ^g 2 Peter 1:3)

About the Triune Godhead:

We believe that there is one, and only one,^a eternally self-existent^b God whose name is Yahweh.^c Yahweh eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.^d Each of these persons is equal in every divine perfection, yet distinct and harmonious in every divine work.^e

(^a Deuteronomy 6:4; ^{bc} Exodus 3:14-15; ^d Matthew 28:19; ^e 2 Corinthians 3:13(-14); ^e 1 Peter 1:2)

The Father

We believe God the 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.^a He is all-powerful,^b all-knowing,^c all-loving,^d and all-wise.^e God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.^f He is fatherly in his disposition toward all people.^g

(^a Ephesians 1:11; ^b Matthew 19:26; ^c 1 John 3:20; ^d 1 John 4:8, 16; ^e Romans 16:27; ^f John 1:12; ^g Ephesians 3:14-15; ^g Psalm 68:5)

The Son

We believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ,^a His virgin birth,^b perfect humanity,^c substitutionary death for the sins of humanity,^d resurrection from death to prove his power over sin and death,^e and His literal, imminent return to rapture his Church^f and later to establish His earthly kingdom.^g

(^a John 1:1; ^b Matthew 1:20-23; ^{cd} Philippians 2:5-11; ^e 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 56-57; ^e Romans 6:9; ^f 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; ^g Zechariah 14:9)

The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;^a and that he is the supernatural agent in regeneration,^b baptizing all believers into the body of Christ,^c indwelling^d and sealing them unto the day of redemption.^e He cultivates Christian character,^f comforts believers,^g and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through his church.^h His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ.ⁱ He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship,^j evangelism,^k and service.^l He is the divine teacher^m who guides believers into all truth.ⁿ It is the privilege and duty of all Christians to be filled with the Spirit.^o

(^a John 16:7-11; ^b 2 Corinthians 3:6; ^c 1 Corinthians 12:13; ^d Romans 8:9; ^e Ephesians 1:13-14; ^f Galatians 5:22-23; ^g John 14:16; ^h 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; ⁱ Ephesians 4:4-13; ^j Philippians 3:3; ^k 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; ^l 1 Peter 4:10-11; ^m John 14:26; ⁿ John 16:13; ^o Ephesians 5:18)

About the Devil, or Satan:

We believe in the reality and personality of the Devil, Satan.^a He was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator,^b leading other angels into rebellion with him.^c He became the unholy god of this age^d and the ruler of all demonic powers of darkness^e and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the Lake of Fire.^f

(^a Job 1:6-7; ^b Isaiah 14:12-15; ^b Luke 10:18; ^c Revelation 12:7-9; ^d 2 Corinthians 4:4; ^e Ephesians 6:11-12; ^f Matthew 25:41; ^f Revelation 20:10)

About Creation:

We believe the biblical account of the creation^a of the physical universe, angels, and humanity.^b This account is neither allegory nor myth, but is a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process. Adam and Eve were created by a direct work of God^c and not from previously existing forms of life; and all people are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race.^d

(^a Genesis 1-2; ^b Colossians 1:16; ^c Genesis 1:26-27; ^c Genesis 2:7, 21-22; ^d Acts 17:26)

About the Fall and Total Depravity of Humanity:

We believe humanity was created in innocence under the law of the Creator God,^a but by voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and happy state.^b All human beings

sinned in Adam^c and are by consequence totally depraved sinners^d both by nature^e and by conduct,^f and this not by constraint but by choice.^g Therefore, all humanity is under just condemnation without defense or excuse,^h and no human being is able to remedy his or her lost condition.ⁱ

(^a Genesis 1:26-31; ^b 3:1-7; ^c Romans 5:12, ^d 19; ^e Psalm 51:5; ^f Romans 3:23; ^g Isaiah 53:6; ^h Romans 1:20; ⁱ Ephesians 2:1-3)

About Salvation through Jesus Christ:

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated^a and wholly of grace^b through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ the Son of God;^c who by the appointment of the Father,^d voluntarily took upon himself our nature,^e yet without sin,^f and honored the divine law by his personal obedience,^g thus qualifying himself to be our Savior. By the shedding of his blood in his death he fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin.^h His sacrifice was a voluntary substitution of himself in the sinner's place,ⁱ the Just dying for the unjust,^j Christ the Lord bearing our sins in his own body on the tree.^k It is the immediate duty of all to accept salvation by faith.^l Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel,^m which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.ⁿ

(^a Jonah 2:9; ^b Ephesians 2:8; ^c 1 Timothy 2:5; ^d John 3:16; ^e Hebrews 2:14-17; ^{fj} 2 Corinthians 5:21; ^g Philippians 2:8; ^h 1 John 4:10; ⁱ Isaiah 53:4-6; ^k 1 Peter 2:24; ^l Mark 1:15; ^m John 5:40; ⁿ John 3:19; ⁿ 2 Thessalonians 1:8)

About the Resurrection and Priesthood of Christ:

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ^a and in his ascension into Heaven,^b where he now sits at the right hand of the Father^c as our high priest interceding for us.^d

(^a 1 Corinthians 15:4; ^b Acts 1:9-11; ^c Hebrews 12:2; ^d Hebrews 7:25)

About Divine Election:

We believe election is the eternal purpose of God,^a according to which he graciously regenerates,^b justifies,^c sanctifies,^d and glorifies^e sinners. It is perfectly consistent with the free agency of human beings,^f comprehending all the means in connection with the end^g and encouraging the use of means in the highest degree.^h It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness,ⁱ excluding all human boasting^j and promoting humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy;^k it is the foundation of the Christian's assurance.^l

(^a Ephesians 1:3-14; ^b James 1:18; ^{cel} Romans 8:28-31; ^{dg} 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; ^f Revelation 22:17; ^g Acts 13:48; ^h 1 Corinthians 9:19-22; ^{eh} 2 Timothy 2:10; ⁱ Romans 9:14-18; ^j 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; ^k Colossians 3:12-17; ^k 1 Peter 2:9; ^k Luke 18:7)

About Regeneration:

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again.^a This new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus.^b It is instantaneous and not a process. In the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins^c is made a partaker of the divine nature^d and receives eternal life, the free gift of God.^e The new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth,^f so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel.^g Its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.^h

(^a John 3:3; ^b 2 Corinthians 5:17; ^c Ephesians 2:1-5; ^d 2 Peter 1:4; ^e Romans 6:23; ^f John 3:8; ^g 1 John 5:1; ^h Ephesians 5:8-11; ⁱ 1 John 5:1-13)

About Repentance and Faith:

We believe repentance and faith are inseparable graces^a and sacred duties^b brought about in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God.^c Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God,^d and faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and the commitment of the entire personality to him as Lord and Savior.^e

(^a Mark 1:15; ^b Acts 17:30; ^{b^e} Acts 16:30-31; ^c Acts 2:4; ^c Acts 11:18; ^c Ephesians 2:8; ^d Acts 20:21)

About Justification:

We believe justification is that judicial act of God whereby he declares the believer righteous^a upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ.^b It is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood.^c

(^a Romans 5:1, 9; ^{a^c} Galatians 2:16; ^{b^c} Philippians 3:9)

About Sanctification:

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner: first, an eternal act of God,^a based upon redemption in Christ,^b establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior;^c second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life;^d third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return.^e

(^a 2 Thessalonians 2:13; ^b Hebrews 10:10-14; ^c 1 Corinthians 6:11; ^d John 17:17; ^d 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; ^e Jude 24-25)

About Perseverance of the Saints:

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end.^a Their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors.^b A special providence watches over their welfare,^c and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.^d

(^a John 8:31; ^b 1 John 2:18-19; ^c Romans 8:28; ^d Philippians 1:6)

About the Christian's Walk:

We believe that Christians are called with a holy calling^a to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit,^b and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit in order that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.^c The flesh with its fallen, Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated,^d needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ,^e or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord.^f

(^a 1 Peter 1:14-16; ^b Romans 8:4; ^c Galatians 5:16-26; ^d 1 John 1:8; ^e 2 Corinthians 5:15; ^f Colossians 3:5-10)

About the Church:

We believe a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers who are associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel.^a The local church observes the ordinances of Christ,^b is governed by his laws,^c and exercises the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word.^d Its biblical officers are pastors and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in Scripture.^e While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is biblically limited to men. The church is commanded to assemble regularly for teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, prayer, and edification.^f The primary, though neither exclusive nor exhaustive,^g meeting of the church is on Sunday,^h the Lord's Day,ⁱ that first day of the week commemorating the resurrection of Christ from the dead.^k

The local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations.^l It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel^m with each local church being the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. On all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, and of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

(^{abf} Acts 2:41-42; ^c Matthew 28:20; ^c Ephesians 5:23-24; ^d 1 Corinthians 12:11; ^e 1 Timothy 3:1-13; ^e Titus 1:5-9; ^f Hebrews 10:24-25; ^g Acts 2:46; ^g Hebrews 3:13; ^h Acts 20:7; ⁱ Revelation 1:10; ^k John 20:1; ^l Acts 20:17-28; ^m Galatians 2:9)

About the Ordinance of Baptism:

We believe Christian baptism is the immersion^a of a believer^b in water, showing forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our identification with the crucified, buried, and risen

Savior, through whom we died to sin and rose to a new life.^c Baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church, and it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.^d

(^ac Romans 6:1-14; ^bd Acts 2:41-42)

About the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper:

We believe the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience^a whereby believers, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate his second coming.^b The Lord's Supper should be preceded always by solemn self-examination.^c We believe 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 in good standing with a local church.^d

(^a Luke 22:19; ^b 1 Corinthians 11:24-26; ^cd 1 Corinthians 11:27-32; ^d Acts 2:41-42)

About Evangelism and Missions:

We believe it is the duty and privilege of every Christian and of every Christian church to be faithful and obedient witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ.^a The new birth of the regenerated person means the birth of love for others.^b Missionary effort on the part of all Christians rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life^c and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of the New Testament,^d the Lord Jesus Christ himself commanding the preaching of the gospel to all nations.^e It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness^f undergirded by a Christian lifestyle,^g and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

(^ae Matthew 28:19-20; ^a Acts 1:8; ^b 1 John 4:7-11; ^c Acts 4:20; ^d 2 Corinthians 5:19-20; ^f Romans 10:14-17; ^g 1 Peter 3:1)

About Spiritual Gifts in the Church:

We believe God is sovereign in the bestowment of all his gifts^a which are to be used for the common good^b and the building up of the body of Christ,^c the church. With the completion of the New Testament scriptures and the establishment of their authority, the sign and revelatory gifts of the Holy Spirit have fulfilled their purpose and are not applicable to the work of the Holy Spirit today.^d God does hear the prayer of faith for the sick and afflicted, and may, in accord with his own will, miraculously answer.^e

(^a 1 Corinthians 12:11, 18; ^b 1 Corinthians 12:7; ^c I Corinthians 14:12, 26; ^d 1 Corinthians 13:8; ^e James 5:15)

About Gender and Sexuality:

We believe God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female;^a gender is assigned by God and determined at conception.^b Therefore, to intentionally alter or change one's physical gender, or to live as a gender other than the one assigned at conception, is to reject God's right as Creator to assign gender to his creatures and is a personal rejection of his plan to glorify himself through the original gender he assigned that individual.^c These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God.^d

God has ordained marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman,^e their God-given genders having been assigned and determined at conception. Intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union.^f

(^{ad} Genesis 1:26-27; ^b Psalm 139:13-16; ^c 1 Corinthians 10:31; ^e Matthew 19:4-6; ^f Hebrews 13:4)

About Marriage and Family:

We believe marriage is the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman,^a genders having been assigned by God at conception,^b in covenant commitment for a lifetime.^c It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and the church^d and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship,^e the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards,^f and the means for procreation of the human race.^g

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God,^h since both are created in God's image.ⁱ The marriage relationship models the way God relates to his people.^j A husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church;^k he has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family.^l A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ; she, being the image of God as is her husband and equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.ⁿ

Children are a blessing and heritage from the Lord^o and are worthy of protection from the moment of conception.^p Responsibility for children rests solely upon the parents and they are to be brought up in loving, structured control and conscientious instruction in the truths of God and his principles of life.^q Children are to obey their parents.^r

(^a Matthew 19:4-6; ^b Psalm 139:13-16; ^c Matthew 19:4-6; ^{djkm} Ephesians 5:21-33; ^e Genesis 2:15-25; ^f 1 Corinthians 7:1-7; ^g Malachi 2:15; ^h Galatians 3:28; ⁱ Genesis 1:26-27; ^l 1 Peter 3:7; ⁿ Proverbs 31:10-31; ^o Psalm 127:3; ^p Proverbs 31:8; ^q Deuteronomy 4:9-10; ^r Proverbs 1:8; ^s Ephesians 6:4; ^t Ephesians 6:1)

About Civil Government:

We believe civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society.^a Civil rulers are to be prayed for,^b conscientiously honored,^c and obeyed except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ^d who is the only Lord of the conscience^e and the coming King of kings.^f Civil rulers have no right of control over, or of interference with, religious matters.^g

(^a Romans 13:1-7; ^b 1 Timothy 2:1-2; ^c 1 Peter 2:13-17; ^d Acts 5:29; ^e Romans 2:15; ^f 1 Timothy 6:13-16; ^g Matthew 22:21)

About the End Times:

We believe in the pretribulational rapture of the church,^a an event that can occur at any moment,^b and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies,^c and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death,^d and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation.^e

We believe the Tribulation, which follows the rapture of the church, will be culminated by the premillennial return of Christ in power and great glory^f to sit upon the throne of David^g and to establish his kingdom upon this earth.^h

(^a 1 Thessalonians 4:17; ^b James 5:8-9; ^c 1 Thessalonians 4:16; ^d 1 Corinthians 15:50-53; ^e 1 Thessalonians 5:9; ^f Matthew 24:29-31; ^g Isaiah 9:6-7; ^h Micah 4:1-8)

About the Righteous and the Wicked:

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men,^a the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment.^b We believe the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord,^c where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord.^d We believe the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection,^e when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment,^f and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire,^g not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment.^h

(^a 1 Corinthians 15:12-22; ^b John 5:28-29; ^c 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; ^d 1 Corinthians 15:35-49; ^e Revelation 20:4-6; ^f Luke 16:19-31; ^f Revelation 20:11-13; ^g Revelation 20:14-15; ^h Isaiah 66:24)

About the Final Authority for Matters of Faith and Conduct:

These *Articles of Faith* do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of humanity, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of our faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, we, as an

autonomous church, are the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

About these Articles:

In subscribing to these *Articles of Faith*, we by no means set aside or undervalue any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; but we deem the knowledge, belief, and acceptance of the truth as set forth in these *Articles* to be essential to sound faith, fellowship, and fruitful practice, and therefore requisite for membership with Cosperville Baptist Church.