

Faith Baptist Church

3833 W. Walnut Ave.
Visalia, CA 93277
559-732-2268

Statement of Faith

HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit, constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God. We believe the Scriptures are verbally inspired in every word, absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We believe the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture and that the Bible is infallible in all matters of which it speaks. We believe that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended human authors that through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man without error in whole or in part. (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16)

We believe that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation.

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. (Genesis 1; 2; Exodus 31:17)

GOD

We believe that there is but one living and true God, an infinite, all-knowing Spirit, perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- each equally deserving worship and obedience. (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 4:24; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

GOD THE FATHER

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace. He is the Creator of all things. As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. As Creator, He is Father to all men, but He is spiritual Father only to believers. He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass and upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events. In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin, nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures. (1 Corinthians 8:6; Genesis 1; Romans 11:36; Ephesians 4:6; Romans 8:14; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Habakkuk 1:13; 1 Peter 1:17)

He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own. He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own. (Ephesians 1:4-6; John 1:12)

GOD THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, of the same essence, and coeternal with the Father. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity, was born of a virgin; that He was God incarnate, humanity and deity in indivisible oneness, never divesting Himself of His divine attributes in becoming the God-man. We believe that our Lord took the form of a servant to reveal God and to redeem men. (John 10:30; John 1:3; Matthew 1:23-25; John 1:1, 14; John 1:29)

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive. (John 10:15; 1 Peter 2:24)

We believe that on the basis of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God.

We believe that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He mediates as our only Advocate and High Priest. (Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1)

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the Rapture and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His Millennial Kingdom on earth. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind. (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20; John 5:22,23)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is a divine person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity and is coequal and of the same essence as the Father and the Son. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation, the incarnation, the written revelation, and the work of salvation. (Matthew 28: 19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Genesis 1:2; Matthew 1:18; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; John 3:5, 7)

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18)

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:14)

We believe that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles and prophets in writing God's revelation, the Bible. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

MAN

We believe that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God. We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, and enjoy God's fellowship. (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9; Revelation 4:11)

We believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Because he cannot recover himself, man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Genesis 2:16, 17; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8, 9)

We believe that because all men were in Adam, all men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration. (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18; 5:10-12)

SALVATION

Regeneration -- Election -- Justification -- Sanctification -- Security -- Separation

We believe that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works. (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10)

Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit. (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:10)

Election

We believe that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies. We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord. Nevertheless, all whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive. (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; John 3:18, 36; John 6:37-40)

Justification

We believe that justification is the gracious act of God in declaring righteous the sinner who believes on Jesus Christ. It is freely by His grace, by faith, by Christ's blood, and unto life. (Romans 3:24; 3:28; 4:5; 5:9; 5:18)

Sanctification

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is identified as a saint. We teach that there is also a progressive sanctification that through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification, thus becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 2:11; 10:10, 14; 13:12)

Security

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. God's Word, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality. (John 5:24; 6:37-40; Romans 8:1; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:13; Titus 2:11-19)

Separation

We believe that separation from sin is clearly taught in the Scriptures and that separation from any association with religious apostasy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God. We believe that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ and a continual pursuit of holiness. (2 Corinthians 6:14-17:1; Romans 12:1-2; Titus 2:11-14)

THE CHURCH

We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church, the bride of Christ, of which Christ is the head. We believe that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the Rapture. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 5:22-32; Acts 2:1-21, 38-47; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

We believe that the church is made up of all born-again believers in this present age and is distinct from Israel. We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. (Ephesians 2:11; 3:1-6; Colossians 1:18)

The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are pastors (males, who are also called elders, bishops, and pastor-teachers) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications. We believe that these leaders rule as servants of Christ and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership. (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Hebrews 13:7, 17)

We believe the importance of discipleship, mutual accountability of all believers to each other, as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture. (Matthew 28:19, 20; 18:15-22; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15; Titus 3:10; 2 Timothy 2:14-18)

We believe the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. (Titus 1:5)

We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God by building itself up in the faith, by instruction of the Word, by fellowship, by keeping the ordinances and by advancing and

communicating the gospel to the entire world. (Ephesians 3:21; 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Acts 2:38-47; Matthew 28:19)

We believe the calling of all saints to the work of service. We believe the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purposes in the world. To that end He gives the church spiritual gifts. He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7-12; Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10, 11)

We believe that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message and, ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message. The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Hebrews 2:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Corinthians 13:8-12; Romans 12:6-8)

We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism by immersion shows forth the believer's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin, and resurrection to a new life. It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the local church. (Acts 2:38, 42; 8:36-39; Romans 6:1-11; Acts 2:41,42)

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32)

ANGELS

Holy Angels – Fallen Angels

Holy Angels

We believe that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped; they are created to serve God and to worship Him. (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:6, 7)

Fallen Angels

We believe that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin, incurring the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator taking numerous angels with him in his fall and introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve. We believe that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man, the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezeikle 28:11-19; Revelation 12:1-14; Genesis 3:1-15 Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 6:20; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10)

LAST THINGS

Death -- The Rapture of the Church -- The Tribulation Period -- The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign-- Eternity

Death

We believe that at physical death the soul of the redeemed separates from the body and passes immediately into the presence of Christ to remain until the rapture which initiates the first resurrection, when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord. We believe the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. We believe that the souls of the unsaved, at death, are kept under punishment until the second resurrection, when the soul and the resurrected body will be united. They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire, cut off from the life of God forever (Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 20:4-6; John 6:39; 2 Corinthians 4:14; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15)

The Rapture of the Church

We believe the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation to translate His church from this earth and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

The Tribulation Period

We believe that immediately following the removal of the church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world, and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth. At that time, the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged. This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. (Daniel 9:24-27; 12:1-3; Matthew 24:15-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12)

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We believe that after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David and establish His Messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth. During this time, the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nation of the earth. This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world. We believe that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel. God will restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience. The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside, but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing. We believe that the Millennium will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life, and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan. (Isaiah 65:18-25; Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Romans 11:1-29; Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Eternity

We believe that after the closing of the Millennium, the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved and replaced

with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells. Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another. (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21, 22)

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of kings. (Romans 13:1-7; Exodus 18:21, 22; Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29; Daniel 3:17, 18)

ISRAEL

We believe the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as nation at the second advent of Christ. (Genesis 13:14-17; Romans 11:1-32; Eziekle 37)

HUMAN SEXUALITY

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that all other forms of intimate sexual activity are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. (Genesis 2:24 Leviticus 18; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)