

CONFESSION OF FAITH

REDEEMER BAPTIST CHURCH OF NORWALK, IOWA

of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible, as originally written, was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit controlled men, and therefore has truth without admixture of error for its matter. We believe that is the true center of Christian union and the only infallible rule for all human conduct, creeds, and opinions. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

of the True God

We believe the one true and living God is one in essence, possessing three eternal, personal distinctions which are revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, yet executing distinct but harmonious offices. (Exodus 20:2-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Peter 1:2)

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary; that He is one Person possessing two natures and thus is true God and true man; that He lived a sinless life and gave Himself as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all men; that He arose in the very body, though glorified, in which He was crucified; that He ascended into Heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God interceding for His people, and will return to the earth in keeping with His promises. (Matthew 1:20; John 1:1-2; 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:20)

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Triune Godhead; that He has been and will continue to be active throughout eternity; that, in gracious dealing with mankind, He has inspired the writing of the Scriptures; that He is in the world today convincing men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He is calling out a people for God from among the Jews and Gentiles; that He regenerates those who believe, places them into the body of Christ, indwells them, and produces in them the fruit of the Spirit; and that He calls individuals to Christian service and empowers and directs them in that service. (John 16:8-11, 13; Romans 8:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:30)

of the Creation

We accept the Genesis account as being a historic record of creation and believe that the universe with all that is in it was created by God, not produced by some process of evolution. (Genesis 1, 2; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16)

of the Spirit Realm

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless spirit beings known as angels; that many of these continued in their holy state and are the ministers of God; that Lucifer (now known as Satan or the Devil) and many others rebelled against God; that these fallen angels, though defeated in the cross of Christ, still continue to oppose God and His work; that they will ultimately be judged by God and cast into the lake of fire to suffer everlasting punishment, which is their righteous due. (Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:14; 12:22; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:10)

of Men

We believe that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God; that through uncoerced disobedience Adam fell from his original state, became depraved in nature, was separated from God, and came under condemnation and the sentence of death; that, because of the unity of the human race and the natural headship of Adam, all men (Jesus Christ only excepted) are born with sin natures and have come under the same consequences of sin. (Genesis 1-3; Romans 1:18; 5:10-21; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:45-50)

of Salvation

We believe that salvation is all of grace through the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ who paid the full redemptive price, fully satisfied God's righteous demands by suffering the death penalty for men's guilt, and imputed to men His perfect righteousness reconciling him to God; that salvation is made effective to man only upon his exercise of personal faith in the crucified and risen Christ, which faith is not a meritorious work but possible only by the grace of God.

We believe that salvation includes justification, regeneration, adoption into the family of God, sanctification (positional, progressive, and final), and glorification; that one who is truly born again will, by the grace of God, persevere and be kept saved forever.

(Romans 8:35-39; 10:9-13; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24-25)

of Sanctification

We believe that every saved person is positionally, in Christ, completely set apart for God; that in experience the saved person retains his sin-nature, which is not eradicated in this life, and thus his present state is no more perfect than his daily experience; that there is a progressive sanctification wherein the saved person is to grow in grace and into Christlikeness by the unhindered power of the Holy Spirit; that when Christ appears the saved person will be fully sanctified so that his state will conform to his standing.

We believe that progressive sanctification involves separation not only from ungodly living but also from ungodly teaching; that, though we love all men and seek their salvation, there are areas in which we cannot have fellowship with unbelievers; that, in areas of ecclesiastical fellowship, it may be necessary to separate even from our brethren in Christ, if they in turn maintain fellowship with unbelievers. (Romans 8:26; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:6; Jude 1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Hebrews 10:10; 1 John 4:1)

of Dispensations

We believe that the dispensations are not ways of salvation, (this has always been "by grace through faith"), but are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on earth through men under varying responsibilities; that changes in dispensational dealings depend upon changed situations in which man is found in relation to God due to man's failures and God's judgments; that, though several dispensations cover the entire history of mankind, only three of these are the subject of extended revelation in Scripture; that these three (Mosaic Law, Grace, and Millennial Kingdom) are distinct and are not to be intermingled or confused. (Genesis 2:7-25; 3:23; 8:20; 12:1; Exodus 19:8-20; John 1:17; Ephesians 1:10)

of the Church

We believe that the universal church, which is His body is composed of all the true believers (those who have been born again through a personal acceptance of Christ as Savior) from Pentecost to the Rapture;

that this church was brought into being on the day of Pentecost by the Holy Spirit's baptizing into one body all who were believers at that time; that on the day of Pentecost and since that time others have been and are being added to the church as they personally accept Christ as Savior; that at the rapture this church will be complete and will be caught up to be united with Christ as His bride, never to be separated from Him.

We believe that local churches are gatherings of professing believers in given communities, organized for the purpose of united worship, fellowship, administration of the ordinances (Baptism and Communion), edification, discipline, and effective promotion of the work of Christ throughout the world; that such local churches should be limited in membership to those who are born again, desire to follow Christ in obedience, and have been immersed; that Christ is the supreme head and every member has direct access to Him and is responsible to seek His will; that the only offices recognized in such New Testament churches were those of Pastor (bishop, presbyter, elder) and Deacon; that government is democratic with every member responsible to vote in keeping with his understanding of the will of Christ; that each local church is responsible directly to Christ and not to some other local church or organization; that there is value in fellowship and cooperation with other local churches of like convictions. (Matthew 18:15-17; 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; 8:38; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 11:26-28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 8-15)

of Civil Government

We believe that civil government was instituted of God and is still His means of maintaining peace and order among men; that believers here on earth are responsible in the area of civil government and should participate in it to promote and preserve good order in human society; that civil governments and churches (and fellowship of churches) are distinct from each other, must be organizationally separate from each other, and neither must seek to control the other. (Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 13:1-7; Acts. 4:19, 20; 5:29; Colossians 3:22-24; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-14)

of Things to Come

We believe that the Scriptures do foretell certain future events among which are the following:

- Rapture of the Church. We believe that Jesus Christ will return to the atmosphere of this earth; that the dead in Christ will rise first, then believers who are still living will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air and to ever be with the Lord; that the Rapture is the next event on the revealed calendar and that no prophecy need be fulfilled before it occurs. (1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13)
- Tribulation. We believe that the Rapture of the church will be followed on earth by Israel's seventieth week; that, though there will be salvation, this will be a time of great judgments, the latter part being known as the great tribulation. (Daniel 9:26, 27; Revelations 7:4,9,14; 13:6-17)
- Second Coming. We believe that following the tribulation Christ will return to the earth with His glorified saints to establish the millennial kingdom; that during the 1000 years of peace and prosperity Satan will be bound and Christ will reign with a rod of iron; that at the end of the millennium Satan will be released for a short time, deceive many and lead them in final rebellion but be destroyed with his armies. (Psalm 2; Isaiah 26:20; Daniel 9:24; 12:1-2; Revelation 20:1-10)
- Eternal State. We believe that the unsaved men of all ages will be resurrected and together with the evil angels will be finally judged and condemned to everlasting, conscious punishment in Hell; that all saved of all ages in glorified bodies will enjoy everlasting blessing in the presence of God. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelations 20:6-7, 15; Revelations 21, 22)

New Testament Distinctives of a Baptist Church

- 1) The authority of the Scriptures for faith and practice.
(We are to organize and operate our churches according to the Word of God and not by traditions or man-made creeds.) 2 Timothy 3:16, 17
- 2) The soul liberty of the believer.
(Each believer is directly accountable to God and is subject to the Word of God. No man can force his beliefs on another person or church without being contrary to God's Word.) Acts 5:29; Romans 14:5
- 3) The Priesthood of the believer.
(Each believer as a priest can draw near to God in full assurance of faith in our tasks for God, prayer, in worship, and in confession of sins.) 1 Peter 2:5
- 4) A regenerate, baptized membership.
(The Word of God clearly indicates that only regenerate, immersed believers should be received into the local church.) Acts 2:41; 8:36-38
- 5) The sovereignty of the local church.
(Each church is independent and governed by the people.) Acts 2:42
- 6) The separation of the church and the state.
(God's Word gives no indication of one having authority over the other, but each one's duties or authority is given separately.) Matthew 18:15-17; Romans. 13:1