

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
of
Sleepy Eye, Minnesota
CONSTITUTION

We, being born-again and Bible-believing Christians by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; believing the Bible to be the divinely inspired and authoritative Word of God and final authority for all Christian faith and practice; accepting the historic Baptist distinctives; in the interests of growth in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ through worship and work; and that we might fulfill our responsibilities to propagate the Word of God both at home and abroad; and to contend earnestly for the faith¹; and that “all things might be done decently and in order”²; we do, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of immersed believers in Jesus Christ and hereby adopt the following constitution as the statement of our faith and principles for the government of our local church
(¹Jude 3; ²1 Cor. 14:40).

ARTICLE I. NAME.

The name of this organization shall be: Calvary Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God.¹ This purpose will be accomplished by striving to bring the believers to maturity in Christ through the precise teaching of God's Word,² and in making disciples of all nations.³
(¹Rom. 11:36; 15:6; Eph. 3:21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 3:18; Jude 25. ²Eph. 4:12-16; Col. 1:28, 29. ³Matt. 28:19, 20.)

ARTICLE III. DOCTRINAL POSITION.

Section I. Statement of Faith.

A. The Holy Scriptures.

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books in the Old and New Testament, is without error in its original writing in all areas.¹ Its author was God,² using Spirit-guided men,³ which insures verbal (the very words themselves) and plenary (every word) inspiration.⁴ It is the sole authority for faith and practice.⁵
(¹Prov. 30:5, 6; Jn. 17:17. ²2 Pet. 1:19-21; Acts 3:21; Heb. 1:1-3; Jude 3. ³2 Pet. 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; 1 Cor. 2:10-13. ⁴2 Tim. 3:17; Matt. 5:18. ⁵2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Cor. 10:6-12; Eph. 6:17; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16; Jn. 10:35)

B. The Godhead.

We believe in one, and only one, triune God existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,¹ eternally self-existent in being,² identical in essence, equal in power and glory, and having the same divine attributes and perfections;³ yet exercising them in distinct works.⁴
(¹Dt. 6:4, 5; Matt. 28:19; Matt. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 13:14. ²Jer. 10:10; Jms. 1:17; Hab. 1:12. ³Jn. 10:30; 14:7-12. ⁴Jn. 3:16; 15:26.)

C. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man.

(Matt. 1:18-20; Lk. 1:35; Jn. 1:1-2, 14, 18)

2. We believe that the Lord Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who receive Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.

(Rom. 3:24-26; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21)

3. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ and that our redemption and salvation is guaranteed to us by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead; in His bodily ascension into heaven; and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Intercessor.

(Matt. 28:5-6; Acts 1:9; 1 Cor. 15:12-19; Heb. 4:14-16; 7:23-25; 9:24; 1 Jn. 2:1-2)

4. We believe in "that blessed hope" which is the Personal, Pre-tribulation, Pre-millennial, Visible and Imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

(1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:14-17; Titus 2:13; 1 Jn. 3:2-3)

D. Future Events.

We believe the Scriptures teach that at death the spirit and soul of the believer pass instantly into the presence of Christ and remain in conscious joy until the resurrection of the body when Christ¹ comes for His own;² the blessed hope of the believer is the imminent, personal, pre-tribulation, pre-millennial appearance of Christ in the air to rapture His church His bride;³ His righteous judgments will then be poured out on an unbelieving world during the 7-year Tribulation (the seventieth week of Daniel), the last half of which is the Great Tribulation;⁴ the climax of this fearful era will be the physical return of Jesus Christ to the earth in great glory to introduce the Davidic Kingdom;⁵ Israel will be saved and restored as a nation;⁶ Satan will be bound and the curse will be lifted from the physical creation;⁷ following the Millennium, the Great White Throne judgment will occur, at which time the bodies and souls of the wicked shall be reunited and cast into the Lake of Fire.⁸

(¹2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Jn. 2:28-3:2. ²1 Cor. 15:51-57. ³Titus 2:13; 1 Thess. 4:14-17. ⁴Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:21. ⁵2 Sam. 7:12-16; Zech. 14:4-11; Lk. 1:30-33; Rev. 19:11-16. ⁶Rom. 11:26, 27. ⁷Rom. 8:20-22; Rev. 20:2, 3. ⁸Rev. 20:11-15.)

E. The Personality of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with the Father and the Son and of the same substance and nature;¹ that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment;² bears witness of the Truth;³ is the agent of the new birth;⁴ and that He seals,⁵ guides,⁶ teaches,⁷ sanctifies and helps the believer;⁸ that He baptizes them into the church, the body of Christ;⁹ indwells them permanently;¹⁰ and fills those yielded to Him.¹¹ We believe that certain of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church such as apostleship, prophecy (fore-telling), and tongues were temporary needed only in the infancy of the church and are not to be expected today.¹² We believe that the Holy Spirit testifies concerning Jesus Christ¹³ and never leads any person, at any time, contrary to the teaching of the Bible. We believe that the Fruit produced by the Spirit is an evidence of Christian maturity.¹⁴

(¹Matt. 28:19; Ac. 5:3; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Sam. 23:2, 3. ²Jn. 16:8. ³1 Jn. 5:8. ⁴Jn. 3:8; Titus 3:5. ⁵Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30. ⁶Jn. 16:13. ⁷1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Jn. 2:27. ⁸Jn. 14:26; 15:26. ⁹1 Cor. 12:13. ¹⁰Rom. 8:9, 11. ¹¹Eph. 5:18. ¹²1 Cor. 13:8-10; Eph. 2:20-22; Heb. 2:4. ¹³Jn. 16:14. ¹⁴Gal. 5:22, 23; Phil. 1:11)

F. Total Depravity of Man.

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God,¹ but that in Adam's sin the race fell and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God,² and that all mankind have inherited a sinful nature,³ become willful sinners with the first expression of personal choice, are totally unable to regain their former position and are without excuse before God.⁴ (¹Gen. 1:26. ²Gen. 3:1-24; Is. 53:6; 64:6. ³Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 7:20; Eph. 2:1-6, 12; Ps. 51:5. ⁴Rom. 1:18-32)

G. Salvation, Regeneration, Eternal Security of the Believer.

1. We believe that salvation is a gift of God brought to men by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins and, being a gift, is not earned by any good works whatsoever. All those who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are regenerated and become the sons of God.

(Jn. 1:12; 3:5-7; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9)

2. We believe that the Scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that change in the soul by the Holy Spirit by which a new nature and spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; and without it, salvation is impossible.

(Jn. 3:36; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:23; Titus 3:5)

3. We believe that the salvation of every believer is secure for all eternity from the moment of regeneration. This security is guaranteed to each believer by the fact that the life received is eternal life, by the keeping power of God, by the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit and by the interceding ministry of Christ.

(Jn. 5:24; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1,29-30,38-39; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25)

H. Sanctification.

1. We believe that immediate, positional sanctification is that act of God whereby believers are, at the time of regeneration, eternally set apart as belonging to Him by redemption, thereby being placed in the family of God as children, joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

(Rom. 8:14-17; 1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 10:10-14; 1 Jn. 3:1)

2. We believe that progressive sanctification is the process by which, according to God's will we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is begun at regeneration; that it progresses if the believer is yielded to the Holy Spirit and His control; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, self-examination, watchfulness and prayer.

(Prov. 4:18; Jn. 17:17; Eph. 5:18; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 1 Jn. 2:29)

3. We believe that ultimate sanctification will be the portion of every believer when soul and spirit are united with the resurrection body, complete and entire, at the catching away of the saints. Then we will be free from every trace or effect of sin and rebellion.

(1 Cor. 15:52-54; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Thess. 5:23)

I. Separation.

We believe in the Biblical doctrine of separation which encompasses three things: (1) the separation of the local church from all affiliation and fellowship with those who deny the verities of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints;"¹ (2) the separation of the individual believer from all worldly practices that may dishonor the Savior;² (3) the separation of Church and State.³

(¹2 Cor. 6:11-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Jn. 9-11; Jude 3. ²Rom. 12:1, 2; 14:13; Titus 2:11-15; 1 Jn. 2:15-17.
³Lk. 20:35)

J. The Eternal State.

We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory; but, that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery, unto the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the Millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the Lake of Fire from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

(Lk. 16:19-26; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15)

K. The Church.

We believe in the church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head.

(Matt. 16:16; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)

We believe that each local church is a visible expression of the body of Christ and is a congregation of believers in Jesus Christ immersed upon credible confession of faith, and associated together by covenant for worship, evangelism and observance of the ordinances, and fellowship. We believe that the local church is the center of God's program for this age, and that every Christian is bound by Scripture to give his unhindered cooperation to the program of the local church.

(Acts 2:41-47; 14:27; 20:17; 1 Cor. 3:10-17; 5:1-5; 11:2; 1 Tim. 3:1-16; Titus 1:5-11)

L. The Church's Ordinances.

We believe that the Lord Jesus instituted two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, to be observed by all believers until the Rapture. We believe that baptism is by immersion in water of a believer in Christ, into the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to show by solemn and beautiful symbolism the believer's identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection, and that it is a Scriptural prerequisite to church membership.

(Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38-41; 8:36; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:21)

We believe that the Lord's Supper is partaking of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine as symbols of Christ's body and blood, commemorating His suffering and death for us and our continual benefit therefrom; that participation should be limited to those who have united to the local church by baptism and testimony, or to those who are baptized members of churches of like faith and practice, and that participation should be preceded by careful self-examination.

(Matt. 7:3-5; 1 Cor. 11:23-32)

M. The Great Commission.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned the church to take the Gospel to the world, and that evangelism at home and abroad should be primary in the program of the local church.

(Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

N. The Responsibility of Believers.

We believe that all believers should seek to walk by the Spirit, not bringing reproach upon the Lord, exercising Christian liberty regulated by love, separated from worldly pleasures and practices, separated from organizational association with apostate groups.

(Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)

We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scriptures, and to assume responsibility for the propagation of the Gospel to all the world.

(Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the local church and its extension ministries in prayer, to support it with the voluntary giving of their tithes and offerings as the

Lord prospers them, to participate in all the regular services of the church as the Lord enables them and to voluntarily submit to the watch-care and discipline of the local church.

(1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8, 9; Heb. 10:19-25; 13:17-18)

O. Creation.

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, “each after its own kind” by direct act, and not by any process of evolution and that the days of creation in Gen. 1:1ff were solar, that is, six (6) twenty-four (24) hour days.

(Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:9, 11; 31:17; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17)

We believe that man has been created in God's image.

(Gen. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9)

ARTICLE V. AMENDMENTS

Suggested amendments or additions to this Constitution shall be presented to the Pastor and Deacons for their prayerful consideration. Upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons, any amendment may be presented to the congregation at a regular quarterly business meeting. Proposed amendments or additions shall be posted in the church for thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which they are discussed. The proposed amendment shall then be voted on at the next quarterly business meeting. Proposed amendments and additions to ARTICLE III. may be adopted by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote by the voting membership present and voting.