

Heritage Baptist Church

Statement of Faith – What We Believe

I. Statement of Faith

We Believe

1. In the verbal inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. We believe that the Bible reveals God, the fall of man, the way of salvation, and God's plan and purpose in the ages.
2. In God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
3. In the deity, virgin birth, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
4. That salvation is by grace plus nothing and minus nothing. The conditions to salvation are repentance and faith.
5. That man is justified by faith alone and is accounted righteous before God only through the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Justification establishes an eternal relationship that can never be broken.
6. In the visible, personal, pre-tribulational, and pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ.
7. In the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

II. The Holy Scriptures

We believe in the verbal inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

We believe that the Bible reveals God, the fall of man, the way of salvation, and God's plan and purpose in the ages.

A. Inspiration and Revelation

1. We believe that the Holy Scriptures (the Old and the New Testaments) in all its parts (all sixty-six books) down to every word of the autographic text of the original documents was given by divine inspiration (II Timothy 3:16), in the sense that holy men of God "were moved by the Holy Ghost" to write the very words of God (II Peter 1:20-21). This inspiration was plenary – inspired equally in all parts, and verbal – inspired in every word (I Corinthians 2:13). The Word of God in its entirety is the Revelation of God and is complete in its internal harmony and unity.
2. We believe that God has preserved the text of Scripture so that today we possess the very Word of God. We believe that modern translations in any language are reliable and trustworthy to the extent that they accurately and literally convey the verbiage and meaning of the original text. We believe that the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind of a believer and He makes the Scripture sufficiently clear for believers to understand. It is clear enough for the simplest believer to live by and, at the same time, deep enough to be inexhaustible for readers of the highest intellectual capacity.

B. Infallibility, Inerrancy, and Authority

1. We also believe that the Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible – true, safe, and reliable in all the matters it addresses (John 17:17) and is inerrant – free from all error, falsehood, fraud, or deceit (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2). Because God cannot lie, the Scriptures are to be the supreme authority for all matters of faith and practice. We do not believe this inerrancy is automatic in every, or any translation of the original text. Any translation bears the Divine mark of truth and authority only so much as it remains true to the original text.
2. We do not believe that the Scripture receives its authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source. It is the responsibility of every individual to ascertain the true intent and meaning of Scripture because proper application of the Scripture is binding on all generations.

C. Interpretation and Application

The Bible is to be interpreted in the literal, grammatical-historical method. We believe that it is wrong to treat the text of scripture in a way that would legitimize relativism or reject its claims to absolute, divine authority.

III. The Godhead

We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

A. The Essence and the Attributes of God

There is only one true and living God (Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; I Corinthians 8:4-6).

1. He is Infinite (I Kings 8:27; Psalm 113:4-6; Isaiah 66:1).
2. He is Self-existing (Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 41:4; Revelation 1:8).
3. He is Eternal (Genesis 21:33; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 102:27) and Spirit (John 4:24).
4. He is perfect in all His attributes of –
 - a) Omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:23-24)
 - b) Omniscience (Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 15:3; Psalm 147:5; Hebrews 4:13)
 - c) Omnipotence (Genesis 17:1; Job 42:2; Matthew 19:26)
 - d) Immutability (James 1:17; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:12)
 - e) Holiness (Leviticus 11:44; Joshua 24:19; Psalm 22:3; Isaiah 40:25)
 - f) Righteousness and Justice (Psalm 89:14; II Chronicles 12:6; Nehemiah 9:33; II Timothy 4:8)
 - g) Goodness (Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17), and Truth (John 17:3; I John 5:20; Jeremiah 10:10; Revelation 3:7)
5. God is eternally existent in three distinct Persons but One in divine essence – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).

B. The Unity of God

There is only one God, whose divine nature is undivided and indivisible (Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 6:4; I Kings 8:60; Isaiah 45:5; Mark 12:29-32; I Corinthians 8:4-6).

C. The Trinity of God

The Bible clearly teaches the Trinity. God used plural pronouns to refer to Himself (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8). Several times the three Persons of the Trinity are shown together and are equal (Matthew 3:16-17; John 14:16; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 1:3-14). The Father is recognized as God (John 6:27; Romans 1:7). The Son is recognized as God (John 1:3; Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Revelation 21:3). The Holy Spirit is recognized as God (Acts 5:3-4; II Corinthians 3:17).

1. God the Father – We believe that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and sets in place all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalms 145:8-19; I Corinthians 8:6).
 - a) He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9).
 - b) He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalms 103:9; Romans 11:36).
 - c) As Creator, He is the Father of all (Ephesians 4:6), but He is the Spiritual Father only of believers (Romans 8:14; II Corinthians 6:18).
 - d) He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (I Chronicles 29:11; Romans 11:36).
 - e) He saves from the penalty of sin all who come to Him by faith in Christ; and He becomes Father to believers (John 1:12; Romans 8:14; Hebrews 12:5-9; II Corinthians 6:18).
2. God the Son – We also believe that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine attributes, and is co-equal, co-substantial, and co-eternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9). God the Father created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

3. God the Holy Spirit – In addition, we also believe that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, has all the characteristics of personality.
 - a) He has intellect (I Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), and will (I Corinthians 12:11).
 - b) He possesses the essence and all the attributes of deity, including eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalms 139:7-10), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13).
 - c) He is co-equal and co-substantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; I Corinthians 12:4-6). The Holy Spirit executes the divine will.
 - d) He was sovereignly active in creation (Genesis 1:2), in the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), in the inspiration of the Scripture (II Peter 1:20-21), and He is sovereignly active in salvation (John 3:5-7).
 - e) The Holy Spirit baptizes and indwells all who believe in Christ at the moment of salvation (I Corinthians 12:13), and sanctifies, instructs, and empowers them for service (Romans 8:9; II Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation. It is the duty of all believers to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Ephesians 5:18; I John 2:20).
4. We further believe that the Holy Spirit bestows gifts to the church, but He does not glorify Himself, He glorifies Christ (John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 3:18).
 - a) Speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of authenticating the apostles and confirming the Word of God until the completion of Scripture, when the Holy Spirit finalized the Canon of Scripture. These sign gifts were never intended to be defining characteristics of the lives of believers (Mark 16:17-20; I Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; II Corinthians 12:12).
 - b) We deny the legitimacy of the modern “signs and wonders” charismatic movement because of its erroneous teachings and practices relating to the manifestations and work of the Holy Spirit in the church and in the life of the believer.

IV. The Works of God – Creation

A. Creation

We believe that the triune God created the entire space-time universe and every basic form of life in the six literal, historic days of the Genesis creation record. Adam and Eve were a special creation as the literal, male and female beginning of all human beings (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7, 21-23). We also believe in the literal fall and resultant divine curse on the creation (Genesis 3), the worldwide flood (Genesis 7-8), and the origin of nations and languages at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9).

B. His Sovereign Rule

We believe that God, as Creator of all things visible and invisible, has an absolute right to rule over all (Matthew 20:15; Romans 9:20; Ephesians 1:11). God also as the holy, benevolent, wise, and omnipotent being sovereignly maintains in existence all the things, which He has made (Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:17; Matthew 5:45; Hebrews 1:3).

V. Jesus Christ

We believe in the deity, virgin birth, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

A. The Deity of Jesus Christ

1. We believe that the deity of Christ is crucial to the Christian faith (Matthew 16:15; 22:42).
 - a) Jesus Christ possesses the attributes of deity (John 1:15; John 17:5, 24; Colossians 2:3; John 5:19; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 21:19; Hebrews 1:12; 13:8).
 - b) Jesus Christ possesses the offices of deity (creation: John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10).

- c) Jesus Christ possesses the prerogatives of deity (to forgive sin: Matthew 9:2; to execute judgment: John 5:25-29; the Judgment Seat for rewarding believers: Romans 14:10).
2. We firmly believe that Christ is eternally the Son of God.

B. The humanity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ

1. We believe that Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity, was fully human as well (He was made flesh: John 1:14; made of a woman: Galatians 4:4; grew as a man: Luke 2:52; He hungered: Matthew 4:2; He was thirsty: John 19:28; He was flesh and blood: John 19:34) yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15; 9:14; I Peter 2:22). At the incarnation Jesus “took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:6-8).
2. We believe that the doctrine of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23) is essential to the incarnation and redemption (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38). Without the virgin birth there would have been no union of God and man. The virgin birth was the only way for the sinlessness of Jesus (Psalm 51:5).
3. We don’t believe in the teachings that Christ’s humanity was hidden as well as any departure from the understanding of Jesus as fully God and fully man.

C. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ

1. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, an essential part in the application of salvation, and a conclusive exhibition of divine power. Everything stands or falls with Christ’s bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:12-19; Romans 4:24; 6:4; 10:9; Ephesians 1:20).
2. We don’t believe the teaching that Christ’s bodily resurrection is not essential for our justification. Neither that Christ’s resurrection was only spiritual and not physical.

VI. Salvation

We believe that salvation is by grace plus nothing and minus nothing. The conditions to salvation are repentance and faith.

A. The Fall and Depravity of Man

1. We believe that man was originally created innocent in the image and after the likeness of God and that he fell through sin, and as a consequence of his sin became dead in trespasses and sins, and became subjected to the power of the devil (Genesis 3:1-7). As a result, spiritual death or total depravity of the human nature has been transmitted to the entire human race, the Man Christ Jesus alone being exempt (1 Kings 8:46; Psalms 143:2; Romans 3:10, 12; 3:23; Job 14:4; 15:14; Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:3). Depravity has made man inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of doing that which is acceptable to God apart from God’s grace. Because of this, all men are thus sinners by nature, by choice and by Divine declaration (Psalms 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12; Ephesians 2:3). Man is hopelessly lost. (Romans 3:10, 12, 23; I John 1:8, 10; I Corinthians 2:14).
2. We deny the teaching that man’s fall was partial, and not complete, including the view that man’s will is fallen but the intellect is not. Also the view that man can save himself through moral and ethical means.

B. The Grace of God

We believe that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemptive work of 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; I Peter 1:18-19). The conditions to salvation are repentance and faith. Repentance is a change of mind and direction having three aspects: intellectual, emotional, and volitional (Romans 3:20; Job 42:5; Romans 1:32; II Corinthians 7:9; Luke 15:21; I John 1:9). Our whole salvation is dependent upon faith. We are saved, justified (Romans 5:1), and sanctified (Acts 26:18) by faith. We deny the view that water baptism, sacraments, church membership, or good works can lead to salvation.

C. Justification and Eternal Security

1. We believe that men are justified by faith alone and are accounted righteous before God only through the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Justification establishes an eternal relationship that can never be broken. In regeneration man receives a new life and a new nature, in justification, a new standing. Justification is that act of God whereby He declares righteous those who believe in Christ (Romans 5:12-21; 8:1; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:26; Hebrews 2:11, Titus 3:7; Galatians 2:16).
2. A regenerated, justified soul is brought into a vital union with Christ (Ephesians 2:20-22; Colossians 2:7; John 14:20; I Corinthians 6:17). Union with Christ means eternal security (John 10:28-30; Romans 6:5; 8:38, 39).
3. We deny the teaching that a regenerated, justified soul sealed by the Holy Spirit can lose his salvation.

VII. The Return of Jesus Christ

A. We believe in the visible, personal and premillennial return of Jesus Christ.

B. His Imminent Return

We believe in the imminent, personal, visible, bodily, pretribulational, premillennial return of Jesus Christ into the air (I Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to rapture His church from the earth (John 14:1-3; I Corinthians 15:51-53; I Thessalonians 4:15-5:11), and to reward believers according to their works, between this event and His glorious return with His saints to the earth (I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10). Immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:13-18), the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon the unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Revelation 16), following which Christ will return in glory with His saints to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31; II Thessalonians 2:7-12) to occupy the throne of David (Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and to establish His Messianic Kingdom for a thousand years (Revelations 20:1-7).

VIII. Judgment of the Lost, Blessedness of the Saved, and Eternity

We believe in the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

A. The End of Satan's Influence

We believe that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9) and Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10) following which the unsaved dead will be resurrected for the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8) and committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

B. The End of Time

1. We believe that the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, the elements of the earth are to be dissolved (II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15; II Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new heaven and a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22). The heavenly city will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy eternal fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Colossians 3:4; Revelation 21:22).
2. We deny the teaching that the lake of fire is a state of mind or anything short of an actual, physical, literal place. We further deny that the unsaved are annihilated or their punishment is for a limited time.