

32. STATEMENT OF FAITH of LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH (Independent)

"..... where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Corinthians 3:17.

I. NAME.

The church shall be known as Liberty Baptist Church (Independent).

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

The purpose and programme of this church is to obey the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19-20). The practice by Pastors and people of soul-winning, discipleship, baptism, Bible teaching, fellowship and edification of the church are the reasons for this church's existence.

The church's aim is to show forth Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour in all things.

Excessive administration will be avoided as will any social or secular activity that tends to divert the church from its God given responsibilities. The financial and physical resources of this church are to be constantly focused on fulfilling the Great Commission.

III. COVENANT (Mutual Agreement).

As members of Liberty Baptist church we accept the following agreement.

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and upon our public profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We promise that we will watch over and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love (Galatians 6:1,2), that we will remember one another in our prayers (James 5:16), and that we will help one another in sickness and in distress.

We further agree, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love (John 15:12); to strive for the growth of this church in grace, knowledge, holiness and comfort of Christ (II Peter 3:18); to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin (Ephesians 5:26,27); and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor (James 1:27), and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We further covenant to maintain family and private devotions (Deuteronomy 6:4-25); to educate our children in the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to live carefully in this present world (II Timothy 2:22-26; Titus 2:12); to be just in our dealings, faithful in our responsibilities, and exemplary in our behaviour (I Timothy 4:12); to avoid all gossip, backbiting and excessive anger (Titus 2:6-8); to abstain from everything that will cause our brother to stumble (Romans 14:13; 15:3), or that will bring reproach upon the cause of Christ (I Thessalonians 5:22); and to strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, that amidst evil and good report we will humbly and earnestly seek to live to the honour and glory of Him who loved us and gave himself for us (I Corinthians 10:31-11:1; Philippians 2:3,4,14-16,20,21).

We also agree that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word (Hebrews 10:24,25).

IV. DOCTRINAL STATEMENT.

Members of this church shall hold as an essential part of their profession of faith the following evangelical doctrines:

1. The Scriptures.

We believe that the Holy Bible is God's infallible, inerrant Word, supernaturally and verbally inspired in totality, through holy men of old, such that the actual words were God's words without error or contradiction. The Bible therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to men (II Timothy 3:16,17); the true basis of Christian union and the supreme and only standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried. The Word of God has been preserved in the vast majority of the manuscripts from which the Authorized Version (King James Version) has been translated.

- a) By "the Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written and preserved to today does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but **IS** the very Word of God.
- b) By "Inspiration" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from all error and omission as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired (II Peter 1:19-21; II Timothy 3:16; Matthew 24:35; Rev. 22:18,19).

2. The True God.

We believe that there is only one living and true God, the Creator and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; perfectly holy, worthy of all possible honour, confidence and love, who is the Upholder, Redeemer and Saviour of mankind. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every Divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (Matthew 28:19; I Peter 1:2; II Corinthians 13:14).

3. The Deity of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Godhead. He is co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father of whose person and glory He is the exact expression. This absolute deity of Jesus Christ is indissolubly combined with His perfect humanity in one Person. He is the one and only Mediator between God and man. (I Timothy 2:5; John 20:28; I Timothy 3:16; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9,15-19; Hebrews 1:2,3; John 1:1-4).

4. The Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, and of the same nature. The Holy Spirit was active in the creation (Genesis 1:2); in relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled (II Thessalonians 2:6, 7). He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8-11). He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony. He seeks to glorify Christ in all things (John 16:14,15). He is the agent in the new birth (John 3:3-8). He seals, endues with power, guides into all truth (John 16:13), teaches, witnesses to our salvation (I John 3:24), sanctifies and helps the believer.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to the church for mutual edification (Ephesians 4:7-16). The temporary, miraculous sign gifts (for example, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, apostleship, prophecy, knowledge and healing), were intended to be transitional and foundational. These ceased when Israel finally rejected the gospel (I Cor. 13:8-13; 14:21,22; Mark 16:17-20).

5. **Creation.**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively. Man was created directly in God's own image (Genesis 1:26,27), and after His own likeness. Man's creation was not a matter of evolution (atheistic or theistic) by change of species by developments through periods of time from lower to higher forms, but that all life was made directly by God, and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind".

6. **Fall of Man.**

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of God, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state (Genesis 3:1-24) in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners (Romans 5:12) by nature and by choice, therefore being under just condemnation without defence or excuse (Romans 1:18-20).

7. **Virgin Birth.**

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of a woman. Mary is not an object of worship or prayer, but just a chosen vessel (Luke 1:46,47). Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and God the Son (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:23).

8. **Salvation.**

a) **The Purposes of God.**

Election and predestination are according to God's fore-knowledge of man's response to the conviction of the Spirit of God. (I Peter 1:2). All men are called to salvation, convicted of sin and enlightened. They therefore are able to exercise faith in Christ. It is God's desire that all men without exception should be saved (II Peter 3:9), though He knows beforehand that many will reject His free offer of mercy.

People are not predestined or ordained to believe, but those who of their own free will, exercise faith in Christ, in God's fore-knowledge, are appointed to eternal and heavenly blessing and they are eternally secure from the moment of conversion. (Romans 8:29; I Timothy 2:4-6; Ezekiel 18:23).

b) **Christ's Atonement for the Sin of Mankind.**

The sinner is able to be redeemed from the guilt, penalty and power of sin through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In His death, Christ is the sinners' representative and substitute (II Corinthians 5:21). Something happened to Christ, and because it happened to Christ it need not happen to us. i.e. Because Christ died for our sins, we need not die for them if we accept His sacrifice. The sinner is reconciled to God and justified, not by human merit, but by Divine grace and by faith alone in what Christ has done (Ephesians 2:8,9,10). This atonement is

sufficient for the whole world (Hebrews 2:9), but efficient only for those who personally believe in Christ as their Saviour.

Christ honoured God's law by His sinless obedience (Hebrews 4:15), and by His death made a full atonement for our sins (Colossians 2:14-17). His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by his death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Having risen from the dead for our justification (Romans 4:25), He is now enthroned in heaven (Hebrews 1:8), and in His perfection is in every way qualified to be a suitable (Hebrews 7:25), compassionate (I Peter 5:7), and a completely sufficient Saviour (I John 2:2).

c) **Freeness of Salvation.**

We believe that the blessings of Salvation are made free to all by the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), that it is the duty of all to accept salvation freely, being sorry for their sins and having an obedient faith (Acts 2:37). Nothing holds back the Salvation of the greatest sinner on earth (John 6:37), except his own desire to sin (John 3:19,20), and his willing refusal of the Gospel (Acts 13:46). This refusal puts a man in a very great judgment (Revelation 14:11; Matthew 25:46). Repentance is a sincere and thorough changing of the mind and disposition in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and helplessness, apprehension of God's mercy, a strong desire to escape or be saved from sin, and a desire to abandon it.

d) **Repentance and Faith.**

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn duties (Luke 13:3), and also graces that cannot be separated (Hebrews 6:1), worked in our souls by the Spirit of God (John 16:8). Therefore, being deeply convicted of our guilt (Luke 5:8), danger (Jude 23), and helplessness (Luke 23:42), and of the only way of salvation being through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Romans 10:9), we turn to God with true sorrow (Romans 10:10), confession and asking for mercy (Luke 18:13); at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Saviour (Hebrews 10:10,12,14).

Faith is **produced** by the **Word of God** (Romans 10:17), showing our need, stating the promises, and conditions, and pointing out the blessings of salvation. Saving faith **begins** with **intellectual belief** of the Word of God, that Christ is available as our Saviour. **Prayer** is the **means to faith**, where we claim the promise of Christ as Saviour. Having done this we are then saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

e) **Regeneration.**

We believe that to be saved, sinners must be **regenerated** or born again (John 3:3), (a change of state). Regeneration means getting a **new mind** (I Corinthians 2:15,16), a new nature (II Peter 1:4), and becoming a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24). A new governing power has come into the regenerated man's life by which he is enabled to become holy in experience. All this is done in a way above our understanding by the power of the Holy Spirit, working with God's Truth (I Peter 1:23). The results of regeneration can be seen in our lives in the fruit of the Spirit, and in **newness of life** (Romans 6:4).

f) **Justification** is the judicial act of God whereby those who put faith in Christ as Saviour are declared righteous in God's eyes, and free from guilt and punishment due for their sin. (In effect, it is just as if I've never sinned). It is a change of position before God (Romans 5:1,2). We have acceptance with God on account of Christ's righteousness (II Corinthians 5:21). Justification includes the forgiveness of sin (Romans 4:7,8), and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ (Romans 4:20-25). It brings us into peace and favour with God (Romans 4:20-25).

g) **Sanctification.**

Sanctification is living a life separated from a sinful world and dedicated to God. Each believer is free from sin's guilt, but daily needs deliverance from sin's power. The Old Man, (the Old Human Spirit which has produced a habit pattern or way of life in the soul, Romans 6:6), has been crucified, but the principle of sin still operates in the believer's members (Romans 7:17), and will continue to do so until the redemption of the body at the coming of Christ for His Saints. Victory over sinful tendencies is the privilege of every believer, by the Holy Spirit's control and filling. Victory is appropriated by faith (Romans 6:6; 7:21-25; 8:2).

Sanctification therefore is the way by which we are made to share God's Holiness (Hebrews 10:10,14). It is a progressive process (Psalm 119:9), commencing when one is born again (II Corinthians 5:17), and is carried on in the heart of the believer, by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15), through the Word of God (Colossians 3:16), self-examination (I Corinthians 11:31), self-denial (Luke 9:23), watchfulness (Revelation 16:15; Matthew 24:42,44,46), and prayer (Luke 18:1).

h) **Security of the Believer.**

We believe that once a person has been born again into the family of God by faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour, it is impossible for him to lose his salvation. He is kept saved by the power of God unto eternal salvation. (I Peter 1:4, 5; John 10:28).

9. **Church.**

The Church is the body of Christ composed of true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. She has her visible form in the local assembly which is responsible for fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20), ministry and mutual fellowship. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles (New Testament) and the prophets (Old Testament). (Ephesians 2:19-22). Evangelists, pastors and teachers are given in our time to teach and lead (Ephesians 4:11-13). Jesus Christ is the only Head and Founder (Matthew 16:18) of the Church by which all the saved are directed as members of His body (Ephesians 4:15; 5:23). The gifts of the Spirit are given to the church for her edification (Ephesians 4:12).

10. **Offices.**

The only offices in a true Church are **Pastors** (also called Bishops, I Timothy 3:1, Elders and Overseers), and **Deacons** (servants), who are appointed by the church for spiritual leadership and service. These are to be fit men in accordance with I Timothy 3:1-12; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4; and Acts 6:1-8.

11. **Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.**

a) We believe that Scriptural **Baptism** is the immersion of a believer in water (Acts 2:41; John 3:23; Mark 1:9-11), in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). It is a public declaration of a person's faith in Jesus Christ

as their Saviour, symbolizing the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection as the means of salvation, with its effect in our death to sin, burial of our Old Man, and resurrection to a new way of life. (Romans 6:1-6; Acts 8:38).

b) The **Lord's Table** is to be a constant reminder of the sufferings of Christ, His broken body and precious blood by which salvation is purchased and heaven opened. (Acts 20:28). The elements of the supper are unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29).

In the Lord's Supper the believer remembers the Lord Jesus Christ till He comes again (I Corinthians 11:26). The taking of the elements does not impart forgiveness, but should be an occasion for solemn self-examination, and putting right any division which may occur within the Body of Christ. All true believers of the Lord Jesus are invited to the Table. This ordinance shall be observed on a regular and frequent basis (I Corinthians 11:23-29).

12. **The Resurrection of the Dead.**

Christ arose bodily "the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:4); that He ascended "to the right hand of the throne of God", and that He alone is our "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God".

After death, the bodies of men return to dust, but their spirits and souls return immediately to God (Ecclesiastes 3:21), the righteous to be with Him in heaven (II Corinthians 5:8), and the unrighteous to be reserved for the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). There will be two resurrections, the saved will be resurrected at the first resurrection (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:4-6; Matthew 27:51-54), and the unsaved at the second resurrection. (Revelation 20:11-15; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:1-58).

13. **The Return of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

We believe in and accept the Sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. At the end of this age, according to His promise (John 14:3), Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in His glory to the earth (Mark 8:38). The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits His return. He will appear in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16,17), and He will bring His saints with Him (I Thessalonians 4:13). "The dead in Christ shall rise first", and the living saints "shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." The time of this event is known by no man (Matthew 24:44). Following this event will be a time of very great trouble on the earth called the Tribulation (Matthew 24:21,22). This Tribulation will see the death of many on the earth and only those who have Jesus Christ as Saviour have any hope of being delivered from this great trouble. (I Thessalonians 5:9). Christ will therefore come initially to the air as the Heavenly Bridegroom to receive His Church before the Tribulation, and later come as King of Kings after the Great Tribulation when He will judge the nations and reign over all the earth for 1,000 years. (Revelation 20:1-7; Matthew 24:3-31; 25:31-34).

14. **The Righteous and the Wicked**

We believe that there is a basic and important difference between the righteous and the wicked (Matthew 25:31-33). Only those who through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour are justified, and are therefore truly righteous in God's sight (Romans 3:24-26). This is because the believer's sins have been judged in Christ and at the first resurrection, believers receive rewards for faithful service. (II Corinthians 5:10; I

Corinthians 3:11-15; Romans 14:10; Revelation 22:12). All others, being unbelievers, are under the wrath of God (John 3:36), and immediately upon death enter the literal fire and torment of hell (Luke 16:19-31). They remain there until the end of the 1,000 year rule of Christ, where they are resurrected bodily to stand before the Great White Throne to be judged according to their works. They will then all be consigned to a literal lake of fire where they will suffer everlasting punishment. (Revelation 20:11-15; 14:10,11).

15. Satan.

Satan is a created angelic being, who was once holy, enjoyed heavenly honours, but through pride and rebellious ambition to be like the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels who now make up the demon hordes. He is now the evil prince of the power of the air, the unholy god of this world, man's great tempter, the enemy of the Godhead, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power behind the present apostasy, the force behind the Antichrist and the chief of all the powers of darkness. He is destined to final defeat at the hands of God the Son, and to the punishment of an everlasting justice in the lake of fire, a place prepared for him and his angels. (Matthew 25:41; Ezekiel 28:1-19; Revelation 12:4; 20:10).

16. Civil Government.

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment (Romans 13:1-7) for the interest and good order of human society. Rulers are to be prayed for (I Timothy 2:1-3), conscientiously honoured (Matthew 22:21), and obeyed (Matthew 17:24-27; Romans 3:31) except in matters clearly opposed to the will of Almighty God (Acts 4:19), who is the only True King and Lord of Heaven and Earth (Revelation 19:16).

17. Missions.

We believe that the command to give the Gospel to the World is clear and unmistakable and that this commission is given to the churches. (Acts 1:8; 13:1-5).

Having read the Statement of Faith of Liberty Baptist Church (Independent) and finding myself in agreement with the doctrines, principles and practices contained herein, I hereby apply for membership of this church and agree to conscientiously work towards the achieving of its goals as stated above.

Signed

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