

Articles of Faith of Emmanuel Baptist Church

The doctrine of the church shall be that expressed in the following Articles of Faith. All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

Bibliology—The Doctrine of the Bible

We believe that the 66 books of the Bible are the very Word of God (Exodus 4:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:13) and are the believer's sole rule of all faith and practice. We believe that they are inspired, that is "breathed out by God," in the original manuscripts or autographs (2 Timothy 3:16). Men "moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" so that what they produced were not only their words (2 Chronicles 36:21), but also the very words of God (2 Peter 1:20-21).

We believe that the 66 books are plenary inspired, meaning that every part of them is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16); that they are verbally inspired, meaning that inspiration extended to the very words the writers used (Proverbs 30:5), even down to the minute grammar used (Galatians 3:16); that they are, by nature of their inspiration, inerrant in whatever they discuss; that they are infallible, incapable of being wrong (John 17:17); and that they are completely sufficient to grant Christians "everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:17).

We also believe that God has preserved His Word (Psalm 12:6-7; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35). This preservation is seen through a preponderance of ancient manuscripts in existence today. Any accurate translation of the Scriptures is indeed the Word of God and completely authoritative for mankind. We do not believe that there is any single English translation that may be exclusively considered to be the Word of God.

We believe that the canon of Scripture is complete and that nothing may be added to it or taken away (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19). The Scripture alone is God's special revelation through which man may discover the plan of salvation (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15).

Theology Proper—The Doctrine of God

We believe there is only one true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6). We believe that God is the Creator, having made all that exists in 6 literal, 24-hour days (Genesis 1:1; 2:1,2). We believe that God is a spirit (John 4:24).

We believe that God's incommunicable attributes—those only true of Him—include the following: eternality (Psalm 90:2), omnipotence (Genesis 18:14; Job 38-39), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Psalm 139:11,12; 147:5; John 1:48), and immutability or unchangeability (Psalm 102:26-27; Malachi 3:6). We believe that God's communicable attributes—those to a degree possible for believers—include the following: holiness—God's foremost attribute (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3), love (1 John

4:8), mercy (Psalm 86:5; Ephesians 2:4), grace (1 Timothy 1:14), righteousness (Ezra 9:15), and truth (John 14:6; Revelation 15:3).

We believe in the Trinity, the tri-unity of the one God. We believe that the Trinity consists of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They are a unity, not a union—one in essence and substance yet eternally existent and distinct in three persons (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). They are co-equally and co-eternally divine, yet there exists an incomprehensible subordination and cooperation within the Trinity with the Father acting as the functional head (1 Corinthians 11:3; John 14:26; 15:26).

Christology—The Doctrine of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is and has been from all eternity the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God and God the Son (Micah 5:2; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 4:9). We believe that He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father (John 8:58; 10:30; Romans 9:5). We believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-23). He was fully God and fully man, having two natures in one person (John 1:1, 14; John 4:6; Romans 1:3-4; Colossians 2:9). We believe that in His humiliation He voluntarily and temporarily emptied Himself by suspending the independent exercise of some of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:6-8).

We believe that Jesus Christ was completely sinless and could not have sinned (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21-22). He willingly suffered the most hideous death, death on the cross, in order to provide a vicarious or substitutionary atonement for any who would believe in Him (Isaiah 53:6; John 3:14-17; Romans 5:8). We believe that He shed His own precious blood as the Lamb of God Who alone can take away the sin of the world (1 Peter 1:18-19; John 1:29). Both His death (Romans 5:10) and His shed blood (Hebrews 9:22) were necessary to secure our salvation. By meeting all the righteous demands of God's law in His life and by dying in the sinner's place, He satisfied all of God the Father's just requirements for the salvation of man (Romans 5:19).

We believe that Jesus Christ was buried and that He arose bodily from the grave on the third day (Matthew 28:6-7; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). We believe that He ascended bodily to heaven forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:9), and that today He is at the right hand of the Father interceding continually on the behalf of the redeemed (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24).

We believe He is coming again, first to rapture the church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), then later to bind Satan for 1000 years and establish His millennial kingdom (Revelation 19-20).

Pneumatology—The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and co-equal with God the Father and God the Son (Acts 5:3-4). We believe that He is a Person, not a force or

an influence (John 16:13-14; Ephesians 4:30). We believe that His ministry in the Old Testament consisted of coming upon men and enabling them to perform certain tasks (Judges 11:29; Judges 15:14). In the New Testament and today, His post-Pentecost ministry included (and includes) the following: baptizing believers into the body of Christ—the universal church—at salvation (Matthew 3:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13); indwelling those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (John 14:17; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20); illuminating believers so that they can understand the Word of God (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:14); glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, not Himself (John 16:14); and sealing believers until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

We believe that the Holy Spirit moved upon prophets, apostles, and other godly men in such a way that their writings were indeed the very Word of God (2 Peter 1:21).

We believe that the Holy Spirit's filling of believers consists of *controlling* believers (Ephesians 5:18) through the Scriptures (John 17:17; Ephesians 6:17) as they continually put off sinful habits and replace them with godly ones (Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:5-14).

We believe that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to believers today (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Every believer receives at least one gift that serves as the believer's "spiritual spectacles" through which he meets the needs of others within the local body (1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10).

We believe that some spiritual gifts were temporary sign gifts and have ceased for today. They were used to authenticate the gospel message (Hebrews 2:3-4). Apostleship and prophecy were foundational for the church, not ongoing (Ephesians 2:20). Healing ceased as evidenced by Paul's suggestion that Timothy use medicinal wine for his "frequent ailments" (1 Timothy 5:23). Paul writes that tongues would cease (1 Corinthians 13:8). They were a sign to unbelieving Jews that Jesus Christ was truly the Messiah (1 Corinthians 14:21-22), but most Jews rejected the message and tongues ceased. That tongues have ceased is further authenticated by the absolute silence of church history concerning them (although the Scriptures, of course, need no authentication).

Angelology, Demonology, and Satanology—The Doctrines of Angels, Demons, and Satan

We believe that angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14) created by God (Psalm 148:2, 5; Colossians 1:16) for His glory and service (Isaiah 6:1-3; Daniel 8:16). Angels are always shown in Scripture doing the will of God, and emphasis is never placed on them in and of themselves. We believe that they are innumerable (Hebrews 12:22) and that they minister to believers in unnoticeable ways today (Hebrews 1:14; 13:2).

We believe that they were all originally good, but some chose to abandon their heavenly citizenship and sinned (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). This may have been one third of the angels (Revelation 12:4). We believe that these fallen angels are the same as demons and that

they are constantly doing the will of their wicked master, Satan (Luke 11:15; Revelation 12:9).

We believe that Satan is the unholy god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) who was created in perfection, but chose to rebel against God in great pride and arrogance (Isaiah 14:12-13; Ezekiel 28:15-17; 1 Timothy 3:6). We believe that Satan is the enemy of God (Matthew 13:25, 39), blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4), tempts believers to sin (1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Peter 5:8), accuses believers before God (Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Revelation 12:10), was condemned by the cross of Christ (John 12:31), and will suffer eternally in the lake of fire for his rebellion against God and multitudinous iniquities (Revelation 20:10).

Though very powerful, Satan is not omnipotent (1 John 4:4) and may be overcome by the believer who resists him and submits himself to God (James 4:7).

Anthropology and Hamartiology—The Doctrines of Man and Sin

We believe that God created man in His own image, that is, that man was given a God-consciousness and capacity for knowing God as well as dominion over all the earth (Genesis 1:26; 9:6). We believe that the first man, Adam, inexplicably sinned and plunged the entire human race into sin (Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:12). We do not believe that the Fall was caused by God because “God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone” (James 1:13).

We believe in original sin, that is, that as a result of the first sin all mankind is born in a state of sinfulness, being “estranged from the womb” and going “astray from birth” (Psalm 58:3; Ephesians 2:1-3).

We believe that man is totally depraved and that his entire person is corrupted (Romans 3:10-18). He is completely unable of his own accord to do anything that pleases God (Romans 8:7-8). Man’s total depravity does not mean that he is as sinful as he could be, but that his entire being is corrupted.

We believe in the noetic effect of sin, meaning that sin’s corruption extends even to man’s ability to think and reason (Genesis 6:5; 1 Corinthians 2:14). He will never on his own seek to please God (Romans 3:11).

We believe that man is a duplex being, composed of both material and immaterial parts (Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7). We believe that man’s immaterial part has different aspects or facets signified by various names: soul, spirit, heart, will, mind, etc. (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37).

Soteriology—The Doctrine of Salvation

We believe that God offers salvation to all men (1 John 2:2), but chooses to only save some (Acts 13:48). We believe that those of us whom He graciously chooses to save are

the elect (Romans 8:33) because “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” and He “predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself” (Ephesians 1:4-5). We believe that while He chooses to save some, He does not automatically choose to damn the rest. We believe that God “is the Savior of all men, especially of believers” (1 Timothy 4:10), that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), and that God is “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). These twin truths—God’s gracious election and God’s universal call—are a mystery, inexplicable and irreconcilable in the minds of mortal men (Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 55:8-9).

We believe that both repentance and faith are necessary for salvation (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3). We believe that repentance is a change of mind about sin, self, and the Savior (Matthew 19:16-22) when a sinner turns from his sin to follow the Lord (1 Thessalonians 1:9). It is possible only as God’s kindness leads unregenerate man to it (Romans 2:4; John 6:37, 44). We believe that man must place personal faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior (John 3:16) and his Lord (Romans 10:9) to be saved.

We do not believe that man can earn his salvation through good works (Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:5). Salvation is a free gift received by God’s grace through faith in God’s Son (Ephesians 2:8-9).

We believe that believers in Jesus Christ are eternally secure and cannot lose their salvation (John 10:27-29; Romans 8:35-39). Those who apparently turn from the faith are either under great conviction (2 Peter 2:7-8), or, as is more likely, were not saved to begin with (1 John 2:19). Believers are to “test (themselves) to see if (they) are in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5) and to “make certain about His calling and choosing (them)” so that they may serve Jesus Christ confidently (2 Peter 1:10-11).

We believe that salvation includes many facets:

- Justification: God’s judicial declaration that we are righteous (Romans 5:1; 8:1).
- Imputation: God’s act of considering or reckoning to our accounts the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3-5; Galatians 3:6).
- Regeneration: God through His Spirit giving life to our dead souls (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5).
- Adoption: God taking us from the family of Satan and placing us into His family as sons (Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:5).
- Redemption: God “buying us back” from the slave market of sin (Colossians 1:14; Titus 2:14).
- Propitiation: The satisfaction of God’s wrath and justice through Christ’s atonement on the cross (Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 4:10).

Sanctification—The Doctrine of Spiritual Growth

We believe that sanctification refers to believers being “set apart” from sin and to God. It has three aspects:

Positional sanctification is the one-time separation of believers from sin and unto God that occurs at the moment of salvation (1 Corinthians 1:2,30; 6:11; Ephesians 4:22-24; Hebrews 10:10). Our position in heaven is that of absolute separation from sin through Jesus Christ.

Progressive sanctification refers to the continual process whereby believers put off sinful habits and replace them with righteous ones (Colossians 3:5-14; Romans 6:19,22). All believers still battle against the “flesh” and “the body of this death” (Romans 7:18,24). We believe that believers will wage a constant and ongoing battle against indwelling sin until they die or Jesus returns (Romans 7:14-25). Growth is only possible as the Holy Spirit uses His sword, the Word of God, to help us become more like Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:17; John 17:17) and as believers pray for God’s help in overcoming sin (Matthew 6:13).

Not only must God the Holy Spirit be active in this process, but every believer must be active as well. A Christian must “buffet (his) body and make it (his) slave, lest possibly, after (he has) preached to others, (he himself) should be disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27). Christians must “fight the good fight of faith” in order to be godly (1 Timothy 6:12). By God’s grace and their earnest effort, believers can to an increasing degree achieve what God predestined for them: conformity to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

This goal of conformity to the image of Christ includes personal separation of the believer from sin (Romans 6:11-13, 1 John 2:1), worldliness (1 John 2:15-17), conduct unbecoming to the Savior (Philippians 1:27), unequal yokes with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-17), and spiritual compromise with apostates, heretics, and false teachers (Romans 16:17-18, Galatians 1:6-9).

Prospective sanctification is also known as glorification. It refers to the blessed future time when believers will be completely separated from sin forever (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 21:4).

Ecclesiology—The Doctrine of the Church

We believe that the church of Jesus Christ consists of the universal church (Matthew 16:18) and local churches (1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:1; Galatians 1:2). We believe the universal church consists of all believers from the day of Pentecost until the Rapture.

We believe that the church of Jesus Christ is distinct from Israel (Romans 11:25). Local churches are God’s chief instrument for accomplishing His work in this dispensation and are the “pillar(s) and support(s) of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). Anyone who circumvents or minimizes local church work today is fighting against the plan of God.

We believe that there are two offices in the local church: pastor and deacon (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13). The pastor, who is also called elder and overseer (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1,2), is to shepherd the flock of God and equip the saints to do

the work of the ministry (1 Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11-12). Prayer and the ministry of the Word are to be his highest priorities (Acts 6:4). Deacons are to be servants—the meaning of the term—and are to free the pastor to do the work of the ministry (Acts 6:1-7).

We believe there are two ordinances in the local church: baptism (Acts 2:41) and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Baptism follows salvation (Acts 2:41), identifies a new convert with Christ, and admits him to membership in the local church (Acts 2:47). Immersion is the only biblical mode of baptism (Acts 8:38-39). The Lord's Supper is a symbolism of the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and is to be practiced regularly by the church until He comes again (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

We believe in the congregational form of government (Acts 6:3; 2 Corinthians 8:19). While the overseer is to practice voluntary oversight (1 Peter 5:2), he is under the authority of the local body (Acts 6:3, 5). Everyone is under the authority of the church's Head, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23).

We believe that local churches must practice loving church discipline (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1-2) for the purity of the body and the benefit of the sinning member (1 Corinthians 5:13 & 2 Corinthians 2:4-7).

We believe in the separation of the church from the state which means there should be no government-sponsored churches, and government should allow the free expression of religion (Luke 20:25, John 17:14-16, Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17). We believe the local church is to separate itself from all affiliation, cooperation, or fellowship with all organizations which deny, or by their practice, compromise the cardinal doctrines of the Word of God, and tolerate religious apostasy within their membership. (Ephesians 5:8-11, 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17; 7:1, 2 John 10-11, Galatians 1:6-9).

Eschatology—The Doctrine of Last Things

We believe in the pre-tribulational, pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ for His church. This event is next on the prophetic calendar and is called the Rapture, the imminent “catching away” of the universal church by the Lord Jesus Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Following the Rapture, there will be a 7-year period of tribulation on earth of unprecedented devastation (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 6-19). During the tribulation, the church will face the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12) and enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7). After the tribulation, Jesus Christ along with all the saints will come to vanquish Satan's forces at Har-magedon, or Armageddon (Revelation 16:16-21), assign Satan to the bottomless pit, and establish His millennial reign (Revelation 20:1-4).

At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, Satan will be released from the bottomless pit to deceive the world once more (Revelation 20:7-9). After his forces are destroyed, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire where he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10). We believe that all demons and unbelievers will be condemned to eternal judgment in the lake of fire (Jude 6; Revelation 20:15).

We believe in the existence of a literal, fiery Hell (Mark 9:43-48) where all will go who die without Christ (Luke 16:22,23). We believe in the existence of a literal and blessed place called Heaven (Matthew 5:12) or Paradise (Luke 23:43) where all of the redeemed will live forever (Matthew 5:12; John 14:2-3).

We believe there will be a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1) where believers of all ages will enjoy the blessedness of eternity with God (Revelation 21,22).

Statement on the Family

We believe that marriage of one man to one woman is the plan of God and sacred in His sight (Genesis 2:18-25; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16); that the roles of husband, wife, parent, and child are clearly defined in Scripture (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; I Peter 3:1-7); that a sexual relationship is sacred and fulfilling only within the bonds of marriage and is condemned outside of the marriage relationship (I Corinthians 7:3,4; Hebrews 13:4); that children are a blessing of God, and that the responsibility for them rests solely upon the parents; they are to be brought up in a loving, structured, controlled environment with conscientious instruction in the truths of God and His principles of life (Psalm 127:3; Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:6,7; Psalm 78:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; 17:6). We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex; that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance (Genesis 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:13-21; Romans 1:26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; I Thessalonians 4:1-8).