

A CONFESSION FOR INDEPENDENT BAPTISTS

**Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
1117 N Trimble Rd
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1. THE BIBLE

We believe that all Scripture was given by verbal inspiration of God, by which we mean the sixty-six books of the so called Protestant canon (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet 1:21); that this inspiration was accomplished miraculously by the providence and power of God, and is not to be compared with the inspiration attributed to works of human genius (I Cor. 2:13, 14:37; Acts 1:16, 3:21); yet not in such a way as to impair the reality of human agency, which is abundantly manifest in the revelation of personal peculiarities in temperament, strife, and vocabulary (I Pet. 1:10-12; Psa. 68:11); that it is not in different degrees, but extends equally and fully to each part of the Bible whether it be historical, legal, poetical, prophetic or doctrinal, extending even to the words themselves as found in the original manuscripts (Mat. 5:18; Gal. 3: 16; Isa. 34:16); that this inspiration covers historical and scientific references as fully as matters of doctrine, so that the Bible is free from error as to fact as well as being free from error as to doctrine (John 10:35; Psa. 12:6); that the Bible therefore has God as its author, truth without any mixture of error as its matter, and the salvation of men as its end (II Tim. 3:16; Prov. 30:5, 6; John 5:39); that it is and shall remain the true center of Christian unity, the only authoritative standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried (John 17:17; Isa 8:20) .

2. GOD

We believe that there is one and only one true and living God (Deut 6:4); an infinite (Job 11:7); eternal (Psa. 90:2); self-existent (Isa 40:28); immutable (Mal. 3:6); holy (Isa 6:3), just (Psa. 89:14), omniscient (Psa. 147:5), omnipotent (Psa 62:11), omnipresent Spirit (John 4:24), whose name is Jehovah (Psa. 83:18), the creator and supreme ruler of Heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1; Dan. 4 :35); that in the unity of the one essence, nature, and being of the Godhead there are three eternal distinctions that are revealed to us under the figure of persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:26; Mt. 3:16-17; John 14:16, 15:26), that these are equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption, being worthy of precisely the same honor, worship, and obedience (Rev. 4:11; Mark 12:30).

3. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

We believe that God is an absolute sovereign (Psa. 115 : 3), having mercy on whom He will and hardening whom He will (Rom. 9:15-18), doing according to His will of purpose in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth (Dan. 4:35), working all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. I: 11), efficiently causing all good and wisely and holily permitting all evil that comes to pass for reasons known fully to Himself only and overruling it for His own glory and the good of the redeemed (Rom. 8:28; Prov. 16:4).

4. GOD'S WILL OF PLEASURE

We believe that whereas God's will of purpose, comprehending all things in relation to the whole, is accomplished infallibly and cannot be prevented, hindered, or delayed in the least by men, devils, or impersonal forces (Isa. 14:24, 27) ; His will of pleasure concerning each thing abstracted from the whole, being set forth in the Bible by way of commands, exhortations, and assertions concerning what God is pleased with, is often violated (Deut. 29 :29); that it is God's will of pleasure that fixes man's duty and responsibility (James 1:22).

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine personality and not a mere emanation, influence, or force (John 14:26; 16:13); equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same essence and nature (II Cor. 13:14); that He was active in creation (Gen. 1:2) ; restrains that wicked one until God's purpose is fulfilled (II Thess 2:7), and convicts of sin (Acts 2:37); that He is the agent of God in the new birth (John 3:6; 6:63); that He comes into the heart in regeneration there to dwell continuously; sealing (Eph. 1:13), witnessing (Rom. 8:16), counseling (1 John 2:20), teaching (1 John 2:27), guiding (John 16.13), and sanctifying (I Cor 6:11); that the believer, therefore, is not to pray or seek for the Holy Spirit, but to surrender to Him so as to be filled with Him (I Thess. 5:19; Eph. 5:18).

6. THE DEVIL

We believe that the Devil or Satan is a personal evil spirit, formerly a holy angel, from which estate he by transgression fell, drawing a host of angels with him (Ezek. 28:12-18; Isa. 14:12-17; Rev. 12:3,4; II Pet. 2:4); that he now presides over these evil angels as their leader, being the prince of the power of the darkness of this world (Eph. 2:2; II Cor. 11:13-15); that he is the enemy of God (Mt. 13:25), the tempter and accuser of the saints (I Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12.10), possessor of the power of death (Heb. 2:14), author of all evil and of all false religions (I Tim. 4:1), the chief power back of the present apostasy (I John 4:1-3; II Thess. 2:3- 7); and that he is destined, however, to final defeat and eternal destruction in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

7. CREATION

We believe that the Genesis account of creation is to be accepted literally and not figuratively or allegorically (II Tim. 3:16); that man was divinely created by direct act in the image of his maker (Gen. 1:26,27; 2:7), and not by or through the process of evolution from lower species (I Tim. 6:20); that all animal and vegetable life was likewise directly created and placed under God's inviolable law that they should bring forth only after their kind (Gen 1 :20-25).

8. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man, originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, fell from this holy and happy estate by disobedience (Gen. 3:1-7), in consequence of which disobedience the threatened death was then and there inflicted (Gen. 2:17), so that his moral nature was not only grievously injured (Rom. 3:10-18); but he totally lost all spiritual life (Rom 5:12, 18, 19); becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and subject to the power of the Devil (Eph. 2:1-3; II Tim. 2:26).

9. TOTAL DEPRAVITY

We believe that the spiritual death of the natural man, or total corruption of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire race of man (John 3:6; Rom. 5:12), the man Christ Jesus alone excepted (Mt. 1:18-25; John 1:14); and hence that every child of Adam is born into this world with a nature which not only possesses no divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably evil, being at enmity against God, and incapable of being brought into subjection to the law of God by any process whatsoever (John 8:44; Rom. 8:7).

10. FREE WILL

We believe that man by nature possesses free will or free agency, by which we mean that in relation to God he always acts without compulsion and in accordance with his own dominant desires and inclinations, being impelled from within in all his actions (John 3:19; Mark 7:21-23); that this is true while he is yet a sinner under the power of the Devil, even though he cannot of his own strength free himself therefrom (Eph. 2:1; 4:17-19; John 6:44, 65); that it is also true in the exercise of repentance and faith under the regenerating power of God and in service to God after regeneration as God works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Eph. 2:8-10; John 6:37; Phil. 2:13).

11. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

We believe that the elective purpose of God, according to which He predestinates (Rom. 8:29), calls (Rom. 8:30), regenerates (II Cor. 4:6), sanctifies (I Cor. 6:11), saves (II Tim. 2:9), and glorifies (Rom. 8:30) sinners, is eternal, personal (II Thess. 2:13), and unconditional (Rom. 9:11); that it is the most glorious display of His sovereign goodness, being infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable (Eph. 1:1-14); that it comprehends all the means in connection with the end (II Thess. 2:13, 14); that it utterly excludes boasting, promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, and the active imitation of His free mercy (Eph. 1:4); that it is perfectly consistent with the free agency of man (Rev. 22:17); that it is to be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel (I Thess. 1:4-10); that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves utmost diligence (II Pet. 1:10, 11).

12. CHRIST AND HIS MEDIATORIAL WORK

We believe that Jesus of Nazareth was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, without human father (Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-35); that He is therefore both the Son of God and God the Son, that He by the appointment of the Father freely took upon Himself our nature (Heb. 10:51), yet without sin (II Cor. 5:21), honored the divine law by perfect obedience (Gal. 4:4, 5), and by His vicarious death made full atonement for all the sins of all who shall ever believe, together with those who die in infancy and native idiocy (John 10:15); that having risen from the dead (Lk. 24:46), He is now enthroned at the right hand of God, making intercession for believers, uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, being therefore in every way a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Saviour (Heb. 1:3, 4; 4:14-16; 7:25-27; 9:24-28).

13. THE EFFECTUAL CALL

We believe that those and only those accountable persons whom God has elected and predestinated to salvation He does in His appointed and accepted time in this life effectually call by His word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they were born, to salvation through the sanctification of the

Spirit and belief of the truth, regenerating their hearts, enlightening their minds, renewing their wills, thus drawing them and giving them to Christ in repentance and faith (John 6:37; 10:16,26,27; Acts 2:39; 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30; II Thess. 2:13, 14; II Tim. 2:9,10).

14. SALVATION OF INFANTS AND IMBECILES

We believe that whereas all men by nature are SPIRITUALLY incapable of coming to Christ (John 6:44, 65), infants and imbeciles are NATURALLY incapable of such, in that they have not the necessary faculties of mind and heart to comprehend and receive a sense of right and wrong or the gospel; therefore we believe that those who die in infancy and native idiocy were included in the atonement and will be saved by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and the sovereign application of the blood of Christ; that the salvation of these will be accomplished in essentially the same way that accountable adults are saved (Rom. 11:5, 6). That is that they are brought to repentance and faith through the sovereign working of the Spirit through the word supernaturally revealed to them (I John 5:20; John 17:3).

15. THE CONDITION OF THE HEATHEN

We believe that no accountable person can be saved without hearing and receiving the gospel in this life (John 14:6; 17:3); therefore we hold that the heathen without the gospel are lost and will be judged by the light of conscience which is given to every accountable person (Rom. 2:12-16).

16. THE NEW BIRTH

We believe that because of human depravity, involving spiritual death, no one, whether infant or adult, can enter into the kingdom of God either here or hereafter without the new birth (John 3:3); that the new birth consists of the purification of the soul or spirit and the implanting of a new nature (II Cor. 4:6; 5:17); that it is accomplished in the region of the soul below consciousness in a supernatural manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Word of God (John 6:63; I Cor. 4:15; I Pet. 1:23), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life (Rom. 6:17, 18).

17. REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations (Lk. 13:3; Acts 20:21; 17:30) and also inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God (Acts 5:31; I Cor. 3:5; II Tim. 2:25; Eph. 2:8, 9); whereby being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, helplessness, and way of salvation through Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition and acknowledgement of sin; at the same time receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our only and all-sufficient Saviour and submitting to Him as our Lord (John 20:28).

18. WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ (Eph. 2:8, 9; Acts 16:31); that the full benefit of Christ's obedience and death are received by faith alone and wholly apart from works (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16); that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of Christ, who was made to be sin for us, dying in our room and stead (Gal. 3:13), and that no repentance, no faith, no feeling, no resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to rules

and regulations of any church, no baptism or other ordinance can add the least to the value of the precious blood of Christ (Gal. 3:21; Rom. 10:4).

19. FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe that the gospel invitation is for all men without exception (Mk. 16:16); that it is the immediate duty of all who hear it to accept it by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith (Acts 17:30); and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner among these except his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel (John 5:40); which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation (II Cor. 2:15,16; John 3:36; 8:24).

20. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that all who believe in Christ are justified in the sight of God (Acts 13:39); that justification includes the pardon of all sin (Acts 13:38), and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness (Rom. 5:17,21); that it is bestowed, not in consideration or any works of righteousness we have done or shall do, but solely through faith in Christ (Rom. 3:28); by means of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely and fully imputed to us of God (Rom. 10:4; 5:1-8); that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God (Rom. 5:1), and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity (Rom. 8:32-34).

21. ASSURANCE

We believe that it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again of the Spirit to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Christ to be their Saviour (I John 5:20); that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written word (John 20:31), and the witness of the Holy Spirit (I John 4:13; Rom. 8:16), exciting within His children filial love, gratitude, and obedience (II Cor. 5:14,15; I John 4:10).

22. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification belongs to all who have been regenerated (I Cor. 6:11); that it is both instantaneous (I Cor. 1:30) and progressive (I Thess. 4:3); that instantaneous sanctification consists of our being objectively separated from the world of unbelievers and set apart or consecrated to God while at the same time we are made holy in the eyes of the law and a new life is established in the soul (II Thess. 2:13, 14); that this phase of sanctification is accomplished in regeneration and admits of no degrees, being possessed fully and absolutely by all the saved (I Cor. 6:11 ; Heb. 10:10); that progressive sanctification is begun in regeneration and is carried on by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, wherein, by the use of the appointed means -especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, prayer, and the practice of all godly exercises and duties, we are subjectively separated from the world to live unto God (John 17:17; II Tim. 2:21); that this phase of sanctification is only relative and never issues in sinless perfection in this life (Phil. 3:13, 14).

23. THE TWO NATURES OF THE BELIEVER

We believe that regeneration is the implantation of a new life (John 17:3; Rom. 6:23) and not the eradication or reformation of the old nature (Rom. 7:18); that the old nature remains in the believer to

the end of his earthly existence and is in constant conflict with the new nature, so that the believer is never free from the presence of sin in this life and never able to obey fully the will of God (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-25).

24. THE CHRISTIAN WALK

We believe that we are called with a holy calling to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the Spirit that we should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Rom. 8:1-17); but the flesh being still in us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, needs to be kept in subjection to Christ or it will surely manifest its presence to the dishonor of His name (I Cor. 9:27; II Pet. 1:3-12).

25. GOOD WORKS

We believe that while good works have nothing to do with saving us (Titus 3:5), yet they are ordained of God for His glory and will certainly follow regeneration (Eph. 2:10); that it is our duty to engage in them under the leadership of the Spirit and the instruction of the Word of God (Titus 3:14); that our eternal reward in the presence of God is dependent upon them (I Cor. 3:11-15).

26. THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

We believe that those who are truly saved, having been predestinated to both justification and glorification and being born of the Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away and perish (Rom. 8:28-39); but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (I Pet. 1:5); that they are thereby made to endure to the end (Psa. 89:29), yet not in such a way as to impair their responsibility (Phil. 2:12, 13); and that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark that distinguishes them from superficial professors (I John 2:19; Heb. 6:9; 10:39).

27. BAPTISM

We believe that baptism is immersion in water (Acts 8:38) of a penitent believer (Acts 8:37) on the authority of a New Testament church (Mt. 28:19, 20) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19, 20), not in order to obtain the remission of sins (Acts 10:43) but to show forth in most solemn and beautiful emblem our death to sin and resurrection to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4); that it is a prerequisite to membership in the church (Acts 2:41, 47) and participation in the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41, 42).

28. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that the Lord's Supper is not a sacrament, but a symbolic ordinance (I Cor. 11:24, 25) placed in the church by our Lord (Mt. 26:26-30), in which the members of one church (I Cor. 10:11), by the use of unleavened bread (I Cor. 5:8) and wine (Mt. 26:29) (not mere grape juice), show not their love for one another but their Lord's death till He come (I Cor. 11:26); that the one bread or loaf of the supper points to the unity of the church observing it (I Cor. 10:17), which unity is essential to scriptural observance (I Cor. 11:18-20); that in the supper we commune not with one another, but with the Lord (I Cor. 10:16).

29. THE CHURCH

We believe that a New Testament church on earth is a body of baptized believers, necessarily local rather than universal, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Word of God (I Cor. 12:12, 13); observing the ordinances instituted by Christ (I Cor. 11:2); governed by His laws as its only head (Eph. 1:22); and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges vested in it by Christ (Mt. 16:19); that such a church is the body of Christ in its locality, with which all the regenerated should affiliate (I Cor. 12:27); that its officers of ordination are pastor or pastors (bishops, elders) and deacons (I Tim. 3:1-7; Acts 6:2; I Tim. 3:8-13); that the mission of the church is clearly set forth in the great commission (Mt. 28:19, 20); that each church has the absolute right of self-government, free from any interference whatsoever from any organization, group, or individual (Acts 1:15-26); that its one and only superintendent is the Holy Spirit as the viceregent of Christ (Eph. 2:21-22); that it is scriptural for churches to cooperate with each other for the furtherance of the Gospel and the doctrines of the Word of God, with each church being the sole human judge of the measure and method of its cooperation (II Cor. 11:8, 9); that sound Baptist churches today have the essential New Testament pattern (Mt. 28:19, 20); that only churches that preserve that pattern can lay true claim to being New Testament churches (Isa. 8:20); that it has been through such churches that Christ's promise to build His church has been fulfilled (Mt. 16:18); that Christ founded the first one of these and gave to it and to others that should descend from it the great commission, therefore they alone have the divine authority to administer baptism (Mt. 28:19, 20; I Tim. 3:15).

30. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked (II Cor. 6:14); that such only as are regenerate, being justified through faith in Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are truly righteous (Phil. 3:9); while all those that continue in impenitence and unbelief are wicked in God's sight and under His righteous curse (Gal. 3:10); that this distinction holds among men both in life and after death (Rev. 22:11); that the souls of the righteous do at death pass immediately into the presence of God, there in conscious bliss to await the first resurrection, at which time the soul and glorified body will be reunited and associated forever with the Lord (Lk. 16:22; I Thess. 4:17); that the souls of the wicked will pass at death into conscious misery to await the judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium when soul and body shall be reunited and cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (Lk. 16:23; Rev. 20:11-15).

31. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe that Christ is now king over a spiritual kingdom, but that He is reigning now, not on His own throne (the throne of David), but with the Father in His throne, where He will remain until He comes again (Col 1:13; Lk. 1:32; Rev. 3:21; Mt. 25:31); that His second coming is to be premillennial, bodily, visible (Rev. 20:1-4; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7); that it will consist of two stages: His appearance in the air and His revelation on the earth (I Thess. 4:16, 17; Zech. 14:4); that at the time of His appearance in the air all those who sleep in Christ will be raised in glorified bodies and caught up together with all saints who live and remain on the earth (I Thess. 4:16, 17; I Cor. 15:51, 52); that at His revelation on the earth He will sit on the throne of His glory for the first time judging all men then living on the earth, receiving the righteous into His kingdom and sending the unrighteous away into everlasting fire (Mt. 25:31-46); that the two stages of His coming will be separated by a period of time during which the woes depicted in the book of Revelation will be poured out upon the earth (Rev, chapters 6-19); that

this period will be marked also by the revelation of the man of sin or beast, who will rule over the whole world by the power of Satan and will finally gather the armies of the nations together for the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:17-19).

32. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

We believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead , both of the just and the unjust, but not at the same time (Rev. 20:5, 11-15); that the just shall arise at and following the appearance of Christ in the air (I Thess. 4:13-18); that the wicked dead will not arise until after the millennium at the judgment of the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

33. THE MILLENNIUM

We believe that we are now in the midst of a fearful apostasy in professing Christian bodies (I Tim. 4:1, 2; II Tim. 3:13); that the world is now experiencing its night and is by no means becoming better or drawing nearer to God or His kingdom (II Tim. 3:1-7); that the world will not be converted to Christ during this dispensation, but is fast ripening for judgment (II Tim. 4:3-4; II Pet. 3:3-7); that the Lord Jesus must come in person to introduce the millennial age with a judgment of this world (Lk. 18:8; Jude 14-15); that when He comes His completed kingdom will be established in the earth, where He will reign over restored and converted Israel and the whole world, the glorified saints reigning with Him (Mt. 19:28; Zech. 12:10; II Tim. 2:12); that then and only then will He sit upon the throne of David that was promised to Him (Mt. 25:31; Lk. 1:32).

34. THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, should be observed by believers as a day of rest and worship in harmony with the example of New Testament churches (I Cor.16:2); that it is not the Old Testament Sabbath transferred to another day and somewhat slackened in its severity, but a different day to be kept in honor of the resurrection and in a different spirit (John 20:19).

35. THE GRACE OF GIVING

We believe that Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the faith: that we are to bring our gifts into the common treasury of the church upon the first day of the week; that under grace we give and do not pay; that all giving should lose the identity of the giver and assume the identity of our Lord Jesus Christ through His body, the local church, and in order not to rob God, our gifts must exceed 10% of our gross income (Acts 4:34-35 & 37; II Cor. 8:1-24; II Cor. 16:2; Heb. 7:2-4; Mal. 3:8-11).

36. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth (Rom. 13:1-7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:20; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18).

37. MISSIONS

We believe that the command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this commission was given to the church (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Rom. 10:13-15). It shall be the policy of this church to support only New Testament Baptist mission efforts, sound in faith and practice.