

These Things We Believe Study

Mt. Zion Church Bible Study

Taken from

A Remedy for Itching Ears written by

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Lesson 1: What Do We Believe?



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We Have a Vision to Be Intentionally Learning!

Introduction: The following study is designed to help prepare Christians to answer questions regarding their faith. Our responsibility is to understand to a greater degree the Biblical principles which guide The Mt. Zion Church and our beliefs as individuals. We seek to be able to answer questions which may be on the minds of new brothers and sisters who decide to join us.

Matthew 28: 19 tells us "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" Discipleship is getting an understanding about what we believe and how our beliefs dictate the way we live as believers. Further, as the world seeks to redefine what is truth, we must be in a position to defend our faith. This is only possible when we understand the belief system we have and the scriptural basis of said beliefs.

The purpose of the following study is to simplify many of the beliefs we have as followers of Christ. Many of these beliefs transcend Baptist beliefs while others are specific to the Baptist denomination. In general, we understand the commonality of our faith statement with other denominations that by faith we are saved through Jesus Christ which provides for us the ability to have a renewed relationship with God the Father.

Most of this study will not center on what it means to be "Baptist," however it should be noted that The Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church follows the foundational beliefs of the Baptist denomination. This introductory lesson will touch on some of those tenets while other lessons in this nine-week study will be used to highlight some differences between Baptist and other denominations. The general purpose is to ground students and make clear "These things we believe!"~~Pastor Ken Patterson

Declaration of Faith

I. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

II. Of the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

III. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

IV. Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Saviour.

V. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

VI. Of The Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

VII. Of Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

VIII. Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

IX. Of God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

X. Of Sanctification

We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

XI. Of the Perseverance of Saints

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XII. Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

XIII. Of a Gospel Church

We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops, or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

XIV. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the Church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

XV. Of the Christian Sabbath

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations; by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

XVI. Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

XVII. Of the Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

XVIII. Of the World to Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

The General Association of General Baptists (GARB) modified the confession to reflect a premillennial view of the future. Typically this means the person believes that Jesus Christ returns for all Christians before the Tribulation starts and that after the Tribulation, Jesus sets up His kingdom on earth (Revelation 20:1-10). After the judgment of the wicked occurs, eternal life either with God or in the lake of fire follows (Revelation 20:11-15).

What Do We Believe?

The Articles of Faith

➤ The introductory chapter describes where the Articles of Faith originated. How many Articles are part of The Articles of Faith?

_____ .

➤ From which Christian denomination did the Articles of Faith originate? _____

As you study the Articles of Faith Chapter (pages 23-40) you will find the author has modernized the language for each article (see the remixes). Take a moment and read the first sentence of each. Are there any that surprised you? Were there any that you did not realize were part of your Christian beliefs? For example, did you realize that only two defined church offices are mentioned in the Bible (Pastor/ Bishop and Deacons)?

Activity

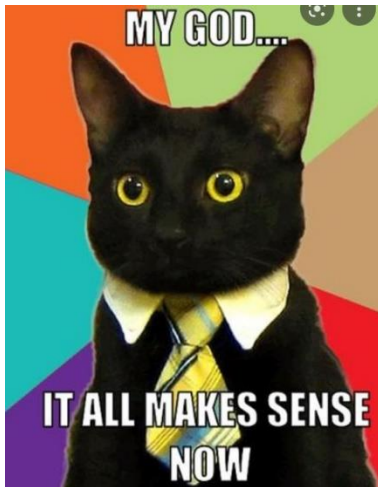
With the members of your group, analyze the first Article of Faith.

Directions: Write in the correct answer!

➤ Do we believe that the Bible has errors or has no errors?

➤ Do we believe that the Bible is man's thoughts or God's thoughts written by men? _____

Discussion: Why is it important for you to know that God's word is exactly what God wanted you to know and to understand about His nature?



IMPORTANT: Getting clarity for what God meant (Proverbs 4: 7) reduces the possibility of misunderstanding. This is why you must study God's word.

YOU can know God's thoughts and His meaning over time when you choose to study and grow!

Let's dig a bit deeper into this thought by reading Genesis 3: 1-5.

BIG IDEA: How did the serpent challenge Eve? See the question in Genesis 1: 2. "Did God really say?"

Anytime we question the authority of God's word, we place ourselves in a position to go against God's desires for their lives just like Adam and Eve. Article of Faith 1 is a reminder that scripture is the source of God's word. It has no errors and is the ultimate source for understanding God's plan for salvation, God's nature, and God's purpose for our lives!

WE BELIEVE THIS!

Activity Part 2: Assign 1 Article of Faith per group member. Have each member take 2 minutes to read the Faith statement and then put it in their own words. Each member gets 1 minute to explain the meaning of their assigned Article of Faith.

What did you learn? In the space below, please write what you learned from this lesson and how it helps you to understand your faith better.

By studying this lesson, I learned...

Closing Prayer: Dear God, thank you for what I have learned. Help me to better understand you and your word. I want to know more about what I believe and want to be sure of my faith. In Jesus name, Amen.

Homework:

- Read Chapter 1: The Scriptures and Our True God
- Complete the following activity. Send your work to your teacher's email address.

Directions: Take each Article of Faith and rewrite it in your own words in the space below!

Article	In your Own Words!
Example Article 1	The Bible is God's word and is the source of what we believe about God. It is God's word and perfectly describes God's personality, character, and plan for salvation.
