



DOCTRINE

PART I

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, Christian churches vary tremendously in their Bible interpretation. While each church claims to be based on the Word of God, their doctrine in some areas is often quite different. Therefore, many churches have taken to articulating their interpretation of key matters in statements of faith. For example, in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) most churches subscribe to the *Baptist Faith and Message* which is a small booklet that carefully outlines what Southern Baptists believe to be true. In so much as Berean is not a part of the SBC or any other larger denominational unit, we as a local church communicate what we believe to be true about God, the Word of God, the Godhead, His plan of salvation, His Second Coming, His church, church ordinances, and other subjects like marriage and life in a statement of faith that contains nine articles. Articles of faith must be approved by a super-majority of the congregation before they can be added to the church's official statement of faith contained in the Constitution. The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize you with BBC's Statement of Faith.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. In Article #1, Berean affirms its belief that the Bible was written by God; in 2 Timothy 3:16 the Greek word underlying "inspired" literally means "God-breathed." We believe the Bible is without error in the o_____ writings and is the supreme and final a_____ in faith and life.
2. In Article #2 the church communicates confidence in the G_____ account of creation. We reject any suggestion that man ev_____ or any teaching that God used evolution as the means to create.
 - A. We affirm our complete belief in the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.
 - B. We believe God has chosen to reveal Himself to us in three persons: Father, _____ and Holy Spirit.
3. Article #3's references to "only begotten Son of God" and "Eternal Word" describe Jesus' special and preeminent position as the Son who has always existed. Look at John 1:1 and 1:14, and notice the reference to "Word" Who we believe to be Jesus Who was born of the virgin M_____. We believe that Jesus' virgin birth was necessary to ensure he did not inherit a sin nature from Adam.
4. In Article #7, we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our _____ as an innocent man Who was without sin; and we, who are born-again, are declared "just" because of our faith in his shed b_____, His death, burial, and resurrection.
5. In Article #3, we affirm our belief in Christ's bodily re_____. Notice in John 20:20 the reference to Christ's hands and His side—both effected by His crucifixion.



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6. Article #3: Look up 1 John 2:1 and see the Bible affirming that Jesus is NOT dead, but is, instead alive and well; ad_____ing for those call Him Lord and Savior by faith.

A. Where is Christ presently? _____

B. In Article #8, the reference to “church” is to all who are saved (thus the universal church).

7. Article #9 addresses the Second Coming of Christ. We believe that Christ could return at a_____; thus, His return is imminent. By “pre-millennial” we believe that Christ’s return will happen before a 1,000-year kingdom is established on this earth in fulfillment of the covenant promises to Abraham and King David. We reject any teaching that Christ’s return is only symbolic.

8. In Article #7, the main point is that man is dependent upon G_____ for His salvation.

A. By “totally depraved” we do not believe that any man is as bad as he could be or that any act of man is sufficient to warrant his salvation apart from God’s gracious election.

B. By possessing “no spark of divine life” we do not mean to remove man’s accountability to God’s revelation of Himself through all of Creation (Romans 1).

9. Article #7: In this article we affirm our belief in the doctrine that man is saved by f_____ alone.

A. In John 3:3ff, Jesus used the words “b_____ again” to describe what one must be in order to see or enter the Kingdom of God.

B. We believe that one receives the Lord Jesus Christ when the “Spirit of Christ” indwells their heart (in the biblical sense) by faith (Ephesians 3:17).

10. Article #4 outlines the roles and function of the Holy Spirit of God. This article emphasizes:

A. That the Spirit c_____ men of sin.

B. That the Spirit baptizes the believer in a symbolic way into the universal body of Christ.

C. That the Spirit of God (Spirit of Christ) is living inside every true be_____.

D. That the Christian is s_____d with the Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30).

E. That the Spirit sets apart or sanctifies every Christian to a h_____ life.



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F. That the Spirit teaches _____ the believer in his understanding of the Bible.

G. That the Holy Spirit wishes to guide even our daily _____.

11. Article #4 deals with the church's understanding of the Gifts of the Spirit.

A. We reject any suggestion that man can manipulate God into giving him certain spiritual gifts that may be perceived as more desirable.

B. According to Ephesians 4:11-12 the _____ of the church have a responsibility to equip (teach, develop, train) the members of the church for the work of the ministry.

C. Some churches teach that one must be able to speak in tongues to affirm their salvation. We believe the gift of tongues and supernatural gift of healing were _____.

D. We believe the miraculous gifting to heal by laying on of hands was given to some men to authenticate their apostolic ministry, but we still believe that God frequently chooses to answer prayers of believers for physical healing.

12. Article #7 deals with the perseverance and the _____ security of the believer.

A. In this article, Berean distinguishes itself from a freewill Baptist church or other churches that believe a true believer can lose their salvation.

B. The main point of the second sentence in this article is that man does not do anything to keep himself secure in Christ. He is resting in the sovereignty of God, the promises of God, the Word of God and the finished work of Christ on the cross.

C. By eternal _____ punishment of the lost we affirm our belief in a literal hell.

CONCLUSION

At this point, you are about half way through the church's Statement of Faith. If you have a question about anything presented in this lesson or the Constitution, please take the time to ask your question in class. In most cases, there will be another person who can also benefit from the answer to the question.

Doctrine matters especially in the areas that are essential to the faith once delivered by the apostles commissioned by the Lord Jesus to the church. Everything is essential but in the matters that are essential to Christianity there can be no compromise. For example, either Jesus is both God, and the Son of God, or everything about Christianity falls apart. The old cliché is true: the church that stands for nothing will fall for anything. The Apostle Paul told Pastor Timothy to give his attention to doctrine in 1 Timothy 4:3 and Acts 2:42 the early church made doctrine (what the Apostles taught) a priority alongside prayer and fellowship.



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QUESTIONS
