

THE BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men who were divinely influenced. The Holy Bible is God's explaining Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine teaching. God is the author. Salvation is its purpose. Truth, without any mistakes, is its substance. For these reasons, all Scripture is completely true. All Scripture is completely correct. It tells the main beliefs that God uses to judge us. It is the true center of Christianity. It will remain the center of Christianity until the end of the world. It is the most excellent ideal. It is with this ideal that all human behavior, all statements of belief, and all religious opinions should be tested. All Scripture is proof of the Christ. Christ is the center of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being. He is the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is never-ending in purity. God is perfect. God is all powerful. God is all knowing. He knows about all things in the past, present, and future. He knows about all of the future decisions that His free created beings will make. To Him we owe the highest love, respect, and obedience. The never-ending God shows Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three have separate personal characteristics. There is no difference in their nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father rules with kind care over His universe, His creatures, and human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful. He is all knowing. He is all loving. He is all wise. God is Father to people who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the never-ending Son of God. In His life as Jesus Christ, He was brought into being

by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus completely showed and did the will of God. He became a human being with all the stress and needs of human beings. He identified completely with humans. Even though He was human, He had no sin. He respected the divine law. He personally obeyed God. When He died for others on the cross, He made a way for the salvation of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body. He appeared to His disciples. They knew that He was the person who was with them before His death on the cross. He went up into heaven. He is now honored at the right hand of God. He is the One Mediator. He is completely God. He is completely man. In Him are God and man brought together. He will return in power and majesty to judge the world. When He returns, He will complete His work of salvation. He now lives in all believers as the living and always present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is completely divine. He influenced holy men of Bible times to write the Scriptures. By explanation He allows men to understand truth. He honors Christ. He shows men their sin. He shows men the worthiness of Christ. He shows men their punishment. He calls men to the Saviour. He is the source of rebirth. At the moment of rebirth, He takes every believer into the Body of Christ. He grows believers into mature Christians. He comforts believers. He gives the spiritual gifts to believers. With these gifts, believers can serve God through His church. He keeps the believer safe until the day of the last salvation. His presence in the Christian is the promise that God will make the believer completely like Christ. He explains and gives power to the believer and to the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God. Man is made in God's likeness. God created them as male and female. They are the greatest work of His creation. Being made male or female by God is a part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin. He was given the gift of freedom of choice by his Creator. By his free choice man sinned against God. Man brought sin into all people in the entire world. Through the temptation of Satan, man disobeyed the command of God. He lost his original innocence. Now all men inherit a life and a background willing to sin. As a result, as soon as they are able to make right decisions and actions, they become sinners. They are guilty of sin. Only the kindness of God can bring man into His holy fellowship. Only the kindness of God can let man complete the creative purpose of God. The godliness of all people is obvious, because God made man in His own likeness. The godliness of all people is obvious, because Christ died for all men. Now every person of every race should receive respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation includes the whole man. Salvation is given to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ by His own blood brought never-ending salvation to the believer. Salvation includes being accepted just as you are when you turn from your sin. Salvation includes being set apart for His work. Salvation includes being made to worship God. There is no salvation without personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's kindness. Believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart created by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit shows us our sin. The sinner begins by turning from sin and turning to God. The sinner has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Turning from sin and turning to God and faith are experiences of God's kindness that are never separated.

Repentance is a real turning from sin to God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the whole person to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's kind and complete pardon from sin of all sinners because of His righteousness. All sinners must turn from their sin and turn to God. All sinners must believe in Christ to receive justification. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and approval with God.

C. Sanctification is the way a believer is set apart for God's purposes. Sanctification begins with new birth. The believer grows toward moral and spiritual maturity. The believer grows because of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit living in him. Growth should continue throughout the believer's life.

D. Glorification is the result of salvation. Glorification is the last blessed condition of the believer. This condition never ends for the believer as he worships God forever in heaven.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Becoming one of God's children is the caring work of God. He accepts us just as we are. He sets us apart for His work. He wants us to be with Him and to worship Him forever. God's kind plan does not deny the free will of man. God's plan includes all the ways to accomplish this. God's plan is the great evidence of God's most excellent goodness. God's plan is very wise, holy, and cannot be changed. God's plan does not include boasting. God's plan encourages humility.

All true believers continue forever. Believers that God has accepted in Christ and set apart for His work by His Spirit will never lose their salvation. They shall continue forever. Believers may sin because of neglect and temptation. Believers grieve the Spirit because they sin. Believers damage their graces and comforts because of sin. Believers bring criticism on the cause of Christ because of sin. Believers bring worldly judgments on themselves because of sin. Even though they may sin, true believers will still be saved by the power of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an independent local congregation of baptized believers. These believers are joined by shared agreement. These believers share in the same faith and fellowship of the gospel. This group of baptized believers observes the two ordinances of Christ. They are guided by His laws. They use the gifts, rights, and privileges given to them by His Word. They are trying to present the gospel to all people on the earth. Each congregation works under the Lordship of Christ by self-governing methods.

In this kind of congregation, each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. The church's scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. Both men and women are given gifts by the Holy Spirit for service in the church. The office of pastor is limited to men that meet the qualifications found in Scripture.

The New Testament describes the church as the Body of Christ. This church includes all of the believers from throughout history. These believers come from every people group. They come from every language group. They come from all people from every country.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience. Baptism is the picture of the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. Baptism is a picture of the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in a new life in Christ Jesus. Baptism shows the believer's faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Baptism is required before church membership. Baptism is also required before taking the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a picture of obedience. Church members eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine. They remember the death of the Redeemer. They look forward to His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian custom to recognize this day regularly. On this day Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This day should include worship and spiritual commitment, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should agree with the Christian's sense of right and wrong under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes His general rule over the universe. The Kingdom of God also includes His rule over men. These men of their own free will accept Him as King. The Kingdom is the area of salvation. Men receive this salvation by having trust like a child and making a commitment like a child to Jesus Christ. Christians should pray and work so that the Kingdom of God may come. Christians should pray and work so that God's will may be done on earth. The Kingdom of God will be complete when Jesus Christ returns to earth again at the end of this time.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its right end. In keeping with His promise, Jesus Christ will return to earth in person. He will be seen in all His greatness by all people on the earth. The dead will be raised. Christ will judge all men with honesty. The unworthy will be sent to Hell, the place of never-ending punishment. The worthy, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward. They will live forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the job and honor of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to try to make disciples of the people from all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Winning the lost world to faith in Jesus Christ depends on all believers. Making disciples is a Christian duty for the person who has already accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Making disciples is clearly commanded many times in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to try always to win the lost to Christ by a spoken witness. The child of God should also present a Christian way of life. The methods used to witness should be in agreement with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43;

16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of explanation and intelligence. In Jesus Christ are all the riches of understanding and learning. All good learning is a part of our Christian history. The new birth opens all human abilities. The new birth creates a desire for learning. The reason for education in the Kingdom of Christ is brought together with missions and general kindness to others. These should receive the generous support of the churches. A system of Christian education is necessary for a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education, there should be a good balance between educational freedom and educational responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always incomplete and never final. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is controlled by the authority of Jesus Christ. The teacher is controlled by the power of the Scriptures. The teacher is controlled by the obvious purpose for which the school was started and continues.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the giver of all earthly and heavenly blessings. God is the giver of all that we have and all that we are. Christians have a spiritual responsibility to the whole world. Christians have a responsibility to share the gospel. Christians have a duty to be good managers of their possessions. They have the responsibility to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions. Christians should know that all of these are given to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. The Scriptures say that Christians should give a percentage of their income cheerfully, regularly, carefully, and generously. Christians should give for the progress of the Redeemer's plan on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as time requires, plan associations and conventions that will best get cooperation for the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no power over one another or over the churches. These organizations are voluntary. They are to make suggestions planned to get, to join, and to direct the interests of our people in the most successful way. Members of New Testament churches should help each other to spread the missionary, educational, and kind ministries of Christ's Kingdom. This should be done together to add to Christ's Kingdom. The meaning of Christian unity in the New Testament is spiritual agreement and voluntary help by many groups of Christ's people to reach a common purpose. Cooperation is wanted between the many Christian denominations when the purpose is right. Cooperation is wanted when there is no ignoring of the sense of right and wrong. Cooperation is wanted when there is no giving up of loyalty to Christ and His Word as explained in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians have a responsibility to try to make the will of Christ first in our own lives and in the world. The ways and methods used to improve society and to create righteousness among men can be very helpful. These changes are helpful only if they come because of the rebirth of the person by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. Just like Christ, Christians should be against racial discrimination, every form of greed, self-interest, and evil, and all forms of sexual wrongdoing, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for orphans, the poor, the abused, the old, the weak, and the sick. We should speak for the unborn. We should insist on the holiness of all human life from its creation to natural death. Every Christian should try to bring business, government, and all people under the influence of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. To do this Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause. Christians should always be careful to act in love without giving up their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to try to find peace with all men. In keeping with the character and

teachings of Christ, Christians should do everything they can to put an end to war.

The true solution for war is the gospel of our Lord. The first need of the world is to accept His teachings in all the actions of men and nations. The world needs to apply His law of love to everything they do. Christian people all over the world should pray for the time to come when the Prince of Peace will be in control.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of what is right and wrong. Man's sense of what is right and wrong is free from the rules and commandments of men. These rules and commandments may be different from His Word. They may not be found in His Word. Church and state should be separate. The state owes protection to every church. The state owes complete freedom to every church in seeking spiritual matters. In giving this freedom, no religious group or denomination should be given any special treatment by the state. The national government was planned by God. It is the duty of Christians to give faithful obedience in all things that are not against the known will of God. The church should not expect the national government to do its work. The gospel of Christ considers only spiritual methods to reach its purposes. The state has no right to require punishment for religious beliefs of any kind. The state has no right to require taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal. This suggests the right of free communication with God by all men. This also suggests the right to start and spread religious opinions without trouble from the government.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has planned the family as the first institution of the world. It is made up of persons joined to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the joining of one man and one woman with the promise of being faithful to one another for a lifetime. Marriage is God's special gift. Marriage shows the union between Christ and His church. Marriage gives the man and the woman the way for intimate friendship. Marriage is the way of sexual expression according to the main beliefs in the Bible. Marriage is the way for increasing of the human race.

The husband and wife are of the same worth before God. Both are created in God's likeness. The marriage relationship shows the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his

wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given duty to provide for, to protect, and to guide his family. A wife is to submit herself with kindness to the servant leadership of her husband. A wife submits just as the church willingly submits to the leadership of Christ. She is made in the likeness of God. Her husband is also made in the likeness of God. This makes the wife and husband equals. She has the God-given duty respect her husband. She is to serve as his helper in running the household and supporting the next generation.

Children, from the moment of creation, are a blessing and inheritance from the Lord. Parents are to show to their children God's example for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and right values. Parents are to guide their children to make choices based on truths in the Bible. Parents are to guide their children by living a life faithful to God. Parents are to guide their children with loving discipline. Children are to respect and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

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