

Ordinances

We teach that Christ has committed two ordinances to His church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) has no saving merit (Acts 16:31-32; I Pet. 3:21), but is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior (I Cor. 15:3-4), his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Rom. 6:3-5), and the fact that his sins are washed away and he stands clean and forgiven in God's sight (Acts 22:16; I Pet. 3:21). Baptism is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death (I Cor. 11:23-26) and should be preceded by solemn self-examination (I Cor. 11:27-32). We also teach that where as the elements of communion are only representative of the body and blood of Christ (I Cor. 11:23-25), the Lord's Supper is a unique and special time of fellowship with the risen Lord Jesus.

ANGELS

Holy Angels

We teach that angels are a higher order of created intelligent beings than man (Heb. 2:6-7) who serve God with reverence (Ps 89:6-7) and obedience (Ps. 103:20). One of their assignments is to help believers (Heb. 1:14), working alongside them to advance God's kingdom (Rev. 22:8-9). We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8-9).

Fallen Angels

We teach that Satan is a created angel who rebelled against His Creator (Is. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-18) taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 12:3-9). Satan and his demons are the enemies of God and His children (Mt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:12; I Pet. 5:8). Their defeat was ensured at the cross of Christ (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14), can be appropriated by believers by faith (Mt. 17:17-20; Acts 16:18; Ja 4:7), and will be culminated by their everlasting torment in the lake of fire (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

LAST THINGS

Death

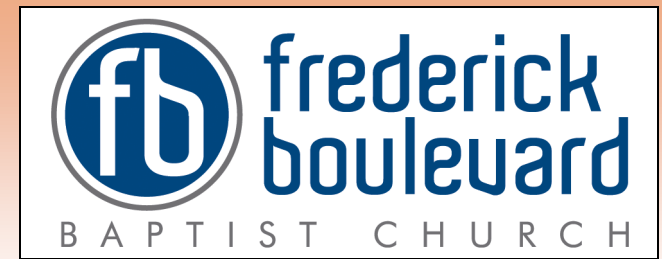
We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11), that there is a separation of soul and body (Ja. 2:26), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Lk. 23:43; Phil. 1:23), and that, for the redeemed, such separation continues until the day of the Rapture (I Thes. 4:13-17). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (Jn. 6:39), the unsaved to judgment and eternal punishment (Rev. 20:11-15). We teach that the souls of the unsaved are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Lk 16:19-26; Rev. 20:11-15). Then they shall appear at the Great White Throne judgment and shall be cast into the eternal hell, the lake of fire, cut off from the life of God forever (Rev. 20:11-15, 2 Thes. 1:7-9).

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell 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

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what we teach

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the written Word of God, inspired in every word (I Cor. 2:12-13) by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21), without error in the original documents (Ps. 19:7; Tit. 1:2), and providentially preserved so that the Scriptures as we now have them are in every essence as originally given so that they constitute the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Jn 17:17; Jude 1:3).

We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief in a supernatural creation (Gen. 1), Adam and Eve as the historical parents of the human race (Gen. 2), a world-wide flood in the days of Noah (Gen. 6-8), and the historicity of the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testaments.

THE TRIUNE GOD

We teach that there is only one true God, eternally existing in three Persons— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14) — each equally deserving worship and obedience.

God The Father

We teach that God the Father is the sovereign Creator of all things (I Cor. 8:6), the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3), the Father of all men as their Creator (Eph. 3:14-15), and the spiritual Father of believers (Rom. 8:15).

God The Son

We teach that God the eternal Son (Jn. 1:1-3) became a man through a virgin birth (Lk. 1:34-35), uniting perfect deity and true humanity in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ forever (Jn. 14:9; Col. 2:9). He lived a sinless life (Heb. 4:15), was crucified (Mt. 27:35), rose bodily from the dead (Lk. 24:39), and ascended to heaven as Lord of all (Acts 1:9). He is now interceding for believers (Heb. 7:25), preparing a place to receive them (Jn. 14:2), and will one day return for them (Jn. 14:3).

God The Holy Spirit

We teach that God the Holy Spirit is a fully divine, eternal Person (Acts 5:3-4). He glorifies Christ (Jn. 16:14), inspired the Scriptures (2 Pt. 1:20-21) and convicts unbelievers of their need to repent of their sins (Jn. 16:8). The Holy Spirit is the supernatural agent in regeneration (Jn. 3:5), baptiz-

ing all believers into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). He also sanctifies (Rom. 8:2), instructs (Jn. 16:13), empowers them for service (Acts 1:8), and seals them for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). Every believer is indwelt by the Spirit from the moment of salvation (Rom. 8:9), and it is the duty of each believer to allow the Spirit to fill (or control) his life continuously (Eph. 5:18). We teach that the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to believers for the building up of Christ's church (I Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:11-12). He imparted miraculous gifts of revelation and healing in the apostolic era primarily to provide revelation and confirm the authenticity of the apostles' message (Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 12:12). Such miraculous gifts are not normative for all believers (I Cor. 12:29-30), nor essential for a godly, fruitful life (I Cor. 1:7, 3:1-3).

MAN

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness (Gen. 1-2). For that reason human life is sacred. Therefore murder, suicide, abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia are immoral and sinful (Ex. 20:13). Man was created for the purpose of loving God (Mk. 12:29-30), glorifying God (Rom. 11:36; I Cor. 10:31), and pleasing God (I Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 5:9).

We teach that in Adam's sin against the revealed will of God (Gen 3:1-6), man lost his innocence (Gen. 3:7-11), incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death (Rom. 6:23, Eph. 2:1,5), became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace (Eph. 2:3-9).

We teach that Adam's sinful nature has been transmitted to all men (Rom. 5:12), Jesus Christ being the only exception (2 Pet. 2:22). All men are thus sinners by nature (Eph. 2:3), by choice (Rom. 3:23), and by divine declaration (Rom. 3:9, 10).

SALVATION

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace received through faith on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ by the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5-6).

Election

We teach that election is the sovereign act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ (Eph. 1:4) those He graciously calls to Himself, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies (Rom. 8:29-30).

We teach that election does not contradict man's freedom and responsibility to make the choice to repent of his sins and believe in Christ (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:13; Acts 2:40, 16:30-31; Mt. 23:37). Though God's sovereignty and man's freedom may seem to be contradictory to our finite human minds (Isa. 5:8-9), the Bible teaches both truths

and we must accept both, knowing that in heaven God may reveal to us the way they work flawlessly together (Deut. 29:29).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which we are imparted a divine life and nature (Jn. 3:3; Col. 2:13; Titus 3:5). It happens instantaneously the moment a repentant sinner, enabled by the Holy Spirit, places saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 5:24; Eph. 1:13-14). That new life is his true identity (2 Cor. 5:17), is experienced by faith (Gal. 2:20), is enabled by the Word of God (2 Pet. 1:3-4), and is expressed in righteous living and good works (Jn. 15:5; Gal. 5:22-23; Ja 2:17-18).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God by which He declares righteous those who put saving faith in Him (Rom. 3:24,28). It involves the placing of our sins on Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (2 Cor. 5:21).

Sanctification

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint (I Cor. 1:2,30). This sanctification is positional and instantaneous (I Cor. 6:11). This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Heb. 10:10).

We teach that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the likeness of Christ (Rom. 8:29) through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God (2 Cor. 7:1).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh (Gal. 5:17). Ever believer has adequate provision for victory through drawing upon the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit by faith (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:1). Nevertheless, the struggle stays with the believer all through his earthly life and is never completely ended (Rom. 7:15) until he reaches heaven (I Jn. 3:2). All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are false (I Jn. 1:8). However, we can experience forgiveness and cleansing of our sins as we confess them (I Jn. 1:9).

Security

We teach that all the redeemed, once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (Jn. 5:24, 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10, 8:1, 31-39; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25, 13:5, I Pet. 1:3-5). However, not all who claim to be believers, are truly saved (Mt. 7:21-23, 13:24-

30, 36-43). True believers, though they may have temporary lapses in faithfulness, will persevere in their faith (Jn. 10:27-28; I Cor. 1:8-9; Col. 1:22-23). Those who do fall away from Christ give conclusive proof that they were never true believers to begin with (I Jn. 2:19).

We teach that believers can and should have assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word (I Jn. 5:11-13), through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:16), and through the evidence of Christ-like character in their lives (Heb. 6:9-10; 2 Pet. 1:5-11). We teach that anyone who takes on an overtly sinful lifestyle can have no genuine assurance of salvation (2 Pet. 1:10-11; I Cor. 6:9-10).

THE CHURCH

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (I Cor. 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-32), of which Christ is the head (Col. 1:18). We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the Rapture (I Thess. 4:13-17). We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Eph. 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (I Cor. 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6). We teach that believers are responsible to associate themselves together in local churches (I Cor. 11:18; Heb. 10:25).

Leadership

We teach that the one supreme authority of the church is Christ (Col. 1:18). Under Christ's leadership, the church body as a whole should be involved in making major decisions and should appoint its leaders (Acts 6:5-6, 15:22). The biblically-designated officers serving under Christ are elders (males, who are also called overseers and pastors) (Acts 20:17, 28; I Tim. 2:12-3:7) and deacons (I Tim. 3:8-13).

Responsibilities

We teach that all believers are responsible to serve and build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12, 16), and to pray, give, and work so that disciples are made of people locally, regionally, and internationally (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Mt. 28:19-20, 2 Tim. 2:2), the mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Mt. 18:15-17), as well as the need for discipline for sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Mt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:1-13; I Tim. 5:19-21).