

## CONSTITUTION OF THE MORGANTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

### PREAMBLE

REPOSING OUR FAITH IN THE Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, believing in the teaching and the practice of the Baptists and those great distinctive principles for which they have ever stood, namely:

1. The Lordship of Jesus Christ;
2. The Bible, the standard of faith and practice;
3. Regenerated membership;
4. Believer's Baptism by immersion in water;
5. Progressive sanctification;
6. Soul liberty;
7. Congregational government;
8. Separation of church and state:

We, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of immersed believers in Jesus Christ and adopt, ordain, and establish for our government and plan of worship and service the following declaration of faith, covenant, constitution and by-laws (and we hereby revoke all previous constitution and by-laws and action contrary to this constitution, by-laws and action contrary to this constitution, by-laws, and standing rules).

### CONFESSION OF FAITH

To set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us...that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed we send forth the commonly believed confession of faith held among us, as follows:

#### I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was (a) verbally and plenary inspired of God;(b) that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter; that consequently it is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks; and (c) therefore is and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

(Explanatory)

1. By "THE HOLY BIBLE" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation. which, as originally written does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.
2. By "INSPIRATION we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.
3. We believe that the Texts which are the closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus Greek Text for the New Testament, and that the King James Version of the English Bible is a true and faithful translation of these two providentially preserved Texts.

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- (a) II Tim. 3:16-17, II Pet. 1:39-21, Acts 1:16, Acts 28:25,
- (b) Psa. 119:160, Psa. 119:105, Psa. 119:130, Luke 24:25-27, John 17:17, Luke 24 :44-45,
- (c) Psa. 119:89, Pro. 30:5-6, Rom. 3:4, 1 Pet 1:23, Rev. 22:18:19, John 12:48 Isa. 8:20, Eph, 6:17, Rom. 15:4, Luke 16:31, Psa. 19:7-11, John 5:45-47, John: 5:39.

#### II. OF THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is(a) one, and only one, living and true God, and Infinite , Intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth (b) inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; (c) 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 but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

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- (a) Ex. 20:2-3, Gen. 17:1, I Cor. 8:6, Eph. 4:6, John 4:24, Psa. 147:5, Psa. 147:5, Psa. 83:18, Psa. 90:2, Jer. 10:10.
- (b) Ex. 15:11, Rev. 4:11, I Tim. 1:17, Rom. 11:33, Mark 12:30
- (c) Matt. 28:19, John 15:26, I Cor. 12:4-6, I John 5:7, John 10:30, John 17:5, Acts 5:3-4, I Cor. 2:10:11, Phil. 2:5, 6, Eph. 2:18, II Cor. 13:14.

### III. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

That the Holy Spirit is a divine person: (a) equal with God the Father and (b) Goth the Son and (c) of the same nature: (d) that He was active in the creation; (e) that in His relation to the unbelieving world He retrains the Evil one until god's purpose is fulfilled; (f) that He convicts of sin, of judgement and of righteousness; (g) that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; (h) that He is the agent in the New Birth; (I) that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer.

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- (a) John 14:16-17
- (b) Matt: 28:19
- (c) Heb0 9:14, John 14:26, Luke 1:35
- (d) Gen. 1:1
- (e) II Thes. 2:7
- (f) John 16:8-11
- (g) John 14:26-27, Acts 5:30-32
- (h) John 3:5-6
- (i) Eph. 1:13-14, Luke 24-49, John 16:18, John 14:26, Ram. 8:14, Rom.8:16  
II Thes. 2:13, I. Pet 1:2, Rom. 8:26-27.

### IV. OF THE DEVIL OR SATAN

We believe that Satan was once (a) holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and (b) drew after him a host of angels; that he is now (c) the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world, (d) We hold him to be man's great tempter (e) the enemy of God and His Christ, (f) the accuser of the saints, (g) the author of ail false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; (h) the lord of the antichrist, and (i) the author of all the powers of darkness - destined however (j) to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and (k) to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels

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- (a) Isa. 14:12-15, Ezek. 28:14-17
- (b) Rev. 12:9, Jude 6, II Pet. 2:4, Eph. 2:2, John 14:30
- (c) I. Thes. 3:5, Matt. 4:1,3
- (d) I. Pet. 5:8
- (e) Zech. 3:1, I John 3:8, Matt. 13:25, 37-39, Luke 22:3-4
- (f) Rev. 12:10
- (g) II Cor. 11:13-15, Mark 13:21-22
- (h) I John 4:3, II John 7, I John 2:22

- (i) Rev. 13:13-14, II Thes. 2:8-11
- (j) Rev. 19:11, 16, 20, Rev. 12:7-9, Rev. 20: 1-3
- (k) Rev. 20:10, Matt. 25:41

#### V. OF THE CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and (a) that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; (b) that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; (c) that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; (d) that all animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law was they should bring forth only after their kind.

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- (a) Gen. 1:1, Ex. 20:11, Acts 4:24, Co1. 1:16-17, Heb. 11:3, John 1:3, Rev. 10:6, Rom. 1:20, Acts 17:23-26, Jer. 10:12, Heb. 9:6
- (b) Gen. 1:26-27, I Cor. 11:7
- (c) Gen. 2:7, Gen. 2:21-23
- (d) Gen. 1:11-12, Gen. 1:20,24

#### VI. OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe (a) that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but (b) by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, (c) in consequence of which, all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and (d) therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

- (a) Gen. 3:1-6, 24
- (b) Rom. 5:12, Rom. 5:19
- (c) Rom. 3:10-19, Eph. 2:1,3, Rom. i:i8, Ezek. 18:19-20
- (d) Rom. 1:32, Rom. 1:20, Rom. 1:28, Gal. 3:22

#### VII. OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe (a) that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; (b) born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman, and (c) that He is both the Son of God, and God the Son.

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- (a) Gen. 3:15
- (b) Isa. 7:14, Matt 1:18-25, Luke 1:35, Mark 1:1, John 1:14, Psa 2:7, Gal. 4:4
- (c) I John 5:20, I Cor. 15:47

#### VIII. OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe (a) that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; (b) 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 and vicarious atonement for our sins; (c) that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; (d) that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Saviour.

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- (a) Eph. 2:8,9, Acts 15:11, Rom. 3:24
- (b) John 3:16, Matt. 18:11, Phil 2:7, Heb. 2:14, Isa. 53:4-7, Rom. 3:25,  
I John 4:10, I Cor. 15:3, II Cor. 5:21
- (c) John 10:18, Phil 2:8, Gal. 1:4, I Pet. 2:24, I Pet. 3:18, Isa. 53:11,  
Heb. 12:2
- (d) I Cor. 15:20, Isa. 53:12, Heb. 9:12-15, Heb. 7:25, I John 2:2.

#### IX. OF GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

We believe (a) that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; (b) that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; (c) that it is instantaneous and not a process; (d) that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; (a) that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, and not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel ;(f)that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life

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- (a) John 3:3
- (b) II Cor. 5:17
- (c) Luke 5:27, 28, I John 5:1, John 3:6-7, Acts 2:41; Acts 16:30-33
- (d) II Pet. 1:4, Rom. 6:23 Eph. 2:1, II Cor. 5:19, Col. 2:13
- (e) John 3:8, John 1; 12-13
- (f) Gal. 5:22, Eph. 5:9

#### X. OF THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

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

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- (a) I Thes. 1:4, Col. 3:12, I Pet 1:2, Titus 1:1, Born. 8:29-30
- (b) Matt, 11:28, Isa, 55:1, Rev. 22:17, Rom. 10:13, John;6:37
- (c) Isa. 55:6, Acts 2:38
- (d) Isa. 55:7, John 3:15-16, I, Tim, 1:15, I Cor. 15:10, Eph. 2:4-5,  
John 5:40
- (e) John 3:18, John 3:36.

#### XI. OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; (a) that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; (b) 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, His righteousness is imputed unto us.

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- (a) Acts 13:39, Isa. 53:11, Zech 13:1, Rom. 8:1, Rom. 5:9, Rom. 5:1
- (b) Titus 3:5-7, Rom, 1:17, Hab. 2:4, Gal. 3:11, Rom. 4:1-8, Heb. 10:38

## XII. OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that Repentance and Faith are (a) solemn obligations, and (b) also inseparable graces, (c) wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; (d) thereby being deeply convicted 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; (e) at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Saviour.

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- (a) Acts 20:21
- (b) Mark 1:15
- (c) Acts 2:37-38
- (d) Luke 18:13, Rom. 10:13, Isa 51:1-4, Psa. 51:7, Isa 55:6-7
- (e) Luke 12:8, Rom. 10:9-11

## XIII. OF THE CHURCH

We believe that a church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers (a) associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospels (b) observing the ordinances of Christ, (c) governed by His laws; and (d) exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His word; (e) that its officers of ordination are pastors or elders, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; (f) we believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission;

First, to make individual disciples; Second, to build up the church; Third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order; (g) we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit; (h) that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; (i) on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

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- (a) Acts 2:41
- (a & b) Acts 2:42
- (b) I Cor. 11:2
- (c) Eph. 1:22-23
- (d) Eph. 4:11, I Cor. 12:4, 8-11
- (e) Acts 14:23, Acts 6:5-6, Acts 15:23, Acts 20:17,28, I Tim. 3:1-7, I Tim. 3:8-13
- (f) Matt. 28:19-20
- (g) Col. 1:18, Eph. 5:23-24, I Pet. 5:1-4
- (h) Acts 15:22, Jude ~4 II Cor. 8:23-24, I Cor. 16:1, ~l. 3:10, Lev. 27:32, I Cor. 1~:2
- (i) I Cor. 6:1-3, I Cor. 5:11-13

## XIV. OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is (a) the immersion in water of a believer; (b) in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church; (c) 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; (d) that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's supper; (e) in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread

and the fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; (f) preceded always by solemn self-examination.

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- (a) Act 8:36-39, Matt. 3:6, John 3:23, Rom. 6:45, Matt. 3:16
- (b) Matt. 28:19
- (c) Rom. 6:3-5 Col. 2:12
- (d) Acts 2:41-42, Matt. 28:19-20
- (e) I Cor. 11:23-28
- (g) I Cor. 11:27-28

#### XV. OF THE PESEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

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

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- (a) John 3:31-32, Col. 1:21,23
- (b) I John 2:19, Matt 13:19-21
- (c) Rom. 8:28, Matt 6:30, Psa. 121:3 Heb. 1:14
- (d) I Pet. 1:5, Phil. 1:6, John 10:28, John 10:29, John 16:8, Rom. 8:35-39

#### XVI. OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that (a) there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; (b) 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; (c) while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; (d) and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

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- (a) Mal. 3:18, Gen. 18:23, Rom. 6:17-18, Pro. 11:31, I Pet. 4:18.
- (b) Rom. 1:17, I Cor. 15:22, Acts 10:34-35, I John 2:29, I John 3:7
- (b &c) Rom. 6:16
- (c) I John 5:19, Gal. 3:10, Rom. 7:6, Rom. 6:23
- (d) Pro. 14:32, Luke 16:25, Matt 25:34,41,46, John 8:21, Luke 9:26, John 12:25, Matt. 7:13-14

#### XVII. OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

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

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- (a) Rom. 13:1,3, II Sam. 23:3, Ex. 18:21-22
- (b) Acts 23:5, Matt. 22:21, Tim. 3:1, I Pet. 2:13-14, I Pet. 2:17
- (c) Acts 5:29, Acts 4:19-20, Dan. 3:17-18
- (d) Matt. 10:28, Matt. 23:10, Rev. 19:16, Phil 2:10-11, Psa. 72:11

## XVIII. OF THE RESURRECTION, RETURN OF CHRIST AND RELATED EVENTS

We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. Of the Resurrection, (a) we believe that Christ rose bodily "the third day according to the Scriptures;" (b) that He ascended "to the right hand of the throne of God;" (c) That He alone is our "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God;" (d) "that this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" -- bodily, personally and visibly; (e) that the "dead in Christ shall rise first" (f) that the living saints shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" (g) "that the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David;"(h) and that "Christ shall reign thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet."

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(a) Matt. 28:6-7, Luke 24:39, John 20:27, I Cor. 15:4, Mark 16:6, Luke 24:3-6

(b) Acts 1:9, Acts 1:11, Luke 24:51, Mark 16:19, Rev. 3:21, Heb. 8:1  
Heb. 12:2

(c) Heb. 8:6, I Tim. 2:5, I John 2:1, Heb. 2:17 Heb. 5:9-10

(d) John 14:3, Acts 1:11, I Thes. 4:16, Matt 24:27, Matt. 25:13, James 5:8, Matt. 24:42, Heb. 9:28

(e) I Thes. 4:16, I Cor. 15:42-44, I Cor. 15:52

(f) I Cor. 15:51-53, I Thes 4:17, Phil. 3:20-21

(g) Luke 1:32, Isa. 9:6-7, Acts 2:29-30

(h) I Cor. 15:25, Isa. 32:1, Isa. 11:4-5, Psa. 72:8, Rev. 20:1-4, Rev. 20:6

## XIX. OF MISSIONS

The command to give the gospel to the world in clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the churches. Matt. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, Acts 13:1-4, Rom. 10:13-15.

## XX. OF THE GRACE OF GIVING

Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the Faith. II Cor. .8:7,

We are commanded to bring our gifts into the storehouse (common treasury of the church) upon the first day of the week. I Cor. 16:1

Under grace we give, and do not pay, the tithe - Abraham GAVE a tenth part of a11" - "Abraham GAVE the tenth of the spoils." - Heb. 7:2,4 - and this was four hundred years before the law, and is confirmed in the New Testament; Jesus said concerning the tithe, "These ye ought to have done" Matt. 23:23. We are commanded to bring the tithe into the common treasury of the church. Lev. 27:30, Mal. 3:10. In the New Testament it was the common treasury of the church. Act 4:34, 35, 37.

## CONVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense; but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other Church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of Gods Word.