

Bethlehem PBC OKC

Articles of Faith

- Article 2

What are the Articles of Faith?

Articles of Faith (AOF) are short summaries of doctrines that a church publishes and holds to as a statement of belief. Most PB Churches still have them, and most are similar (but not identical).

When the Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church of Jesus Christ in Oklahoma City was constituted in November 1900, the body of believers there adopted these articles as a public declaration of "those things which we most surely believe."

AOF do not rise to the level of Scripture, but they are central points upon which anyone who joins our assembly must believe and affirm.

Bethlehem PBC AOF: <https://pbokc.org/us/articles-of-faith/>

Article 2

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspiration of God and the infallible rule of faith and practice for the Saints.

What does this Article mean?

- Scriptures
- Inspiration
- Infallible
- Rule of Faith and Practice

Some Basic Definitions

- “Scripture” means the written Word of God (*kathab* in Hebrew – something written; *grafe* in Greek, holy writ)
- “Inspiration” means God-breathed (*theopneustos*)
- “Infallible” means being without error, fully complete, trustworthy, and will never fail
- “Rule of faith and practice” means the Bible is the final and sole authority for Christians for what they believe and what they do

The Bible (“the Books”)

- Written Word of God (the Scriptures)
- Most popular book in the world
- first book printed using moveable type
- translated into hundreds of languages
- 66 Books written by 40 men over 1,600 years from all walks of life on 3 continents and in 3 different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek)

Old Testament (39 Books)

- We call it the “Old Testament” because it was the covenant that God made with the nation of Israel under the Law of Moses. This old covenant has been fulfilled by Christ on our behalf
- The OT was written over about 1,100 years, from about 1500 BC to about 400 BC
- Job is the oldest book of prose in the world
- The OT is arranged into the Law, the Prophets and the Wisdom Literature

New Testament (27 Books)

- We call it the “New Testament” because it is the new covenant that God has revealed and enacted through Jesus Christ. His death sealed and ensured its fulfillment. It is a covenant of peace from God towards His elect people.
- The NT was written in the first century from about 45-95 AD
- Written by the Apostles (e.g., Matthew, John, Paul, Peter, James), or by men under the direction and supervision of an Apostle (e.g., Mark, Luke, Jude)
- Arranged as the Gospels, Acts, Epistles (letters addressed to churches or individuals) and Revelation (the Apocalypse)

External Proofs for the Bible - The Jews Confirm the OT

- All of the content in the OT of your Bible is found in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Tanakh)
- The Jewish people reject Jesus as Messiah, but cannot claim that Christians have modified the OT
- The Jews reject Jesus on the basis that He does not meet the requirements of the Talmud (Oral Tradition)

External Proofs - Secular Historians

- Roman historians from the early 100's AD attest to the validity of events recorded in the Bible
- Suetonius (Claudius kicked out Jews from Rome around 50 AD because of Chrestus – Christ – Acts 18)
- Tacitus (Christ was crucified by Pilate in Judaea)
- Pliny the Younger (Christians worship Jesus as a God)
- Josephus wrote of John the Baptist and Jesus as having lived in the days of Herod Antipas (early 30's AD)

External Proofs - Early Church Writings Quote the NT

- We have hundreds of thousands of manuscripts from the “Church Fathers” who lived in 100-300AD and who quoted the entire NT many times over.
- Clement of Rome (95AD)
- Polycarp (120AD)
- Marcion the Heretic (140AD)

External Proofs – Archaeological Findings

- Thousands of archaeological findings have confirmed both OT and NT – “Luke is the greatest historian”
- Dead Sea Scrolls and other manuscripts confirm early writings
- The Delphi Inscription – a tablet from Emperor Claudius to the people of Delphi identifies Gallio as proconsul in Achaia (Corinth) in 51 AD – confirms Acts 18

Internal Proofs for the Bible - Fulfilled Prophecies

- The internal consistencies of the Bible fully demonstrate it is the Inspired Word of God
- Jesus said that the OT Scriptures “testify of me” (John 5:39)
- Hundreds of prophecies from the OT were fulfilled by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- The Christian church believed from the very beginning that Christ suffered, was buried, and rose again “according to the Scriptures,” which means the law and the prophets of the OT (1 Cor 15:3-8; Luke 24:25-27)
- The NT constantly refers back to the OT to show how God’s promises have come to pass – “that it might be fulfilled”

Internal Proofs for the Bible - Faithful Eyewitnesses

- We can believe the Scriptures because there were many eye-witnesses to Jesus' resurrection.
- Jesus told Thomas, "because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29
- Women were the first eye-witnesses of His resurrection. This was an embarrassing fact but recorded because it is true.
- The early disciples were fearless, and never recanted that they had seen the risen Savior, even when tortured or put to death.
- Peter says we have a more sure word of prophecy (the Bible), which is an even greater witness than our own eyes (1 Pet 1:19)

Internal Proofs for the Bible - Transformed Lives

- Many People have been transformed by the Word of God and by witnessing the risen Savior.
 - James
 - Paul
 - Peter
 - Nebuchadnezzar
 - Woman of Samaria
 - Nathaniel
 - Mark
 - Millions through the ages.

What are some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 2 (Inspiration, Infallibility, Sole Rule of Faith and Practice)?

Some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 2

2 Timothy 3:16: “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

2 Peter 3:2: “That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:”

1 Peter 1:3: ““According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 2

2 Peter 1:19-21: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Psalms 12:6-7: “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 2

Romans 15:4: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

Luke 24:27: “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Matthew 5:18: “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Further Listing of Scriptures from the Group On Article 2

Prov 30:5-6

Acts 8:26-36

2 Pet 1:3

Rom 16:26

Rev 22:18-19

Rev 1:1-2

1 Tim 3:14-15

Matt 26:54

Matt 21:42

Heb 1:1-3

Mark 12:10

John 5:39

2 Pet 3:15-16

Jer 31:33

Dan 10:21

* And there are many, many more.

Conclusion

The Scriptures are the written Word of God.

They are inspired, meaning that while they were written by men, they were authored by the Holy Spirit and breathed-out by God.

They are infallible, meaning they are without error, cannot fail, and will always be preserved.

They are the sole rule of faith and practice for the Saints, meaning that they are authoritative for all that Christians believe and do.

They are sufficient for all we need to live godly lives in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.