

Bethlehem PBC OKC

Articles of Faith

- Article 3

# 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 3

We believe in the doctrine of predestination and of the election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory before the world began, and that they will in time be manifested heirs of God, and joint heirs of, or with, the Lord Jesus Christ by a birth of the Spirit.

What does this Article mean?

# Some Basic Definitions

A “Doctrine” is a body of teachings; a principle that is revealed by God through the Bible (God says *“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:”* Deut 32:2)

“Predestination” means to be fore-ordained by God; a Divine Decree.

“Election” means the sovereign act by God to make a choice based upon His own gracious will.

“Manifested” means to be revealed; to be openly shown to all.

An “Heir” is someone who receives an inheritance from one who grants it. An inheritance requires the death of the Testator (grantor).

“Birth of the Spirit” refers to the act of regeneration, where we are made spiritually alive (quickened) by the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit.

# Timing is Important

*“We believe in the doctrine of predestination and of the election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory before the world began, and that they will in time be manifested heirs of God, and joint heirs of, or with, the Lord Jesus Christ by a birth of the Spirit.” (Article 3)*

Article 3 refers to two different time periods in which God independently and sovereignly acts for our grace and glory:

- (1) Before the world began (prior to Genesis 1:1)
- (2) During our lifetimes here in time

NOTE: BOTH are in our PAST with reference to our own personal experience as believers in Jesus Christ (e.g., as of today, right now).

# What God Did Before Creation

Before God created the universe, He placed His love upon, and chose out for Himself from the entire human family, His elect (chosen) people to be glorified with Jesus Christ.

This election by God was of a definite number of individuals. The family of God was chosen out of the family of Adam (the entire human race). The elect are from every nation, kindred, family and people on the face of the earth. They were individually and collectively foreknown, predestined, called, justified and glorified in Jesus Christ before the world ever began.

This election was unconditional, which means that it was not based on any good things about us or any decisions or actions that we would take during our lives. Instead, it was based solely on God's own good pleasure.

Predestination means that God "predetermined their destiny" that they would be adopted into the family of God, that they would share in the glory of Jesus Christ, and that they would have an eternal inheritance with God in the new heavens and new earth in the resurrection.

# What God Does During our Lives

The Bible refers to these children of God who were chosen in Jesus Christ before the world began in several ways: His People, His Sheep, the Elect, the Saints, the Righteous, Israel, Jacob, His Wheat, His Children, etc.

At some point in the life of every one of the Elect, God will move sovereignly upon them by the Holy Spirit, who will act upon them to make them alive spiritually. This is referred to in the Bible as “regeneration” or the “new birth.” Every one of His Saints will receive this new birth experience before they die (or before Jesus returns if they are still alive when He does).

This new birth does not happen based on anything that the person does. Instead, this new birth happens sovereignly by God. The new birth shows (manifests) that this person is an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ.

When someone is born of God, they will love God and believe in Jesus Christ. They may or may not be as obedient as they should be, but love for God and faith in Jesus Christ are evidence, not the cause, of the new birth.

# In Sum, Article 3 affirms:

God predestinated His People before the world began to grace and glory in Jesus Christ.

God chose His People out of the entire human family, not based on any merit in them or based on any decisions or actions they would take, but rather based on His own sovereign will and good pleasure.

God sends the Holy Spirit to give the new birth to every one of these Elect people so they are manifested as children of God during their lives.

If you love God and believe in Jesus Christ, you are a blessed person and should rejoice, because God has loved you from even before the foundation of the world, He sent His Son to die for you, He sent His Holy Spirit to make you alive spiritually now, and He will someday take you home to glory to live with Him forever.

What are some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 3?

# Some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 3

Ephesians 1:3-6: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

2 Timothy 1:9-10: “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”

# Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 3

Romans 8:28-30: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Hosea 1:10: “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”

1 Peter 1:2: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

# A Further Listing of Scriptures from the Group On Article 3

- Psa 14:1-3
- Eze 36:25-26
- Rom 8:17
- Jer 1:5
- Rom 9:11-13
- Rom 9:21-23
- Tit 3:4-7
- Acts 13:48
- Isa 42:1
- Gen 6:7-8
- Psa 33:12
- 2 Cor 4:10-11
- 1 Pet 1:2-5
- Gen 6:7-8
- Psa 106:5
- Isa 65:22
- Luke 1:44
- Luke 23:39-43

\* And there are many, many more

# Conclusion

God covenanted with Himself before the world was created to save His People.

God's People were chosen by God in Christ based on God's love for them.

They were decreed (predestined) to grace and glory for all eternity to come based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

They all receive the new birth of the Spirit at some point in their lives to manifest they are children of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ.