

Bethlehem PBC OKC

Articles of Faith

- Article 5

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 5

We believe that the Saints shall be preserved by grace and never finally fall away.

What does this Article mean?

Some Basic Definitions

The phrase “preserved by grace” refers to the doctrine of the Preservation of the Saints and means that God will wholly, by his own purpose, power and promises, keep us eternally secure.

The phrase “fall away” means to be lost.

To “never fully fall away” means that while we may stumble in disobedience during our lives, we will never ultimately be lost.

This is also called the Doctrine of the Eternal Security of the Saints, or “Once Saved, Always Saved.”

The Doctrines of Grace (TULIP)

The doctrine of the Preservation of the Saints is the fifth of the so-called “Doctrines of Grace,” sometimes referred to as “TULIP”

Total Depravity – we are by nature totally dead in trespasses and in sins and unable/unwilling to recover ourselves (AOF Article 4)

Unconditional Election – God sovereignly chose His Elect in Christ Jesus before the world began without reference to our own works or faithfulness (AOF Article 3)

Limited (or Particular) Atonement – Jesus died for specific, particular people whom God loved (the Elect). “Limited” means Jesus died for those people, and not just in general (AOF Article 3)

Irrisable Grace – the Holy Spirit sovereignly regenerates (Effectually Calls) all of the Elect during their lives (AOF Article 3)

Preservation of the Saints – the Elect are eternally secure wholly by the grace (purpose, power and promises) of God (AOF Article 5)

Preservation v. Perseverance

We prefer to use the term “preserved” because the Bible uses this term. We are preserved in Christ Jesus (Psalms 37:28; Jude 1:1). “Preserved” places the correct emphasis on the mighty power and grace of God in guaranteeing that all of the Elect will attain heaven and the resurrection, even those who have not heard or obeyed the gospel as preached by man. Preservation correctly places the emphasis upon God, not upon man.

We do not prefer to use the term “persevere,” because this term seldom appears in the KJV, and never from an eternal standpoint. To “persevere” means patience or endurance in remaining faithful to God. Perseverance places the emphasis upon man.

“Perseverance of the Saints” is usually understood (incorrectly) that all of the Elect will hear and believe the gospel as preached by man, and will persevere in continued faithfulness until their death.

While the Scriptures encourage us to endure to the end (Rev 3:10), such is not a prerequisite for attaining heaven, nor will every Elect succeed in remaining in continued faithfulness unto death.

Regeneration v. Conversion

We emphasize Preservation over Perseverance because it demonstrates some important differences between Regeneration and Conversion. Most Christians treat regeneration and conversion as the same thing, but they are not the same.

Regeneration means being born of the Spirit (the new birth). Every one of the Elect will receive this without exception. (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5).

Conversion means to turn to God in humble repentance upon hearing and obeying the gospel as preached by man. Only a regenerated man can be truly converted, but not everyone who has been regenerated will undergo gospel conversion and faithfully walk in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ here on earth (Matthew 18:1-3; Romans 10:14-17).

In Sum, Article 4 affirms that all of the Elect will be eternally saved. Even if they are disobedient during their lives and lose their assurance of salvation, they will “never finally fall away” (be lost eternally).

What are some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 5?

Some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 5

John 10:27-30: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.”

Psalms 37:28: “For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.”

Jude 1:1: “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called”

Titus 1:2: “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”

Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 5

Romans 5:8-9: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

Romans 6:5: “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”

1 Peter 1:3-5: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

A Further Listing of Scriptures from the Group On Article 5

- Psa 89:28-37
- Rom 8:30-39
- Eph 2:5-7
- John 6:39
- John 10:27-30
- 1 Pet 1:3-5
- Psa 37:28
- Rom 11:1-6
- 1 Ths 5:23
- Psa 121
- Tit 1:2
- John 5:24
- Psa 37:23-24
- 2 Tim 1:9-10
- Isa 54:10
- Jude 1:1
- 2 Tim 4:18
- Jude 1:24

* And many, many more

Conclusion

The Elect are eternally secure, wholly by the grace of God.

God will preserve the Elect fully unto heaven and the resurrection based on His eternal purpose, power and promises.

The Elect will all undergo regeneration by a birth of the Spirit, but not all of the Elect will be converted to the gospel, nor is gospel conversion a requirement to attain eternal life.

The fact that the Elect will “never finally fall away” means that they may fall away to a degree in disobedience, but will never lose their eternal salvation.

Our eternal security is guaranteed by the Election of God before the world began, the Atonement made by Christ’s death on the cross, and the Regeneration we receive by the Holy Ghost. All of the Doctrines of Grace work together to ensure all the Elect will live with God in glory forever.