

Bethlehem PBC OKC

Articles of Faith

- Article 7

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 7

We believe in the resurrection of the just and the unjust, and that the vile bodies of the Saints shall be changed like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ, and that the felicity of the Saints will be eternal and the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting.

What does this Article mean?

The Resurrection

The doctrine of the Resurrection is the central doctrine of the entire Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. It is the crown jewel of the Works of God. It is the subject, besides Jesus Christ himself, of the gospel.

Without the resurrection, we are lost. Without the resurrection we have no hope, life has no meaning, our loved ones who have died are gone forever, and there is no purpose to your life. Without the resurrection there is no basis for claiming anything to be moral, good, bad, reasonable, logical or objectively true. Without the resurrection, our lives are reduced to that of brute beasts; sensual pleasure and hedonism, or misery and suffering, are the whole of our existence. Nothing matters without it.

Paul puts it this way: if there is no resurrection, *“we are of all men most miserable...let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.”*

1 Corinthians 15:19, 32

What is the Resurrection?

Many people do not fully see the meaning and significance of the resurrection. The natural man scoffs and dismisses it, but there is something intriguing and appealing about it to the spiritual man.

“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.”

Acts 17:32 – Paul on Mars Hill in Athens

Resurrection means to bring something back to life. It means to “revitalize” or “revive.” Something is in a dead state, and it is made alive. It is a transformation of an existing thing to something new. It brings to mind “restoration,” so the thing that is resurrected is the same as before, but it is also different.

Resurreccioun (Anglo-French – “to rise”)

Anastasis (Greek – “to rise, as from a seat”)

Qûm (Hebrew – “to rise, to stand, to act”)

Different (but Related) Resurrections in the Bible

The most important and central Resurrection is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion.

This is the heart of the gospel – Jesus Christ suffered, was put to death, was buried, and arose again the third day, all according to the Holy Scriptures set forth by the Law and Prophets, and faithful witnesses saw the resurrected Savior and confirmed that he was alive. (1 Cor 15:5-8; Acts 1:3 – “many infallible proofs”).

This Resurrection declared Jesus to be Lord of All and Judge of both the Quick (Living) and the Dead. (Acts 17:31; Rom 1:4)

From a practical standpoint, we are justified (certified) by Jesus’ resurrection – we know He was a successful Savior because God raised Him from the dead to glory (Rom 4:24). He is the firstfruits of the crop – since God accepted Him, He will accept us. (1 Cor 15:20)

Different (but Related) Resurrections in the Bible

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ makes a reality these other types of resurrections that are described in the Bible:

1. The giving of spiritual life (regeneration) of the Saints (John 5:25) – people before Jesus came were regenerated the same way we are based on the faith of God in His Son to secure this for us.
2. The physical resurrection of the Saints from the dead to immortal, glorified bodies at Jesus' second coming to life eternal
3. The physical resurrection of the wicked from the dead to immortal albeit corrupted bodies at Jesus' second coming to everlasting punishment and misery

See John 5:29; John 6:39; 1 Cor 15:42-58; Matt 25:31-46; Rev 20:11-15

All of these resurrections are given by the power and authority of the “voice” of Jesus Christ. He does and will call forth all.

Our Physical Resurrection

All the Saints will be glorified and live forever with Christ in eternal happiness.

We will live in glorified human bodies (these bodies, in fact), but they will be eternally youthful, sinless and perfect.

We see this in Jesus' Resurrection – it was the same body as the one He had before the cross, but the scars and wounds were healed (except He purposefully kept His wounds in his hands, feet and side). He could still eat, but also disappear, walk through walls, ascend, etc. So will we.

Perhaps John said it best: *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”* 1 John 3:2

In this sense, “HEAVEN” is not our final resting place. It is where the souls and spirits of the Saints are in the presence of Jesus Christ and God the Father. But they await, as we do, for the NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH where we will dwell forever as complete human beings (body, soul and spirit).

The Physical Resurrection of the Wicked

It is unpleasant and sobering, but necessary also, to contemplate the resurrection of the unjust. Jesus will raise everyone from the dead and judge them. Those not found in the Lamb's Book of Life will depart into everlasting contempt and torment.

Out of misplaced kindness, some choose to believe that the punishment of the wicked is not eternal – that at some point they sort of “cease to exist.” This is not true.

The words “eternal” and “everlasting” mean the same thing; to last forever.

Think of it this way: we are promised “eternal life” and “everlasting life.”

The wicked are similarly going to receive “everlasting punishment.”

If everlasting eventually ends, then how would you have confidence that your everlasting life won't end in glory at some point as well?

It is necessary that the punishment of the wicked be eternal. It will always stand as a testament to the glory of God and of Jesus Christ. This is what He has saved us from.

What are some Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 7?

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1 Corinthians 15:3-8: “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

John 5:28-29: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 7

Matt 25:31-34: “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”

Matt 25:46: “And these [the goats] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Daniel 12:2: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

Isaiah 26:19: “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

Some more Scriptures that teach the Principles of Article 7

1 Thessalonians 4:13-20: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Colossians 3:1: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

2 Peter 3:13: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

A Further Listing of Scriptures from the Group On Article 7

- Eph 2:1-7
- 1Thes 4:13-18
- Dan 12:1-3
- John 5:25-29
- 1 Cor 15:42-45
- Rev 20:10-15
- Mark 9:43-48
- Isa 66:24
- Psa 16:10
- John 11:21-26
- Mat 25:31-41
- Acts 24:14-15
- Jude 1:7,13
- 2 Thes 1:5-10
- Phil 3:20-21
- John 3:15-16
- 1 Cor 15:12-32
- Isa 55:3
- Rev 19:20
- Matt 13:24-30
- Matt 13:36-43

* And there are many, many more.

Conclusion

The Bible teaches that there will be a general resurrection of all people at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Every dead body will come forth by the voice of Jesus Christ at the last trumpet sound.

The Saints will be clothed in immortal, glorified physical bodies. Those who have died and gone before will come with Jesus, and those who are alive and remain will be immediately changed.

The Saints will share in the glory of Jesus Christ, and dwell with Him in eternal happiness in the New Heavens and New Earth.

The Wicked will have physical bodies that will be subjected to eternal shame and contempt in the Lake of Fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. This state of condemnation will never end.

Our resurrection is guaranteed by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Because He lives, we will live also with him.