

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Bethel Baptist Church

Lawton, Oklahoma

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 written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter; and, 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.

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.

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.

We believe that these Holy Scriptures are *divinely preserved*, without any error, and in their total infallibility, and are given to us in our "Authorized Version," commonly referred to as the 1611 King James translation.

II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Psalms 119:160; Psalms 119:105; Psalms 119:130; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44-45; Psalms 119:89; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 3:4; I Peter 1:2-3; Revelation 22:19; John 12:48; Isaiah 8:20; Ephesians 6:17; Romans 15:4; Luke 16:31; Psalms 19:7-11; John 5:45-47; John 5:39.

II. OF THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious, in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; 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

Exodus 20:2-3; Genesis 17:1; I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; John 4:24; Psalms 147:5; Psalms 83:18; Psalms 20:2; Jeremiah 10:10; Exodus 15:11; Revelation 4:11; I Timothy 1:17; Romans 11:33; Mark 12:30; Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; I Corinthians 12:4-6; I John 5:7; John 10:30; John 17:5; Acts 5:3-4; I Corinthians 2:10-11; Philippians 2:5-6; Ephesians 2:18; II Corinthians 13:14.

III. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

That the Holy Spirit is a divine person; equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature, that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer.

John 14:16-17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Genesis 1:1-3; II Thessalonians 2:7; John 16:8-11; John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5-6; Ephesians 1:13-14; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:29; John 16:13; John 14:26; Romans 8:14; Romans 8:16; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2; Romans 8:26-27.

IV. OF THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

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

Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Revelation 12:9; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4; Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30; I Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:1-3; I Peter 5:8; Zechariah 3:1; I John 3:8; Matthew 13:25,37-39; Luke 22:3-4; Revelation 12:10; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Mark 13:21-22; I John 4:3; II John 7; I John 2:22; Revelation 13:13-14; II Thessalonians 2:8-11;

*Revelation 19:11, 16-20; Revelation 12:7-9; Revelation 20:1-3;
Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41.*

V. OF THE CREATION

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

*Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11; Acts 4:24; Colossians 1:16-17;
Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3; Revelation 10:6; Romans 1:20; Acts 17:23-26;
Jeremiah 10:12; Nehemiah 9:6; Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:21-23;
Genesis 1:11; Genesis 1:24.*

VI. OF THE FALL OF MAN

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

*Genesis 3:1-6, 24; Romans 5:12; Romans 5:19; Romans 3:10-19;
Ephesians 2:1, 3; Romans 1:18; Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 1:32;
Romans 1:20; Romans 1:28; Galatians 3:22.*

VII. OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

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

*Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1;
John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; I John 5:20; I Corinthians 15:47.*

VIII. OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; 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; 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; 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 all-sufficient Savior.

Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 53:4-7; Romans 3:25; I John 4:10; I Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21; John 10:18; Philippians 2:8; Galatians 1:4; I Peter 2:24; I Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 12:2; I Corinthians 15:20; Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 9:12-15; Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:2.

IX. OF GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, 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; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

John 3:3; II Corinthians 5:17; Luke 5:27; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 2:41; Acts 16:30-33; II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13; John 3:8; John 1:12-13; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9.

X. OF THE FREENESS OF SALAVATION

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

I Thessalonians 1:4; Colossians 3:12; I Peter 1:2; Titus 1:1; Romans 8:29-30; Matthew 11:28; Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 22:17; Romans 10:13; John 6:37; Isaiah 55:6; Acts 2:38; Isaiah 55:7; John 3:15-16; I Timothy 1:15; I Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2:4-5; John 5:40; 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; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; 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.

Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Zechariah 13:1; Romans 8:1; Romans 5:9; Romans 5:11; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 1:17; Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Romans 4:18; Hebrews 10:38.

XII. OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe the Repentance and Faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; 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; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 18:13; Romans 10:13; Psalms 51:1-4; Psalms 51:7; Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9-11.

XIII. OF THE CHURCH

We believe that a church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers of ordination are pastors or elders whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the scriptures; 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; 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; 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; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

Acts 2:41; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:11; I Corinthians 12:4, 8-11; Acts 14:23; Acts 6:5-6; Acts 15:23; Acts 20:17; I Timothy 3:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-13; Matthew 28:19-20; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23-24; I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 15:22; Jude 3-4; II Corinthians 8:23-24; I Corinthians 16:1; Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:32; I Corinthians 16:2; I Corinthians 6:1-3; I Corinthians 5:11-13.

XIV. OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer; in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's supper; in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

We have, from the organization of this church, used, and interpret these words to mean, the following:

By *bread*, we mean unleavened bread.

By *wine*, we mean unfermented wine, pure fruit of the vine, or juice of the grape.

Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 3:6; John 3:23; Romans 6:4-5; Matthew 3:16; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:41-42; Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-28.

XV. OF THE PERSERVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

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

John 8:31-32; Colossians 1:21, 23; I John 2:19; Matthew 13:19-21; Romans 8:23; Matthew 6:30; Psalms 121:3; Hebrews 1:14; I Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28; John 10:29; John 16:8; Romans 8:35-39.

XVI. OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; 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; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse 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.

Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17-18; Proverbs 11:31; I Peter 4:18; Romans 1:17; I Corinthians 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; I John 2:29; I John 3:7; Romans 6:16; I John 5:19; Galatians 3:10; Romans 7:6; Romans 6:23; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:34, 41; John 8:21; Luke 9:26; John 12:25; Matthew 7:13-14.

XVII. OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

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

Romans 13:7; II Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:17; Acts 5:29; Acts 4:19-20; Daniel 3:17-18; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 23:10; Revelation 10:6; Philippians 2:10-11; Psalms 72:11.

XVIII. OF THE RESURRECTION AND 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, we believe that Christ rose bodily “the third day according to the Scripture”; that He ascended “to the right hand of the throne of God”; that He alone is our “merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God”; “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; that the “dead in Christ shall rise first”; that the living saints “shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump”; “that the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David”; and that “Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet.”

*Matthew 28:6-7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; I Corinthians 15:4;
Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2, 4-6; Acts 1:9; Acts 1:11; Luke 24:51;
Mark 16:19; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 12:2; Hebrews 8:6;
I Timothy 2:5; I John 2:1; Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 5:9-10; John 14:3;
Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:27; Matthew 25:13;
James 5:8; Matthew 24:42; Hebrews 9:28; I Thessalonians 4:17;
Philippians 3:20-21; Luke 1:32; Isaiah 9:6-7; I Corinthians 15:25;
Isaiah 32:1; Isaiah 11:4-5; Psalms 72:8; Revelation 20:1-4;
Revelation 20:6.*

XIX. OF MISSIONS

The command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the churches.

Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

John 20:21, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Romans 10:13-15, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

XX. OF THE GRACE OF GIVING

Scriptural giving is one of the fundamental of the Faith.

II Corinthians 8:1, "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."

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

I Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Under grace we give, and do not pay, the tithe. "Abraham **gave** a tenth part of all", "Abraham **gave** the tenth of the spoils" (*Hebrews 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.*" (*Matthew 23:23*)

We are commanded to bring the tithe into the common treasury of the church.

Leviticus 27:30, "The tithe is the Lord's"

Malachi 3:10, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

In the New Testament it was the common treasury of the church.

Acts 4:34-35, 37, "And brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet... Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."