

Orwell Bible Church
Statement of Faith

The Bible

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God. It was delivered to man through verbal and plenary inspiration (Matt 5:18; 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16), whereby the Holy Spirit protected the human authors from error and guided them in the selection of words consistent with their individual personalities and stylistic differences (2 Pet 1:21). The result was a written revelation from God to man that is divinely authoritative, inerrant in the original writings (compare 1 Cor 14:37; with 1 Cor 2:13).

The Bible is the supreme and final standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried, and is entirely sufficient for its intended purpose (Luke 16:31; Acts 20:32; 2 Tim 3:14-17). We believe that correctly understanding and applying the Bible requires a consistently literal, grammatical-historical-theological method of interpretation. This approach recognizes the progressive unfolding of new revelation from God in various dispensations or distinguishable administrations/stewardships of God's revealed truth (John 1:17; Rom 16:25; Eph 3:2-4, 9; Col 1:25-27; Heb 1:1).

God

We believe that the God the Bible speaks of is the infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support, and end (Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16-17). The Bible reveals that God is a person (Exod 3:14; Isa 43:13; 1 Thess 1:9), known by His attributes.

God is holy, majestic above all creation, separate from all that is unclean (Isa 6:1-7; 1 Pet 1:15-16). He is self-existent (John 5:26), infinite (Ps 147:5), omnipotent (Gen 18:14), omniscient (1 John 3:20), omnipresent (Ps 139:7-10), eternal (Ps 90:1-2), immutable (Mal 3:6), and incomprehensible (Rom 11:33). Furthermore, God is perfect (Matt 5:48), all-wise (Rom 11:33), the true God (Isa 65:16), righteous (Ps 11:7), faithful (Lam 3:23), love (John 3:16), merciful (Eph 2:4), and gracious (Eph 1:7).

The one true God exists wholly and indivisibly, simultaneously and eternally, in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14). God is three persons in one essence. Each person is forever equally God, yet each forever functions differently from the other (John 15:26; 1 John 4:10).

God is sovereign over all creation, freely and wisely directing all things and events in accordance with His perfect will for His glory (Ps 135:6; Dan 4:35; Acts 4:27-28; Eph 1:11; Jas 4:13-15; Rev 4:11; 17:17).

All creation came into existence out of nothing (Heb 11:3) by God's supernatural and instantaneous work (Gen 1:1, 3, 6, 9) in six literal, twenty-four hour days (Gen 1; Exod 20:11). Every aspect of creation is upheld perfectly and wisely by the Triune God (Ps 104:30; John 5:17; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).

Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 5:17-18; 10:36). As God the Son He is coequal (John 10:30) and coeternal (John 8:58) with the Father. The eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ (Matt 1:23), having been conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20) and born of a virgin (Isa 7:14), so that He was and is sinless (Heb 4:15; 13:8). In the Person of Christ God and man are united with no mingling or confusion of the two natures so He is forever fully human and fully divine (Phil 2:5-8; 1 Tim 2:5).

Jesus Christ kept the divine law perfectly on our behalf by His personal obedience (John 15:10; Rom 5:19). His death on the cross (Matt 27:50) was a one-time (Heb 9:28) substitutionary sacrifice (Gal 1:4; 2:20) that fully satisfied God's wrath toward sin (1 John 2:2). This sacrifice was sufficient for the sin of all mankind (Isa 53:6;

John 1:29; 1 John 2:2) but is effective only for those who receive Christ with repentant faith (2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 4:10).

Jesus Christ rose miraculously and bodily on the third day (Luke 24:39; 1 Cor 15:4) and forty days later visibly ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11). He presently intercedes for all the saints (Rom 8:34), who wait for His return for them (1 Thess 4:13-18) and the establishment of His kingdom (Rev 19-20).

Holy Spirit

We believe in the eternal deity and personality of the Holy Spirit (2 Sam 23:2-3; Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 3:16; Heb 9:14). The Spirit convicts of sin through God's Word (John 16:8-11; 2 Thess 2:13-14), imparts spiritual life in the new birth (John 3:3, 5; Titus 3:5), and is the earnest of salvation (Eph 1:13-14). In believers He permanently indwells (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19), controls through their obedience to the Word (Eph 5:18; Col 1:9-11), assures of salvation (Rom 8:14, 16), illumines their minds to welcome, apply, and obey the Bible (1 Cor 2:14-16), and intercedes for them (Rom 8:26). The fruit of the Spirit evidences His control of a believer's life (Gal 5:22-23).

Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit incorporates every believer into the body of Christ (Acts 2:1-4; 11:15; 1 Cor 12:13) and distributes spiritual gifts to believers (Rom 12:6), God-given abilities for ministering to others in the local church (1 Cor 12:18; 1 Pet 4:10). Every believer receives one or more spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7) for edifying believers and serving in ministry (1 Cor 14:12; Eph 4:11-12). Certain of the gifts (e.g., tongues, prophecies, miracles, healing) were by their very nature miraculous, serving as signs or confirmations of the apostles and their message until the canon of Scripture (Acts 10:45-48; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:4) and the church's foundation were completed (Eph 2:20). With these established, miraculous gifts are no longer needed and thus are not given (1 Cor 13:8-10).

Angels

We believe that God created all angels (Psa 148:2, 5). Angels are spirit beings possessing great intellect and power (2 Pet 2:11; Matt 22:30), are unable to reproduce, and were all originally sinless (Heb 1:14; Gen 1:31). God created all angels to serve and worship Him and to minister to His people (Isa 6:1-3; Rev 4:6-11; Psa 103:20; Heb 1:14); therefore, angels are not to be worshiped (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9).

We believe that Satan, a created angel, in pride rose up against God (Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17; 1 Tim 3:6-7), became the author of sin (1 John 3:8), and led a large number of angels (demons) in rebellion against God (Matt 12:24-26).

Satan and demons are the enemies of God and seek to thwart His will (Gen 3:4-5; Job 1:9-11; 2:4-5; Matt 4:1-11; 2 Cor 11:13-15). They are the enemies of God's people, accusing and opposing them (1 Pet 5:8; Rev 12:10; 20:7-9), inciting persecution (Rev 2:10), sowing counterfeits among them (Matt 13:39; 1 Tim 4:1), and tempting them to sin (1 Cor 7:5).

Satan presently reigns as god of this world (2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2), but is subject to and limited by God (Job 1:6-12; 1 John 4:4). At Calvary Satan and his cohorts were defeated and are now destined for the lake of fire (John 12:31; 16:11; Heb 2:14-15; Rev 20:10).

Man and Sin

We believe God made man directly and supernaturally on the sixth day of the creation week apart from any evolutionary process (Gen 1:26-27). Man was perfectly made in the image of God to glorify Him forever (Gen 2:7; Eph 4:24; Rev 4:11), being composed of both material (body) and immaterial (soul/spirit) parts (Matt 10:28; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 4:12; Jas 2:26), and possessing a mind, will, and emotions free from the corrupting effects and enslaving mastery of sin (Gen 1:31; 2:7, 15-25).

Sin is the failure to conform to God's holy character and is the transgression of his holy will (Rom 3:23; 1 John 3:4). The first man, Adam, fell from his original righteousness and communion with God through disobedience (Gen 2:17; 3:1-19), bringing sin, guilt, and condemnation upon himself and mankind through their connection with him (Rom 5:12-19). Adam's physical descendants inherited from him a corrupted sin nature from which all sin proceeds (Jas 1:14-15). Being a servant of sin (Rom 6:20), every person is sinful in his actions, nature, thoughts, and omissions (Rom 7:19; Jer 17:9; Gen 6:5; Eph 2:3; Jas 4:17).

All men are totally depraved and spiritually dead, alienated from God and the life that is in Him, their minds, wills, and emotions now thoroughly corrupted by and enslaved to sin (Rom 6:20; 8:5-8; Eph 4:17-19). The unsaved, left to themselves, are entirely unwilling and unable to submit to spiritual truth and seek salvation (John 8:42-47; Rom 3:10-18; 1 Cor 2:14). The consequence of sin is death (Rom 6:23): spiritual death, the separation of the person from God (Eph 2:1); physical death, the separation of the body from the soul (Jas 2:26); and the second death, eternal damnation in the lake of fire (Rev 20:14-15). Man is thus hopelessly lost apart from salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 3:3-7).

Salvation

We believe that God's salvation of sinners wholly depends upon His grace through Jesus Christ our Lord (Acts 15:11; Rom 3:24; Eph 2:1-9), as there is not one who is righteous or seeks God (Rom 3:10-18; 5:8-10). Eternal life is a gift of God that cannot be earned in any way by man but is received by faith alone in Christ alone (Isa 64:6; Acts 18:27; Rom 3:28; 6:23; Eph 2:8-9).

Even though all sinners justly deserve nothing but eternal damnation, before the foundation of the world God was moved—solely by His grace, love, and according to His perfect will and good pleasure—to choose to save some to salvation in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:48; Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:3-14; 2 Tim 1:9).

Through the gospel message the Holy Spirit convinced us of our sinful condition (John 16:8-11; Rom 8:30; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:2-3, 23), the Father drew us to Himself (John 6:37, 39, 44, 65), and our hearts were opened to respond to the Word (Acts 16:14; 26:18; 2 Cor 4:6).

Having had our eyes opened to our rebellion against our holy God and truly seeing our hopeless and perilous condition before His infinite justice, we willingly turned from our wicked ways and trusted Jesus Christ alone for salvation (Acts 13:48; 20:21; 26:20; Phil 1:29; 1 Thess 1:9).

God forever united us with Christ in His body (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 2:16), justified or declared us righteous by the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness (Rom 5:1, 9, 19; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9), forgave all our sins (Acts 13:38-39; Eph 1:7; 4:32; Col 2:13) and brought us into His family (Gal 3:26; Eph 1:5).

God has separated us from the power of sin unto Himself (1 Cor 1:2; 6:11) and we must grow in holiness through the indwelling Spirit and our obedience to the Word (2 Cor 3:18; 7:1; Col 3:1-17; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:14-17).

God preserves us secure in Christ (John 6:39; 10:27-30; Jude 1), enables us to persevere in Christ and never fall away (Phil 1:6; 2:12-13; Jude 21), thus assuring us of eternal life (2 Pet 1:3-11; 1 John 5:13) until we are forever with Him (Rom 8:30; Jude 24).

The gospel must be proclaimed, heard, and believed for anyone to be saved (Acts 11:14; Rom 10:13-17; 2 Tim 2:10). While the salvation of any sinner is due entirely to God's grace (John 6:65; Acts 13:48), the damnation of every sinner is due entirely to their sin and unbelief (John 3:18; Acts 13:46).

The Church

We believe the body of Christ, the universal church, is made up of all believers in Christ (Col 1:18, 24). The church began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47), will continue until the rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18), and is distinct from Israel (1 Cor 10:32). The church is the primary means through which God is working in this age (Eph 3:8-10; 1 Tim 3:15).

Members of Christ's body are instructed to associate with one another in local churches (1 Cor 11:18-20; Heb 10:25). A local church is the visible expression of Christ's body in any one place on earth (1 Cor 1:2, et al). It consists of true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47; 5:14), who have been publicly immersed (Acts 2:41), share a common body of doctrine (Acts 2:42; Jude 3-4), and have an orderly walk (1 Cor 5:9-13; 2 Thess 3:6-14).

Local churches exist to glorify God (Eph 3:21) by winning the lost to Christ (Matt 28:19a; 1 Cor 9:14-23), building believers up in Christ (Matt 28:19b-20; Eph 4:11-16), and sending them out for Christ (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26). These purposes are fulfilled as the church meets regularly (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2) for worship, instruction, fellowship, ministry, and prayer (Acts 2:42, 47; Eph 4:11-16), as the gospel is spread (Acts 6:7; 8:4; 1 Pet 3:15) and new churches are established (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; Gal 1:2; Phil 1:1; et al).

The local church is an autonomous (self-governing) body. It alone has the authority to observe and guard the ordinances (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 11:23-24), elect its own officers, leaders, and messengers (Acts 6:1-6; 14:23; 15:3; 1 Cor 16:3), ordain men to the ministry (Acts 13:1-3; 1 Tim 4:14), discipline its members (Matt 18:15-17; 2 Thess 3:6), settle its internal affairs (1 Cor 6:1-5), and determine its relationship to other religious groups (Acts 15).

The local church is congregationally governed and chooses biblically qualified men to serve in the offices of pastor (also called overseer and elder, Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1-2) and deacon (1 Tim 3:1-13). Pastors shepherd, oversee, and lead the congregation (Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:1-3) and deacons help the congregation primarily in their material and temporal needs (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim 3:8-13).

The ordinances of the local church are baptism (immersion of believers, Acts 2:41; 8:38) and the Lord's Supper (observing "close" communion, Acts 2:42; 20:7, 11). Every believer is to be baptized as a public portrayal and testimony of his identification with Christ (Matt 28:19). Every member is to observe the Lord's Supper as a public remembrance of Christ's death and anticipation of His imminent return, and they are to do so regularly, corporately, and meaningfully (1 Cor 11:17-34). No saving grace is present in or conferred through these ordinances.

Members of Christ's Body are to be like their Head, Jesus Christ, Who has the preeminence in all things (Col 1:18). They are to demonstrate their love for God by loving one another (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:14-16). Believers love by humbly giving preference to one another (Rom 12:10; Phil 2:1-8; 1 Pet 5:5), meeting one another's needs (Acts 2:44-45; 1 Cor 12:26; 1 John 3:17-18), supporting those who go out for the sake of the Name (Titus 3:13-14; 3 John 5-8), and helping sister churches in their need (Acts 11:28-30; 2 Cor 8-9).

Members of Christ's Body are also to be holy, separate from all that is sinful or morally unclean (Rom 12:1-2; Eph 4:1; 1 Pet 1:15-16). A local church maintains its purity and testimony through the discipline of unrepentant members (Matt 18:15-17; 2 Thess 3:6-15) and separation from organizations or individuals that reject the Christian faith (2 Cor 6:14-18; 2 Tim 2:19; 2 John 10-11) or disobey clear Scriptural teaching (2 Thess 3:6, 14).

End Times

We believe we now live in the end times (1 Pet 4:7; 1 John 2:18). As members of Christ's body we eagerly wait for Christ's promised return when he will take all Christians to be with him (the Rapture, John 14:2-3; 1 Thess 4:16-17). The Rapture will be at any moment (imminent, 1 Thess 1:10), before the Tribulation (pretribulation, 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rev 3:10), and before the millennium (premillennial, 1 Thess 4:16; Rev 19-20). We will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account for our Christian life and service (2 Cor 5:10).

While we are in heaven, the Day of the Lord will commence as God judges depraved and unrepentant mankind (Rev 6:15-17; 15:1) and turns his attention back to Israel, chastising them for their unbelief (Jer 30:7). At the close of this seven year period of Great Tribulation (Dan 9:24-27), we will return with Jesus Christ to earth for the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:13-16; 19:11-19), Satan will be cast into the Abyss (Rev 20:1-3), and Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised from the dead (Dan 12:2-3; Rev 20:4-6).

Christ will then establish the messianic, millennial kingdom (Dan 7:9-14; Matt 24:29-30) and we will participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:7-9). In this kingdom Israel will be restored to covenant favor with God (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:11; Amos 9:14; Mic 4:7-8; Zech 10:6; Rom 11:25-27) and her land in faith (Gen 15:18; Isa 11:12; Jer 32:37-41), and the church will reign with Christ for a thousand years (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21).

After the Millennium the unjust will be resurrected, judged at the Great White Throne, and thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:5, 11-15) that was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). There will be a new heaven and earth in which God will dwell eternally with His people (2 Pet 3:10-13; Rev 21:1-3).