

THE BIBLE

The Bible is the written Word of God; that God, through his Spirit, authored the Scriptures using human agents (Exod. 34:27; Matt. 21:42; John 10:35; Rom. 3:2; 2 Peter 3:15-16). Thus, they are entirely true and without error (inerrant) (Ps. 19:7, 119:96). And they are dependable and will accomplish what God intends (infallible) (Isa. 55:11).

GOD

The One True God revealed in Scripture is Covenant Lord over all creation (Isa. 57:15; Ps. 113:5-6; Luke 1:48-49). This God is knowable because he has made himself known. His eternal power and divine nature have been shown to his creation through his creation (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20).

God is entirely self-existent and completely self-sufficient and is in no way dependent on anything or anyone (Ps. 50:7-15; Isa. 40:12-17; Acts 17:24-25). He does not lack anything nor does he change in the sense of developing or improving. What he is now is what he has always been and will always be.

God is personal (Gen. 3:8-9; Exod. 33:11; Luke 3:22). He is not simply a force or power in the universe, but a person with a will, who thinks, feels, and speaks. He interacts with his creation, particularly with humans, and by his initiative has relationship with them.

The Scriptures reveal God as both transcendent and immanent. His transcendence, which is related to his Lordship, speaks of his independence from his creation (Ps. 145:3; Isa. 6:1-5, 55:8-9; John 8:23). His immanence, which is related to his covenant nature, speaks of his presence and involvement with his creation (Jer. 23:24; Ps. 139:7-12, 145:18; Acts 17:27-28). Thus, God is both distant and near; he is both separate and intimate.

Triune Nature

The One True God is one, meaning he is whole and indivisible in essence (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-6; Rom. 3:30). This God has revealed himself in three persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14). These three persons are God and are equally eternal, powerful, and glorious (Isa. 6:8; 1 Tim. 2:5; John 1:1-3; Acts 5:1-4). They are distinct in their persons and in their functions (economical), yet of the same essence (ontological).

JESUS

Jesus Christ is the eternal pre-existent Son of God (Ps. 110:1; John 1:1-3, 8:58, 17:5, 24; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:1-3). Without surrendering his divinity, he voluntarily became a man (Isa.

7:14; Matt. 1:16; Ps. 40:6-8; Heb. 10:5-7; John 1:14, 18; Rom. 1:3-4; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 4:2-3). This incarnation, God adding humanity to his deity, was for the purpose of being the mediator (1 Tim. 2:5-6). As the God-man he possessed in his one person two natures – the hypostatic union (Isa. 9:6-7; Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:23; Phil. 2:5-7; 1 Tim. 3:16). These natures, the divine and human, were distinct but functioned in unity.

Christ's incarnation took place through his miraculous conception in the womb of Mary who was a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-38, 2:5-7). This conception was the special work of the Holy Spirit, which allowed no conveyance of a sin-nature in Jesus. Thus, he was fully human but without sin at birth (1 John 3:5). During his life on earth Jesus endured temptation of all sorts (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). These temptations were enticements to distrust and disobey God. He remained sinless (Isa. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:17-18, 4:14-15; 1 Peter 2:22).

Christ died by crucifixion (Matt. 27:35; Mark. 15:14; Luke 23:33; John 19:18; Acts 4:10; 2 Cor. 13:4). His death was an actual physical death (Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30; Rom. 6:10; 1 Cor. 15:3). According to the promise of God in the Old Testament and predicted by himself; Jesus returned to life after being dead for three days (Ps. 16:10; Acts 13:35; Matt. 28:5, 17; Mark 16:6). This conquest over death was an actual resurrection of his physical body (Luke 24:6, 39-43; John 20:14, 26-27, 21:14; Acts 2:32; 1 Cor. 15:4). Forty days following his resurrection, after giving assurances and instructions to his disciples, Jesus bodily ascended into heaven (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9; Eph. 4:10; 1 Tim. 3:16).

Having gone into heaven Jesus is now seated at the right hand of his Father with all creation subject to him (Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 9:23-24; 1 Peter 3:22). Though the exact time is unknown, Jesus will return to earth in the future (Acts 1:11; 2 Thess. 2:1-2; Matt. 24:36). He will come as Savior (John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:1-3), Judge (2 Thess. 1:5-9; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5), and King (Matt. 2:2; Luke 1:33, 19:12-27; 1 Tim. 6:14-15).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit is fully divine; being co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son. He proceeds from the Father (John 15:26) and is the third person in the Trinity; within which there is equal glory and majesty (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:18). His participation in creation (Gen. 1:1-2) and his inspiration of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16) attest to his divinity. Further, His divine attributes are revealed in Scripture, which include eternality (Heb. 9:14), omniscience (Isa. 40:13; 1 Cor. 12:10-11), omnipotence (Luke 1:35; Zech. 4:6), and omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10). Also, the Scriptures acknowledge that He is God by title (Gen. 6:3; Isa. 61:1; Rom. 8:9) and direct assertion (Acts 5:3-4).

The Holy Spirit is a Person. This is evident in that he possesses the aspects of personhood such as intellect (1 Cor. 2:10-11), emotions (Eph. 4:30), and a will (1 Cor. 12:11). Moreover, He displays his personhood as he teaches (John 14:26), speaks (Acts 8:29, 13:12; Rev. 2:7), sends (Acts 13:4), and leads (John 16:13-14; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18). The Bible also shows how he is treated as a person: being lied to (Acts 5:3), insulted (Heb. 10:29), and blasphemed (Matt. 12:31).

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit was instrumental in creation (Gen. 1:1-2, 26; Ps. 33:6) and is instrumental in sustaining life on earth (Ps. 104:30; Job 33:4). The ongoing ministry of the Spirit is to intercede for Christians (Rom. 8:26-27), to sanctify them (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 6:22-23), to empower them to be witnesses for Jesus (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8), and to edify the church through the proper exercise of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 14:3-5, 12, 39-40). Spiritual gifts belong to the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4) who distributes them within the body of Christ as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11). The Holy Spirit also convicts (i.e. convinces) people of their need for Jesus (John 16:8-11).

MAN

God created humans, male and female, in his image and for his glory (Gen. 1:27, 9:6).

Humankind's ultimate purpose is to love God and one another thereby glorifying God (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 22:34-40; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23; 1 Peter 4:11).

SIN

Sin is any act that violates the holy character of God and so dishonors him (Lev. 11:44; Rom. 3:23; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:4). It is a failure to truly love God (Deut. 6:5). All humans are guilty of sin (Rom. 3:23). There is no part of the human person that isn't affected by sin. Apart from Christ, humans are dead in sin, alienated from God, and on their own have no ability to positively respond to God (Eph. 2:1-5, 4:18; Rom. 3:10-11; 1 Cor. 2:14). Thus, sin for each human makes them objects of God's wrath; exposed to God's judgment and ensuing condemnation.

SALVATION

Salvation is a gift of God, which he has provided for all people by Jesus Christ (John 1:29; 1 Tim. 4:10). This salvation is offered to all people as God loves them and desires them to be saved (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4).

Conversion is the favorable human response to God's offer of salvation. It is inducted by the Holy Spirit's conviction on the human heart and mind (John 16:8-11).

Sanctification means to be set apart to God and from sin in moral purity (John 17:19; Rom. 15:16; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:1-7; Titus 2:14). This is holiness (1 Thess. 4:7). It is the progressive work of God in a believer whereby he or she becomes more and more like Jesus in character (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Peter 2:1; 1 Thess. 5:23-24). This work of God is something that people participate with God in (Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4:25-32; Col. 3:5-14; 1 Peter 1:3-11). Sanctification is brought about in the believer's life by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), through the Word of God (John 17:17) in the context of Christian community (Heb. 10:24-25), one degree of improvement at a time (2 Cor. 3:16-18) so that the will of God becomes more and more the desire of the believer naturally (2 Cor. 1:12; Gal. 5:25; Titus 2:12).

Glorification is the completion of God's salvation gift where the believer receives a new body and is made perfectly holy (1 Cor. 15:42-44; Phil. 3:20-21). This will happen in the future, at the return of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2; Col. 3:4; Heb. 9:28), and will be instantaneous (1 Cor. 15:50-57).

THE CHURCH

The universal church is made up of all true believers of whom Jesus Christ is Savior (Eph. 5:23) and Lord (Eph. 1:22-23, 5:24). These believers are those who by God's grace (Eph. 2:8-9) have been reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:22) and given new and eternal life (2 Cor. 5:17; John 3:3, 16). They were called out of the domain of darkness and brought into Christ's kingdom (Col. 1:13) and baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13). The church has been commissioned by Christ to bring the gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; 2 Cor. 5:19-21).

The local church is a community of believers in close proximity who have committed to each other to be the visible expression of all that the universal church is and is to do (1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2). Every member of the universal church should be a member of a local church as Christians have a duty and responsibility toward one another (Acts 2:42-47; Phil. 2:2-3; Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Cor. 14:12).

LAST THINGS

There will be a final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). Those who have not been reconciled to God through faith in Christ will be judged according to their works and consigned to everlasting punishment (2 Thess. 1:5-10; Rev. 20:10). Those who have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ will reign with Christ and enjoy eternal life (Acts 1:10-11; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 21:1-4).