

The Bible

The Bible is the Word of God to man. It was written by men inspired by God himself (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21). We believe it is the inerrant written revelation of God (Revelation 1:1; Galatians 1:11-12). It is both a record of God's dealing with His creation through literal historical events, and propositional truth as interpretation of those events. Both the Old and New Testaments deal with salvation history: the Old looks forward to the coming of God's Messiah, and the New is the total fulfillment of Christ's first coming and the promise of His return. The Bible is our infallible authority in all matters of faith and practice.

The Trinity

While the word "trinity" itself does not appear in the Bible, it is a useful theological term to express the concept of God as "three in one." The Scriptures clearly teach that God exists eternally and simultaneously as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

God the Father

There is one True and Living God, who is Spirit (John 4:24). He is described in the Bible as the Creator (infinite) of everything that exists (Hebrews 1:10-12). As Creator, He is the Ruler and Sustainer of life. He is not just a power or force but a Person, and is the God of perfect love and mercy as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. He is most clearly revealed in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3).

God is inexpressibly holy (Leviticus 11:44-45) and is completely worthy of all our love and trust. God is a unity (Deuteronomy 6:4), and this unity is expressed as three co-equal manifestations: God the Father; God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16, 17).

All that we know of God through the Scriptures, through nature and through personal experience is possible only because He has chosen to reveal Himself to us

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(Romans 1:19). The full revelation of what God is like is in Jesus Christ, and we shall experience the fullness of His presence when we see Him face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12).

God the Son, Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God the Father (John 3:16). He has always existed, and all creation exists because of and for Him (Colossians 1:15-17). He entered our world physically almost two-thousand years ago at Bethlehem, born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14). He was the literal incarnation (“in flesh”) of God (1 Timothy 3:16). He was fully God and fully man. By His coming He revealed the Father (John 14:8-11). He is the complete revelation of God (Hebrews 1:3).

Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. He lived a life full of compassion, healing, teaching and of love (1 John 4:8-10). He knew all that man thinks and experiences (John 2:25), yet He was without sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). He died on a cross for the propitiation of our sins (Ephesians 1:7), and our salvation is only through the merit of His blood on our behalf (Hebrews 9:22, Colossians 1:19-20 and Ephesians 2:8-10).

He was buried, and on the third day (Sunday) He rose literally from the dead (Matthew 28:6 and 1 Corinthians 15:20). He ascended back to the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:9) and is even now our Great High Priest, making intercession for His saints (Hebrews 4:14-16). Jesus Christ will return again to the earth (Acts 1:11) to gather His followers, to execute judgment over all men and nations, and will rule and reign in a literal kingdom (Matthew 25:31-34 and Revelation 20:4-6).

God the Holy Spirit

God is also expressed in the Scriptures as Holy Spirit. Like the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal. He is a Person, not a vague

God the Holy Spirit (Continued)

feeling or emotion. He was present in the Old Testament as He came upon individuals for particular need and service (Numbers 27:18 and Isaiah 63:11), but His presence and power are prominent in the New Testament, particularly following Christ's ascension and Pentecost (the birthday of the Church).

The Holy Spirit provides the inner divine power that God grants to all who are saved. He convicts men of sin (John 16:8-9) and causes them to profess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Romans 8:9). He is the blessed comforter that Christ promised His followers (John 15:26), and His chief role in the life of the believer is to glorify Jesus Christ (John 16:13-15) and to instruct in truth by revealing the Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit is present in the life of everyone born again (John 3:1-8) and bestows spiritual gifts for service in the church body upon each Christian, according to the will of God (1 Corinthians 12-14). All believers have been baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, and He fills with His loving power all those who humbly yield themselves to the personal discipline of the work and will of our Heavenly Father (Acts 9:17 and Ephesians 5:18).

Creation and Man

The Bible opens with the statement, "In the beginning God created..." This encompasses everything that exists, for He is "before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17). He created our world by speaking it into being ("Then God said" according to Genesis 1), and all of life and nature is to be regarded as the handiwork of the Loving God.

We are not on this planet as the result of impersonal evolution. God created man as the highest form of life in our world, created in His own image (Genesis 1:26). Man possesses a free will with which to obey or disobey his Creator, and the disobedience of Adam and Eve brought sin and its punishment by a Holy God into the world. Thus man, made for fellowship with his God, is alienated from

Creation and Man (Continued)

Him by sin and needs a Savior, a reconciler (1 Corinthians 15:21-22 and Colossians 1:19-20).

All men are participants in sin and are justly held accountable and responsible before God (Romans 3:23 and 3:19). The result of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and the personal and social problems we see around us in our world today are the direct result of disobedience and sin. Outside of fellowship with God, man is left to his own lusts and self-centeredness; he is controlled by self and Satan.

The most complete description of personal sin (its origin in the heart and its results) is found in the first chapter of Romans. Sin separates from God (Isaiah 59:2).

The “Good News” of God is that man can be reconciled to God; sin can be forgiven and its eternal consequences reversed. Fellowship with the Heavenly Father can be restored, and life can become a daily adventure of walking together with Him. Once man is made right with God, he is set free to be in the world the kind of social being God created Him to be. He is capable of the immense qualities of love, compassion and good works.

Salvation

The inevitable result of personal sin is complete separation from a Holy God. In this life, that shows itself in rebellion and frustration self-centeredness; in death it is eternal hell, the place of conscious punishment (Mark 9:47-48 and Luke 16:19-31). Hell was created for the devil and his angels and those who refuse to obey God will, as the results of His just judgment, spend eternity there.

The saving grace of God, however, is the opposite of condemnation and hell. His love through Christ provides reconciliation and heaven.

Salvation is not the result of what a person does, but is the result of what God has done. Because of man’s sin, God sent His Son into the world as our

Salvation (Continued)

Savior. He fully understood the eternal consequences of our disobedience, willingly took our place and punishment by dying upon the cross, and He rose from the dead to demonstrate the power of God to defeat sin, death and Satan. Only through His blood can we be saved (John 3:16; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7 and Hebrews 9:22).

How is a person saved? Man must first be convicted that he is a sinner (Luke 18:9-14), and this is the working of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). He must then repent, or change his attitude of heart toward his sin (Acts 2:38). Having repented, he must confess his sin and acknowledge it before God (1 John 1:9). He must then believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and fully trust Him for forgiveness and salvation (John 1:12 and Acts 16:31).

All of this is possible only because of the grace and mercy of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). Man has nothing to do with meriting his salvation; it is all of God. It is a free gift (Romans 3:24-25). And only through Jesus Christ is salvation possible; in all the world there is only one way to God (John 14:6 and Acts 4:12).

The result of salvation is two-fold: the sustaining blessings of a loving God throughout this life, and eternity in heaven with the Lord. Heaven, therefore, is an actual place. We believe, also, that since salvation is the free gift of a sovereign God, bestowed purely by His choice and leading, it cannot be lost. In our salvation we are eternally secure.

The Eternal State

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29 and 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5, 6, 12, 13).

We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the

The Eternal State (Continued)

Lord (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23 and 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6).

We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15).

The End Things

We believe in the “blessed hope,” the personal imminent return of Christ who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation Christ will personally and visibly return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Messianic Kingdom which was promised to Israel (Daniel 2:44-45; Zechariah 14:1-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10, 19:11-18 and 20:1-20).

The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11 and 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

The Church

The Church of Jesus Christ is not a physical building or place; it is the total Body of believers in Christ, those born again by God’s power (Ephesians 1:22-23

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and Romans 12:5.) The Church is the people of God, the “called out ones.” Scripture speaks of the church universal (the total body of redeemed of all ages) and the church local (an individual congregation).

The purpose of the Church is the eternal purpose which God has revealed in Jesus Christ: to witness to the world the salvation that is in Christ (Ephesians 3:10-11). This is accomplished through worship, fellowship and mission outreach. While the Church is now almost twenty centuries old, its purpose remains the same and its mission mandate is never outmoded: to preach, teach, and make disciples through the proclamation of Christ crucified (Matthew 28:18-20 and 1 Corinthians 2:2).

The means by which the Church grows in worship, fellowship and mission outreach is the filling with the Holy Spirit through the study of and obedience to the written Word of God (1 Thessalonians 1:8 and Acts 2:42). Thus, the Church becomes the visible place in society in which the Kingdom of God is brought into being and demonstrated here on earth. Believers are to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13-14), thereby revealing that this present world and its values are corrupt; and are passing away (1 John 2:15-17).

Because the Church of Jesus Christ bears this nature and outreach, it has both the privilege and responsibility to speak out on social and moral issues in society at large. Positions on social issues are not always easily arrived at, but the Christian must make moral choices which touch the lives of others. The Church must reflect God’s Word in such matters as public honesty and justice to all, particularly the poor and disadvantaged minorities. If Christ is truly Lord, that takes in the whole of a Christian’s life and inter-personal dealings.

Ordinances of the Church

As Baptists, we recognize two ordinances laid down by our Lord for perpetual observance: baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper. Neither of these saves a person; they are symbolic and experiential.

Ordinances of the Church (Continued)

Baptism for the Church was instituted by Jesus Christ at His baptism by John in the Jordan to signify the Kingdom of God is at hand (Matthew 3:13-17). In the Great Commission Jesus commanded by baptizing of all nations (Matthew 28:19).

Baptism is administered to those who have already professed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and have been born again. Immersion is the scriptural mode, for it is symbolic of the death and resurrection of our Lord and of the believer's identification with death to sin and the world and resurrection to new life with Christ (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism is an obedient public act of a follower of Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Supper was inaugurated by our Lord as a memorial in remembrance of His sacrifice upon the cross and the seal of the new covenant. The bread and the cup represent Christ's broken body and shed blood for our salvation. These elements are symbolic only. This ordinance is for all who profess Christ as Savior and Lord, and it points onward to the triumphant Second Coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Human Sexuality

We believe that God had commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. (Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5 & 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1 and 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of

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unborn human life. Abortion is murder. (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5 and 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24 and 49:1-5; Jeremiah 1:5 and 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

Tongues

We consider the demonstration of tongues to be inappropriate and not an acceptable part of our worship experience (1 Corinthians 14).

Spiritual Leadership

In light of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 we believe the church is to be led by qualified men.

Biblical Separation and Unity

We believe the saved should be separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ, necessitating holy living in all personal and ecclesiastical associations and relationships (Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Titus 2:14; James 4:4-5; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 John 2:15-17).