

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible, including the canon of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the new, whose author was God, was penned by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We believe in both the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original manuscripts and God's preservation of His Word throughout all generations. We believe in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures, which is God's full and final revelation of His will to man.

We believe that the King James Version, derived from the Masoretic Hebrew text (OT) and the Greek Textus Receptus (NT) is the best translation for English speaking people and therefore the Bible version we prefer to use. And we believe the Judson Bible is the best Bible translation in the Burmese language and therefore is the Bible version we prefer to use in that language. We believe the Bible to be our sole and final authority for all faith and practice. (Psalm 12:6-7; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:19-21)

THE TRINITY

The Godhead

We believe in one, true and living God, who exists in three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, equal in substance but distinct in persons, one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity. There is one person the Father, another the Son, and another the Holy Spirit, but one Godhead, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, coeternal, equal in glory and majesty. Such as the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit. This is an incomprehensible mystery clearly revealed in Scripture but received by faith.

God the Father

We believe in one God the Father, maker of heaven and earth and all things whether seen or unseen. God the Father was neither made nor created nor begotten but is eternal.

God the Son

We believe in one God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, neither made nor created but eternally begotten of the Father before all worlds (Colossians 1:16-17, John 1:1). God the Son was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). He became man without ceasing to be God, equal to God in His divinity and subordinate to God in His humanity (Philippians 2:6, John 10:30, Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 2:9,). He lived a sinless life, tempted in the flesh without possibility to sin as His divine nature always has the pre-eminence (2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15). We believe Jesus Christ died, was buried but gloriously rose again on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3). He presently sits on the right hand of the throne of God and intercedes for His children, those who by faith have received Him as Savior. He functions as our high priest and advocate (Hebrews 8:1, Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:1, Isaiah 53:12).

God the Holy Spirit

We believe in one God the Holy Spirit, neither made nor created nor begotten, but eternal, who proceeded from God the Father and God the Son. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Person who reproves the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the supernatural Agent in regeneration, indwelling all believers and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14).

DIETY OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

We believe that Jesus Christ became man while not ceasing to be God. He was both the Son of God and God the Son. For the early Christian church this was not a question to be answered but a doctrinal assumption (see Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed). The witness of Scripture is overwhelming regarding the deity of Christ.

First He is declared God within Scripture (Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1, Hebrews 1:8, Matthew 1:23 compare to Isaiah 7:14, John 20:28, Acts 7:59, Acts 20:28, Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 1:1, Hebrews 1:3, John 14:7-9).

Second, divine names and titles were ascribed to Him that are reserved only for God in Scripture such as Savior (2 Peter 3:18 compare to Isaiah 43:11), the "I AM" (John 8:58 compare to Exodus 3:14), the first and the last (Rev

1:17 compare to Isaiah 44:6), Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:11 compare to Revelation 1:8).

Third, He is the object of divine worship (Philippians 2:10-11 compare to Romans 14:11-12, Luke 24:52 compare to Exodus 20:4-5).

Fourth, He has divine powers: Offers eternal life (John 10:28), forgives sins (Mark 2:5-10), power of nature (Matthew 8:26-27), power over death (Luke 7:14-15, John 5:25, 2 Timothy 1:10), defeated Satan (Hebrews 2:14), omnipresent (Matthew 18:20, 28:20), omniscience (John 2:24-25, 16:30), immutability (Hebrews 13:8), eternity (John 1:1, Hebrews 13:8, Micah 5:2), impeccability (“sinlessness”) (2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15, 1 John 3:5).

Fifth, the Scriptures tell us He is the Creator (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, John 1:10, 1 Corinthians 8:6, compare to Genesis 1:1, Isaiah 44:24).

Sixth, Jesus is the subject of manifold prophesy in the Old Testament, speaking of the coming Messiah, his life, death and crucifixion (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 53, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 9:9, Psalm 22, Zechariah 13:6, and others, totaling by the count of some 191 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament).

No truth is more central to our faith than the Deity of Jesus Christ our Lord. The implications of the fact that Christ was God to the Christian faith are astounding. If we know that Christ Jesus was fully God, then we know that God humbled himself and was made in the likeness of man, and then subjected himself to the humiliation of sinful men, was beaten and marred beyond recognition, nailed to a cross subjected to excruciating agony, wore the filthy garment of every sin of every man, past, present and future, was separated from the eternal Father who loved Him eternally, bore the billows of God’s wrath intended for us, and purchased our redemption with His shed blood. If creator God did this for our unworthy souls, then we can take great comfort in the security and credibility of our salvation. On the other hand, imagine the fearful wrath of God that will be meted upon those who reject the divine sacrifice of His only begotten and reject the Gospel.

INCARNATION/VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the pre-existent, eternal Son of God

became man while not ceasing to be God. “The Word was made flesh” (John 1:14). And when “the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman” (Galatians 4:4), and “made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7). God the Son humbled himself took on flesh and “became obedient unto death”, that he might show mercy to sinful men by offering a path to redeem them from curse of iniquity (Titus 2:14).

We believe the Scriptures teach that Jesus was begotten supernaturally of the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born, can or will ever be born of a woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God the Son. (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:34, Matthew 1:18, Hebrews 1:8).

SUBSTITUTIONARY (VICARIOUS) ATONEMENT

We believe that Jesus Christ, fully man and fully God, the Son of God and God the Son, Messiah and Savior, died vicariously suffering our sin, in our place, shedding the blood that should have been our own, satisfying the legal obligation incurred through our sin (Romans 5:12, 6:23, 8:12). He was “delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25). As pictured in the lamb provided to Abraham in the place of his son, Christ was the Lamb of God provided in our place (Hebrews 10:1-8, 17-18, 9:22, 1 John 2:2, Isaiah 53:4-5). The entire sacrificial system of Israel was predicated on shedding blood for the remission of sins, of the sacrifice dying in the place of the sinner. Christ was the final sacrificial lamb, bearing the wrath of God intended for us (Hebrews 10:1-12, 17-18, 9:22, 1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:10, Titus 2:14). The shedding of His blood atoned for our sin. “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24)

BODILY RESURRECTION

We believe that Jesus Christ Our Lord rose in bodily form from the dead. He was crucified and died, was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). He showed himself alive, after His passion, in bodily form and was seen by the twelve, over 500 brethren, the apostles and Paul, for over 40 days. (Acts 1:3, 1 Corinthians 15:5-9). After His death Jesus appeared to the disciples and showed them the wounds in his hands, feet and side, to confirm that He was “flesh and bones”

and not a spirit and asked them to “handle me, and see” (Luke 24:38-39, John 20:27). In addition, the risen Savior even dined with the disciples on more than one occasion (John 21:12, 15, Luke 24 41-43).

IMMINENT RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD

We believe that the Lord Jesus will return to the earth in the like manner as he ascended to heaven (Acts 1:11). He will first return in His resurrected body to rapture the Church, to catch up His saints in the clouds during which the dead in Christ first and then those saints that remain (John 14:2-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). This truth is a great encouragement to the Church of the Living God and is so extensively and clearly taught in the Scriptures that it has been included in all the great creeds of our faith. Scriptures tell us this will happen “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” and that our resurrected bodies will put on incorruption, no longer subject to death (1 Corinthians 15:52-54). We believe that Scriptures tell us that although there will be tribulation and trials prior to the rapture, the Church of the Living God will be raptured prior to the Great Tribulation and the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:16-18, Revelation 3:10).

We also believe in the second coming of Christ, in bodily form as he left, with the Holy angels and His saints to establish His Millennial Kingdom (Acts 1:11). This is a truth established in an extensive body of prophecy in both the Old and New Testaments (Psalm 2, 110, Isaiah 9:6-7, Daniel 7:13-14, Zechariah 2:10-11, 14:1-9, Matthew 24:3, Luke 12:40, II Thessalonians 1:7-10, 2 Peter 3:10, Jude 14:15, Revelation 1:7-8). A literal reading of Scripture in light of prophesy supports the conclusion that this second coming is after the Great Tribulation and before the Millennial Kingdom is established. In the rapture Christ comes for His Church. In the Second Coming He comes with His church to establish His millennial reign. The major purposes of the Second Coming are to judge the world, deliver those saints who were saved during the Great Tribulation and to reestablish the Davidic Kingdom (Revelation 20:12-15, Matthew 24:22, Amos 9:11-15, Luke 1:32-33). At the advent of the Second Coming Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3). After the 1,000 years he will be loosed for a “little season”, after which time will be His final judgment, and he will be cast, with the beast and the false prophet, into the lake of fire, “and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). The Second Coming is at the very heart of the progress of Scripture and is the consummation of history and the Kingdom.

CREATION

We believe that God created the entire universe in six literal, twenty-four-hour days (Genesis 1:1-27). We do not hold to any theories which compromise the biblical record including gap theory, long day theory, theistic evolution, and progressive creation. We believe that evolution is a false theory and we boldly and unashamedly declare as truth what God reveals in His Word.

THE DEVIL

We believe that Satan was an angel, an anointed, high ranking cherub, created by God, beautiful, wise, and perfect in his ways, with moral agency/free will (Ephesians 6:11-12). In his pride he was lifted up and rebelled against Almighty God, desiring to be like the most high (Isaiah 14:13-14, Matthew 4:9). When he fell, he drew a host of angels along with him. Some of them are bound in everlasting chains awaiting their judgment (Jude 1:6). He is called the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), and the enemy of God (Ephesians 6:11-13). He is destined, one day, for eternal punishment by God and to be cast into the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels (Matt 25:41, Isaiah 14:15, Revelation 20:10).

We believe that Satan is a liar, deceiver and a murderer (John 8:44, Revelation 13:14-15). His goal is blind the hearts of men to the Gospel and hinder the will of God (2 Corinthians 4:4, Matthew 13:19, Genesis 3:1-7, Matthew 13:39). He walks the earth “seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). And he stands before our Holy God accusing the brethren day and night (Revelation 12:10). He is aided in his work by the fallen angelic host, over which he has dominion.

MAN

We believe that man was placed in the Garden in the glorious state of innocence, and that he was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), but having moral agency, the ability to make a choice (Genesis 3:11). But the serpent, the Devil, deceived him and he chose to disobey God (Genesis 3:13). Because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden, man fell from his sinless state and as a consequence

everyone that is now born into this world is a sinner, separated from God, and under just condemnation (Romans 5:12). All men are born corrupted by the seed of sin and are sinners by nature (Psalm 51:5.). All men are corrupted by a sin nature, and are sinners by behavior, by nature “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3, Romans 3:10-11, 23, Genesis 8:21). Man is born totally depraved and, without God, by himself unable to rectify his wicked state, on whom God will justly mete out His wrath (John 3:36). Without Jesus man is at enmity with God (Romans 8:7).

HEAVEN AND HELL

We believe in a literal hell where unbelievers will spend eternity in the flames of perpetual agony and a literal heaven where believers will spend an eternity in bliss with their Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. The end of every man is eternal life – those who tread the narrow path to salvation by faith in Christ Jesus to eternal life in heaven, and those who rebel against God and reject the offer of the Gospel, eternal life in Hell (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). There are only two paths, one to eternal salvation and one to eternal damnation (Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 25:46). You are either a child of God or a child of the devil (1 John 3:10), living in light or in darkness (1 John 1:5-6), and walk after the Spirit or the flesh (Romans 8:4-8). It is either a Christ filled eternity in heaven or a “Christless” eternity in Hell.

Heaven

We believe in a literal heaven where the saved saints of God will spend eternity (Revelation 21:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:1, John 14:2-3) . According to the Scriptures, Jesus went before us and will prepare a place for us in heaven, in His Father’s house (John 14:2). And, He tells us “I will come again” that “where I am, there ye may be also”. It is a place of incomprehensible worship, purity, beauty and peace that “God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). It is a place where the host of heaven will worship the Lamb, “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea” (Revelation 5: 8-14). It is a place of purity where nothing that defiles, is an abomination or lies shall enter in (Revelation 21:27). It is a place of incredible beauty and brilliance, adorned as lovely new bride, full of precious gems, with streets of pure gold, wondrously constructed (Revelation 21). And the glory of the

Lamb of God will be the light therein (Revelation 21:23). It is a place of perfect peace in which God will wipe away all tears, and there will be no more death, pain, sorrow or crying (Revelation 21:4).

Hell

We believe, those who reject Christ will die in their sins and then, at the appointed time, shall be raised out of the grave to the resurrection of damnation (John 8:24, John 5:28-29). The unsaved will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, where they “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10, 14-15, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, Luke 16:23, Revelation 21:8). It is a fearful place where man is eternally separated from God and His glory and is a place of indignation, wrath, tribulation and anguish from which there is no end (Romans 2:5-6, 8-9).

SALVATION AND JUSTIFICATION

We believe the Bible declares that Christ tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). We believe the Bible is clear that this is an offer extended to anyone who repents of his sins and trusts in the finished work of Christ (John 3:16, John 1:29, 1 John 2:2, 1 Timothy 2:4, John 10:9, Romans 10:13, Revelation 22:17, Romans 1:16, 2 Peter 3:9). We believe salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is wholly a work of God purchased by the shedding of the atoning blood Christ on the cross, and not by any work or merit of man (Hebrews 9:12-14, Titus 3:5-7, Romans 5:9). We are justified or declared righteous in light of the substitution of Christ for us, we worthy of just condemnation, to atone for our sins. Salvation is God’s plan of mercy to redeem lost sinners who he came to seek and to save (Luke 19:10). In God’s mercy and love, he sent his own Son, to be the propitiation for our sins, to bear in His own body the wrath of God and be a ransom for our sins (1 Peter 2:24, Titus 2:14, Mark 10:45). We are saved solely on the merit of the finished work of Jesus, who gave himself for us, the sinless lamb, shedding his blood to atone for us, to redeem us from our iniquity. We are justified, declared righteous, through faith in Christ (Romans 5:1, John 3:36, Romans 10:9-10, John 3:18).

Repentance

Men are born dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1, Colossians 2:13). No man comes to Christ except the Father draws him (John 6:44). God calls all men everywhere to repent of their sins (Acts 17:30,

Acts 3:19, Matthew 4:17, Matthew 3:2-11, Luke 13:3, Ezekiel 18:30-31). An essential element in Salvation is repentance from sin, awareness that we are sinners, and a fearful conviction that we are living at enmity with God's will and a desire to turn from that sin to the living God (Ezekiel 33:11, Proverbs 9:10, Ecclesiastes 12:13). It is a Godly sorrow that leadeth to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). It is not a work of reformation but a conviction of our sin and of our inability to reform ourselves, that our sure end is eternal damnation, and that our only hope is in Christ and Christ alone (Acts 4:12).

Regeneration

We believe that a person must be born again of the Spirit and become a new creature, wherein the Holy Spirit gives the person a new heart and a new spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17, Ezekiel 18:30-31). Regeneration is not a process but a momentary work of God in which the Spirit of God is imparted to the believer. The Scriptures teach that one cannot enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born again (John 3:3). Regeneration is work of the Holy Spirit in which one is born, not of flesh and blood, nor by the will of man, but of God (John 1:13). Regeneration is when he, who is dead in his trespasses and sins, is supernaturally quickened, or brought to life, by the Spirit of God as a new man in Christ (Romans 6:13, Ephesians 2:1, 4:24, Colossians 2:13). It is the moment at which eternal life is imparted to the believer. And the believer receives a new nature and a new predisposition to seek to obey God (Romans 8:1-2, Ezekiel 36:26-27). Through regeneration we are redeemed and made free from the penalty of sin, the power of sin and, one day, the presence of sin in our lives (John 3:16, Romans 8:1-2, 1 John 3:2, Revelation 21:27).

Sanctification

As opposed to regeneration, which is instantaneous, sanctification is a process carried on by the Holy Spirit of God, throughout the believer's life. It is an outgrowth of regeneration and is evidence of regeneration (James 2:17, 20, Titus 2:14, Ezekiel 36:27, Romans 8:2, 13, 16). It has a number of meanings.

In the first sense it is a process whereby the believer is set apart for God (1 Peter 1:15-16, 2:9). And in second sense sanctification is a continuing conformation and yielding to the Lord Jesus (Romans 8:29, Ephesians 5:1-2, Philippians 2:5, 3:10, Romans 13:14). And in a third sense sanctification is a separation from the world and from moral defilement. As a result of the working of the Holy Spirit, we believe that all the saved will live in such a

manner as to not bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations and from all religious apostasy is commanded of God (Romans 6:19, 22, Romans 12:1, 2, I John 2:15-16; II John 9-11; II Corinthians 6:14-17).

Sanctification is evidence of regeneration and as such all saints of God who are truly saved will exhibit evidence that they are being sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 26:18, Galatians 5:16, Romans 8:5-9, James 2:20, 1 Peter 1:15-16, 1 John 1:6).

Eternal Security

We believe that those who are truly saved are eternally secure and are kept by the power of God and sealed by the spirit of God forever (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13). Once a person is saved, he cannot lose his salvation and is “sealed” unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30, John 10:27-28). The sealing of the Spirit is of tremendous importance to the Christian and indicates his security, safety, and ownership by God.

ADDENDUM:

The Church

We believe the church is a local organized assembly of saved, baptized believers who voluntarily join together to carry out the great commission. It is also a place for meeting together as believers for the purpose of worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, and observing biblically mandated ordinances (baptism and the Lord’s Supper). The establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27, Acts 20:17, I Timothy 3:1-13, Matthew 16:18, Titus 1:5-11). We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. Christ is the only head of the church (Acts 20:28, Colossians 1:18, Eph 5:23, I Peter 5:1-4).

We recognize the ordinances of baptism by immersion in water and the Lord’s Supper as a Scriptural means of testimony for local churches in this age (Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 8:36, I Corinthians 11:23-26).