

Revelation

God is revealed in creation (Rom. 1:20), in Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1-3), in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10-11), and in the Scriptures (1 Peter 1:23-25). The sixty-six books of the Bible are the written Word of God (1 Th. 2:14; Heb. 1:1-2; Jn. 17:17). All Scripture is God breathed (verbal/plenary inspiration): the Holy Spirit dynamically superintended the verbal expressions of the human authors of Scripture so that the very thoughts God intended were accurately penned in the wording of the original manuscripts through the personalities and faculties of humanity (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 1 Cor. 2:13).

The Scripture is inerrant as to fact and infallibly trustworthy as to truth. There is but one true interpretation of scripture, although there may be several applications. The proper understanding of the native meaning of each passage is governed by the author's intent, canonical context, consideration of the various literary genres (e.g. narrative, poetry, parable), and the teaching of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 19:7; Mt. 5:17-18; Jn. 7:17; 10:35b; 16:12,13; 1 Cor. 2:14,15; 1 Jn. 2:20,27).

God

God is the one, triune, infinite, personal spirit who created and governs all things and who is the sole object of worship. God is absolutely set apart from and above the world as its Creator (Gen. 1-2, Ps. 33:6-9; Is. 43:7, 45:18; Acts 14:15, 17:24,25; Eph. 4:6; Rom. 4:17; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 4:11, 10:6), yet everywhere present in the world (Ps. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23-24;) as the sustainer of all things (Acts 17:24-29, Rom. 11:36, Eph. 4:6). He has always existed in eternal relationship as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each identical in nature, equal in power and glory, and having precisely the same divine attributes (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 100:5; 139:8; Is. 45:5-7; Deut. 6:4; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 10:18; Jn. 4:24; Acts 17:24-29; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:6).

God is perfect in all His attributes/perfections/qualities of being (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 18:30; Mt. 5:48), being the infinite (Ps. 90:2; Ps. 139; Rev. 4:8), self sufficient (Ex. 3:14; Job 41:11; Ps. 50:10-12, 90:2; Acts 17:25), eternal Spirit (Ps. 90:2; Jn. 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17, 6:16; Heb. 9:13), who is unchangeable in His being (Ps. 33:11, 102:25-27; Is. 46:9-11; Jas. 1:17; Heb. 1:10-12), knowledge (2 Chr. 16:9; Job 28:24, 37:16; Ps. 139:1-4,5,16; Is. 42:8-9; Is. 46:9-10; Mt. 10:29-30; Heb. 4:13; 1 Jn. 3:20), wisdom (Job 9:4, 12:13; Ps. 104:24; Is. 55:9; Rom. 11:33, 16:27; Eph. 3:10; Jas. 1:5), power (Gen. 18:14; Ps. 115:3; Jer. 32:17,27; Mt. 3:9, 19:26; Lk. 1:37; Eph. 3:20; 2 Cor. 6:18; Jude 25; Rev. 1:8, 4:8, 5:13), holiness (Lev. 19:2; Is. 6:1-7, 57:15; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:5-11), justice (Gen. 18:25; Ps. 19:8,9; Deut. 32:4; Is. 45:19; Rom. 3:24-26), goodness (Gen. 1:31; Ps. 34:8, 100:5, 106:1, 107:1, 119:68; Mt. 7:11; Lk. 18:19; Rom. 8:28, 12:1-2; Heb. 12:10), loyal love (Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 100:5, 103:8; Mt. 5:43-48; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 17:24; 1 Jn. 4:8,10; Rom. 5:5-8, 8:31-39), and truth (Num. 23:19; 2 Sam. 7:28; Ps. 12:6; Pr. 12:22, 30:5; Zech. 8:17; Jn. 17:17; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18).

God the Father

God the Father, the 1st person of the trinity, orders and disposes all things according to his own purpose and grace. As the absolute/highest ruler in the universe he is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. He created the universe apart from pre-existing materials according to his spoken word. He has decreed for his own glory all things that come to pass, and continually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and events. He accomplishes this without being in any way the author or approver of sin or abridging the accountability of morally intelligent creatures. He has graciously chosen from all eternity those whom he would have as his own; he saves from sin all who come to him through Jesus Christ; and he relates himself to his own as their Father (Genesis 1-2; Ps. 145:8, 9; 1 Chr. 29:11; Ps. 103:19; Jn. 1:18; Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 1:3-6; Heb. 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:17).

God the Son

Jesus Christ, the 2nd person of the trinity, is the eternal Son of God and the virgin-born Son of Man who was incarnated as the God-Man to reveal God, redeem human beings, and, as Messiah, rule over God's kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jn. 1:1, 3, 18, 29; 10:36; 1 Jn. 1:3). He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, for all things in heaven and on earth were created by Him – all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers – all things were created through him and for him. He himself is before all things and all things are held together in Him (Col. 1:15-17). In the incarnation Christ humbled Himself, becoming human in form and a servant by example (Php. 2:5-8). Christ surrendered nothing of the divine nature in taking on the human nature, either in degree or kind; however, He voluntarily limited the manifestation of these divine attributes. Although he was fully human, since he was also fully God, he was without sin as to nature and did not sin in fact (while possessing a will) (Jn. 1:14, 29; 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 2:9; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:21-24). By his sinless life, miraculous ministry, and substitutionary death, he satisfied divine justice concerning sin (Matt. 11:2-6; 12:28; Rom. 3:24-26; 2 Cor. 5:19; Heb. 1-3; 10:5-10; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10).

In the resurrection of Christ from the grave the Father confirmed both the deity of the Son and his acceptance of the atoning work on the cross, raising him bodily as a guarantee of the future resurrection to life of all believers (Matt. 28:6; Jn. 14:19; Acts 2:30, 31; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; Rom. 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20). After his ascension to the Father's right hand, the Father through Christ sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as a companion like to himself to assume the care and keeping of his own. He is seated at the Father's side performing the intercessory aspect of his high priestly work for believers (Jn. 15:26; Acts 2:33; Heb. 7:25; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22). Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity, the head of his body, the church, the coming universal king who will reign on the throne of David, and the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in him to save and forgive them from their sins (Isa. 53:10; Lk. 1:31-33; Jn. 5:27-29; Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; Rev. 20:11-15).

God the Holy Spirit

It is the work of the Holy Spirit, the 3rd person of the trinity, to execute the divine will with relation to humanity. The Holy Spirit participated in creation, the incarnation, the written revelation, and the work of salvation (Gen. 1:2; Matt. 1:18; Jn. 3:5-7; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21). His work began at Pentecost when he came from the Father and Son, as promised by Christ, to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ which is the church. The broad scope of this special divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, regeneration, baptism into the body of Christ, indwelling, sanctifying, instructing, empowering for service, glorifying the Lord Jesus, transforming believers into the likeness of Christ, and sealing and preserving believers until the day of Christ (Jn. 3:5-7; 14:16,17; 15:26; 16:7-9,14-15; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:22; 2 Thess. 2:13).

Angels

Angels were all created simultaneously by God as a great host of sinless spirit-beings with order/rank, most of whom kept their first estate of holiness and presently worship God and serve his purposes (Ps. 148:2-5; Matt. 26:53; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:14). Angels are messengers sent by God to proclaim the divine will (Lk. 1:19), can appear as humans (Heb. 13:2), and will be judged by believers (1 Cor. 6:3). One angel fell from sinlessness through pride, and influenced a large company of angels to follow him, who thereby are called demons. Scripture calls this angel the Devil/Satan/Serpent (Lk. 10:17-18; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:9; cf. Ezek. 28:12-19).

The work of Satan and demons is the attempted subversion and supplanting of the work of God; therefore, a spiritual war, which is unseen, is being waged between God and Satan which involves angels, demons, and humanity (Dan. 10:13; Eph. 6:11-8). By a subtle suggestion, Satan accomplished the moral fall of the progenitors of the human race, subjecting them to his own power (Gen. 3:1-7; Job 1:12; 2:6; Zech. 3:1, 2; Jn. 8:44; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:2). Satan continues as the enemy of God and the accuser of God's people and persistently seeks to counterfeit the works and truth of God (2 Cor. 2:10, 11; 11:13-15; Eph. 6:12, 16; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:10). Satan (and his angelic/demonic host) was disarmed and judged at the cross, although the sentence was not then executed. He will finally be consigned to the lake of fire at the end of the millennial reign of Christ (Gen. 3:15; Mt. 25:41; Lk. 10:18; Jn. 12:31; 16:11; Col. 2:13-15; 1 Tim. 3:6; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 12:9; 20:10).

Humanity

God created man/woman without natural processes in his image, free from sin; however, without the knowledge of good and evil. They were created with a rational nature, great intelligence, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 1 Th. 5:23; Jas. 3:9). They were created with the divine intention that they should glorify God, enjoy his fellowship, and fulfill his will and purposes on the earth (Gen. 1:26-30; Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). Adam and Eve subsequently fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the revealed will of God (Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1-19; 1 Tim. 2:13, 14). The human race became subject to the wrath of God and inherently corrupt. All are hopelessly lost apart from the salvation which is in the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Jn. 1:8). The fall of the race was an historical and non-repeatable act. Its effects are transmitted to all people of all ages, Jesus Christ excepted. All thus are sinners by nature, deed and divine pronouncement (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; Jas. 2:10).

Hades/Tartaros/Gehenna/Lake of Fire/Outer Darkness

Hades represents the Hebrew concept of Sheol; in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) Hades is translated as its Hebrew equivalent (though it also translates terms associated with death and the state after death). Hades/Sheol is where the dead were gathered (Ps. 16:10, 86:13). The Greek conception of Hades was that of a locality receiving into itself all the dead, but divided into two regions, one a place of torment, the other of blessedness (Lk. 16:23). In the New Testament, Hades is a place of torment, separated from God, having an additional negative force of awaiting judgment (Mt. 11:23, 16:18; Lk. 10:15; Acts 2:27,31; Rev. 1:18, 20:13-14). *Tartaros* was thought of by the Greeks as a subterranean place lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out (2 Pet. 2:4).

Gehenna (“the valley of Hinnom”) had been the seat of the idolatrous worship of Molech, to whom children were sacrificed by fire (2 Ch. 28:3, 33:6). On account of these practices, Gehenna was defiled by King Josiah (2 Ki. 23:10), and became associated (prophetically) with the judgment to be visited upon people (Jer. 7:32). Therefore, the New Testament authors used Gehenna to designate the place of eternal punishment of the wicked, generally in connection with the final judgment and torment by fire; both the body and the soul are cast into Gehenna (presupposing the resurrection) (Mt. 5:22,29,30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 23:33; Mk. 9:43,45,47; Lk. 12:5; Jas. 3:6). The **lake of fire** (the lake of fire burning with sulfur: Gen. 19:24; Ps. 11:6; Ez. 38:22) is a place of punishment and perpetual torment, the second death. The beast, the false prophet, the devil, death, Hades, the wicked (cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, immoral persons, sorcerers, idolaters, liars), and anyone whose name is not found in the book of life will be cast into it, relating it closely to Gehenna (Rev. 19:20, 20:10,14-15, 21:8). The **outer darkness** was a place of suffering (weeping) and despair (gnashing of teeth), exclusion from the Messianic banquet, apart from the presence of Christ (Mt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30).

Heart

The Law has been written in human hearts (Rom. 2:15-16; Heb. 10:16). The heart is the place of thinking, reasoning, and pondering (Mt. 9:4; Mk. 2:6-8; Lk. 1:51, 2:19, 2:51, 3:15, 5:22, 9:47). From human hearts emanates wickedness (Mt. 5:28; 9:4; 12; 13:15; 15:8,18-20; Mk. 3, 7; Lk. 1:51; 6; 16:15; Rom. 1:21, 2:5; 1 Cor. 14:24-25), doubt (Lk. 24:38), unbelief, and **belief** (Mt. 13:19; Mk. 11:23; Lk. 8:12,15; 24:25; Jn. 12:40, 14:1; 24:32; Acts 8:37, 15:8-9, 16:14, 28:27; Rom. 2:29, 6:17, 10:9-10). God knows the heart (Acts 15:8; 1 Th. 2:4; 1 Jn. 3:18-22). The Word of God is sown in the heart (Mt. 13:19; Rom. 10:8). The Word of God judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12). Christ dwells in our hearts through faith (Eph. 3:17). God has cleansed believers’ hearts by faith (Acts 15:9).

God has shone in believers’ hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). The heart is the place where the Holy Spirit is given (2 Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6) and where the Holy Spirit has poured out the love of God (Rom. 5:5). The greatest commandment includes loving God with all your heart (Mt. 22:37-38; Mk. 12:29-30). Believers are to obey (will of God), forgive, and love from the heart (Rom. 6:17-18, Eph. 6:5-6; 1 Pet. 1:22). Believers draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:22). The pure in heart are blessed and shall see God (Mt. 5:8). Believers are to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with their heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:18-10; Col. 3:16). Believers are to sanctify Christ in their hearts (1 Pet. 3:14-16) and let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts (Col. 3:15). When Christ comes, He will disclose the motives of men’s hearts and each man will receive praise from God (1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 2:23).

Gospel

The gospel is the good news of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15). The kingdom of God is the effectual spiritual reign of God as King in the present (Jn. 18:36), the realm in which God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10), awaiting the full consummation of the age after which God will reign over the new heaven and earth, residing with his people as their God (Rev. 21). The gospel is a fulfillment in the past (prophetic), a nearness in the present (the kingdom of God), demands a response in the present (repent/believe), and awaits the future hope of Christ's return. The message to be proclaimed is that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, He was buried, and He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-3). The gospel is to be proclaimed and obeyed (Mt. 24:14; 2 Th. 1:7-10; 1 Pet. 4:17-18).

Salvation

Salvation is received through repentance from sin/dead works and faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; it is the gift of God offered to all humanity by grace (undeserved) (Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 2:11-14; Heb. 6:1). Salvation results in righteous living and good works as its proper evidence and fruit. It will be experienced as believers submit to the control of the Holy Spirit in their lives in obedience to the Word of God. This is accomplished by conformity of believers to the image of Christ, culminating in their glorification at Christ's coming (Jn. 5:24, 10:28; Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:10, 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4-10; 1 Jn. 3:2-3). All true believers, having been justified, shall be kept saved forever (Rom. 8:1,38,39; Jn. 10:27-30; Phil. 1:6).

Church

All who have placed their faith in Christ are immediately united by the Holy Spirit into one spiritual body, the church, of which Christ is the head. The church began on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ. In addition to the spiritual union which extends to the entire body of Christ, the members of this spiritual body are directed to identify themselves with local assemblies (primarily on a house and city level). These local assemblies are to reflect the communion and self-giving love experienced within the triune God in their relationships, words, and deeds, intentionally making disciples of all nations (Mt. 16:18, 28:18-20; Jn. 17; Ac. 1:4-5, 2:46-47, 11:15; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23, 2:19-22, 3:4-6, 5:25-27; Col. 1:18; Heb. 10:25).

Within the context of these local assemblies, believers are to participate in baptism (point in time), after confession and belief in Christ (Ac. 2:41; 10:47-48), and the Lord's supper (ongoing/recurrent). Baptism involves the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God (Mt. 28:18-20). It is an identification with and participation in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-9). The Lord's supper was commanded by Christ as a remembrance of Him (Lk. 22:19-20). It is eating Christ's given body (breaking bread) and drinking Christ's blood (of the covenant: wine) poured out for the forgiveness of sins. In doing this, believers participate in the body and blood of Christ as one unified body (1 Cor. 10:16-17), experience reconciliation with believers or the discipline/judgment of God (1 Cor. 11:17-34), possess eternal life (will live forever), remain in Christ and He in them (Jn. 6:53-58), and proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:26).

Resurrection/Restoration

At death, the redeemed pass immediately into the conscious presence of Christ and there remain in joyful fellowship until the first or second resurrection. The unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment in conscious separation from God until the second resurrection. (Dan. 12:2; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 16:22, 23; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Php. 1:21-26; 3:10, 11, 21; Rev. 20:11-15, 22:3-5,11)

The Lord Himself will return like a thief in the night (1 Th. 5:1-6). Believers will not know the day or hour Messiah will return (Mt. 25:1-13); however, are commanded to stay alert (Mk. 13:31-37), interpret the signs/times (Jesus is near, right at the door), and live as faithful servants (Mt. 24-25). Christ will descend from heaven with a shout and those believers who remain will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air together with those who have fallen asleep in Christ. Then the believers will always be with the Lord (1 Th. 4:13-18). The first resurrection will occur prior to the millennial reign of Christ and will include those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. They will reign with Christ over His earthly kingdom for one thousand years as priests of God and of Christ and will not experience the second death (Rev. 20:1-6). The second resurrection will take place after the one thousand year reign of Christ. This is the white throne judgment. The Book of Life will be opened and the dead will be raised to judgment according to their deeds. Those who's names are not found in the Book of Life will experience the second death and be cast into the lake of fire along with the devil, death, and Hades (Rev. 20:7-15). The first heaven and first earth will have passed away; therefore, there will exist a new heaven and new earth where redeemed humanity will dwell forever with the triune God (Zech. 14:4-11; Rev. 21:1-4).