

WHAT I BELIEVE

April 22, 2011

THE BIBLE - I believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, but not including the Apocrypha, is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God written and thus completely trustworthy.¹ What follows is based on it:

THE GODHEAD OR TRINITY - I believe that there is one God eternally existent in three persons – God-the-Father, God-the-Son, and God-the-Holy Spirit. I also believe that he is/they are holy, immutable, incomprehensible, infallible, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, perfect, self-sufficient, transcendent, and unlimited, and that he is/they are fair, forgiving, generous, impartial, loving, patient – even long-suffering – and reliable.

GOD-THE-FATHER – I believe that the Father is the divine Architect who designs Universe and the divine Author who writes its story, of which the Book of Life is a part. Together the design and the story make up the Decrees of God.

GOD-THE-SON, THE LORD JESUS² CHRIST³ - I believe that the Son implements the Decrees of God. He is the divine Builder who constructs Universe according to the Father's plans,⁴ the divine Sustainer, who holds all things in Universe together by the power of His Word,⁵ the divine Director who ensures that Universe's drama follows the Father's script,⁶ and the divine Redeemer, who repairs and restores Universe's brokenness.⁷ I believe that the Son entered His creation once in the person of Jesus of Nazareth,⁸ who was born of a Jewish virgin,⁹ lived a sinless life¹⁰ (the only person ever to do so¹¹), performed many miracles, died on the cross to atone for the sins of all those who acknowledge Him as their Savior and Lord,¹² rose again as the first fruits of the resurrection,¹³ ascended to heaven,¹⁴ where He now sits on the throne of God,¹⁵ and will

¹ A corollary of this belief is my contention that, "Although the Bible is an historical, not a scientific document, its accounts of what happened in the past impose certain constraints on scientists and scholars. *If any scientific or scholarly theory cannot accommodate the chronology and events which the Bible records, then that theory must be either revised or discarded entirely*" (excerpt from Chapter 1 – Section 1E of my book, A Biblical View of Nearly Everything - through the eyes of a curious architect).

² Yeshua in Hebrew.

³ Mashiach in Hebrew, which has been anglicized into Messiah.

⁴ John 1:3, John 1:10 John 8:28-29, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 3:9, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2, Hebrews 1:10, Revelation 3:14, & Revelation 4:11.

⁵ Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3.

⁶ John 8:28-29.

⁷ Revelation 21:5.

⁸ Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 17:1-5, Mark 1:9-11, Mark 9:2-7, Luke 3:21-22, Luke 9:28-35, & 2 Peter 1:16-18.

⁹ Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, & Luke 1:27.

¹⁰ Hebrew 4:15.

¹¹ Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:10-12, & Romans 3:23.

¹² John 3:16-18, Hebrews 9:28, & 1 John 2:2.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:20, & 1 Corinthians 15:23.

¹⁴ Luke 24:51.

¹⁵ Mark 16:19.

come again in glory.¹⁶ Finally, I believe that the Son is the Promised Messiah of Israel,¹⁷ who now fills the three offices established by the Torah or Pentateuch¹⁸ - the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King – and that He is thus the sole mediator between God and men.¹⁹

GOD-THE-HOLY SPIRIT – I believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine Energizer who quickens Universe and breathes life into its flora and fauna – including mankind.²⁰ I also believe that he changes the hearts of those whose names appear in the Book of Life, enabling them (a) to accept the Son as their Savior and Lord (an event called Regeneration or Salvation) and (b) to turn from their sinful ways and become increasingly obedient to God (a life-long process called Sanctification).

CREATION - I believe that God created Universe by the power of his Word,²¹ that he did so *ex nihilo*,²² that he did so in six, twenty-four hour days, and that universe exists wholly outside of or apart from him. I believe that God created Adam and Eve to exercise stewardship over the earth and endowed them with almost complete freedom, requiring only one thing: that they refrain from eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Finally, I believe that God regarded “all that he made” as “very good.”²³

THE FALL – I believe that sin spoiled all of creation when Adam, being tempted by Satan’s suggestion to Eve that she and her husband could be “as gods” and decide for themselves what is good and what is evil, disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit, and that henceforth every man, woman, and child born into the world is (a) predisposed to sin, (b) alienated from God, who hates sin, and (c) utterly unable to do anything about this problem (The Bad News).

THE GOSPEL OR GOOD NEWS – I believe that the Good News lies in the fact that God took upon himself the burden of solving the above problem. His perfect judgment required the cross (a perfect sacrifice or atonement for sin); his perfect love put himself upon it (see above). His crucifixion atones for the sins of all who repent of their sins and accept Him as their Savior and Lord – they are otherwise known as the Redeemed - all of whose names appear in the Book of Life. He is the author of their salvation.²⁴ They do not merit it; it is theirs solely by God’s grace. They need only to acknowledge Him and what He has done to provide it for them: “...if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”²⁵

¹⁶ The first time He came in love and in the unthreatening form of a babe accompanied by singing angels; this time He will come in judgment and in the form of a warrior-king leading the terrifying hosts of heaven.

¹⁷ In Greek, the Christ; Matthew 16:15-16, Matthew 16:20, Mark 8:27-29, & John 11:25-27.

¹⁸ In Greek, Pentateuch.

¹⁹ 1 Timothy 2:5.

²⁰ Genesis 2:7.

²¹ Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, and 26.

²² In English, “out of nothing.”

²³ NIV Genesis 1:31.

²⁴ Hebrew 5:9.

²⁵ NIV Romans 10:9-10.

BLESSED ASSURANCE – I believe that one of the fruits of salvation is the blessed assurance²⁶ of the Redeemed that their salvation is secure, because it depends, not upon them, but upon Jesus, who has done everything necessary to accomplish it. “As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.’”²⁷

THE FALSE GOSPEL – I believe that, although it comes in many varieties, the essence of the False Gospel is that a person can earn salvation through good works – i.e. by saying certain prayers, by observing certain rites and rituals, by being generous with his time, treasure, and talents, by avoiding criminality, etc. God’s Word says, “There is no one who does good, not even one.”²⁸ Every person is a sinner and, no matter how hard he tries, he cannot be good enough. If he cannot humble himself, admit that he is unworthy of mercy, and call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is doomed for all eternity.

THE RESURRECTION - I believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life (eternal fellowship with God in Heaven), and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation (eternal separation from God in Hell).

GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE – I believe that God singled out the Jews – i.e. the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - to be the vehicle through which he would reveal himself and his purposes to the world.²⁹ They would be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation”³⁰ - i.e. the nation of Israel. They would be an example to the Gentile nations, receiving God’s blessing when they honored God and obeyed his commandments and suffering from God’s curses when they dishonored God and disobeyed his commandments. They would become the Oracles of God, authoring all the books of the Bible (God’s Word Written),³¹ and they would carry the seed of the Messiah (God’s Word Incarnate) down through the ages, to be born of a Jewish maiden at the appointed time in Bethlehem. God would initiate seven restricted or theocratic covenants with them, the last of which would be the New Covenant.³² This New Covenant would

²⁶ 1 Thessalonians 1:5, Hebrews 6:11, 10:22.

²⁷ NIV Romans 10:11.

²⁸ NIV Psalms 14:1-3, Psalms 53:1-3, and Romans 3:12.

²⁹ Grace, not merit, was the basis of God’s election of Israel. He told them “...the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people” (Deuteronomy 7:6-7). Moreover he called them “a stiff-necked people” at least five times (Exodus 32:9, 33:3, 33:5, 34:9 and Deuteronomy 9:13).

³⁰ KJV Exodus 19:6.

³¹ The arguments for Luke being a Gentile are not persuasive.

³² God instituted ten covenants. He initiated three universal covenants: (1) the Edenic Covenant regarding mankind’s mission and behavior, (2) the Adamic Covenant regarding the conditions that will hold sway until God’s curse on the earth is lifted, and (3) the Noachian Covenant regarding mankind’s unchanging mission and his need for government that will repress sin. God then initiated seven restricted covenants: (4) the Abrahamic Covenant regarding his election of the Jews to be his Chosen People, (5) the Abrahamic Covenant regarding his granting of land to the Jews, (6) the Mosaic Covenant regarding the behavior of the Jews, (7) the Covenant regarding Jewish prophets, (8) the Phineas Covenant regarding Jewish priests, (9) the Davidic Covenant regarding Jewish kings, and (10) the New Covenant regarding a new relationship

establish a new relationship between God and the Jews, and the diligent keepers of this covenant would be known as “the faithful remnant of Israel.” Moreover, this covenant would be open to Gentiles, and the Gentiles who entered into this covenant would join the faithful Jews in a “spiritual Israel.” Thus, when I pray to “Our Father” that “thy kingdom come,” I believe that I am praying for the coming of a Jewish Kingdom,³³ of which the Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, was, is now, and ever shall be Prophet, Priest, and King.

SPIRITUAL UNITY - I believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in Jesus the Christ or - perhaps more appropriately here - Yeshua Ha Mashiach.

between God and certain Jews, which would also extend to certain Gentiles. See Appendices 14A and 14B in my book, A Biblical View of Things, for an extensive discussion of covenants.

³³ As Dan Gruber suggested in The Separation of Church and State, Volume 1 – Copernicus and the Jews (2005), Messiah’s kingdom will undoubtedly be a commonwealth of nations similar to the British Commonwealth of Nations, in which each nation acknowledges the King of England as its sovereign, but otherwise is independent. I hasten to add that the Jewish kingdom of Messiah will bear little similarity to the current State of Israel, which consists mostly of humanists and talmudists who agree on little excepting the undesirability of having anything to do with Jesus Christ. After the Parousia, all Jews will acknowledge Him as Yeshua Ha Mashiach, the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:14-16, Revelation 17:14, 19:16).