

# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

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The fundamentals of the faith are Divine pillars upon which rests the Christian religion. The religious division which exists today represents departure from the fundamentals of the faith. The Lord's prayer for the unity of all believers in Christ can be answered only by teaching and defending the fundamentals of the faith. Jesus prayed, **"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me"** (Jn. 17:20-23). As space permits, the fundamentals of the faith will be identified and surveyed.

## THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The source of the faith is Divine. Paul wrote, **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). The Bible is the sword of the Spirit according to Ephesians 6:17. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in order to produce the Bible (2 Pet. 1:20, 21).

## THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is composed of sixty-six individual books written by about forty men over a period of about sixteen hundred years yet the Bible exhibits a remarkable unity in design and purpose. Five sections in the Old Testament fill out its thirty-nine books. These sections are: Law (5 Books), History (12 Books), Poetry or Wisdom Literature (5 Books), Major Prophets (5 Books), and Minor Prophets (12 Books). Correspondingly, five sections in the New Testament fill out its twenty-seven books. These sections are: Gospel Accounts (4 Books), History (1 Book), Letters or Epistles to Individual Christians or Congregations (14 Books), General Epistles or Letters (7 Books), and Prophecy (1 Book). These sixty-six books which are inspired of God are united by a common character in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:24) and a common theme, the salvation of all men everywhere in the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18).

## THE COMPLETENESS OF THE BIBLE

Since the Bible contains "all things necessary to life and godliness" and prohibits additions, alterations, or subtractions, it contains the complete will of God as he has chosen to reveal Himself to man (2 Pet. 1:3; Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:5, 6; Rev. 22:18, 19). A

passage cited earlier, 2 Timothy 3:17, declares that the person of faith is "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Modern attempts like the Book of Mormon, Catechisms, Manuals, and Disciplines which are supposed to supplement the Bible constitute accursed error, for the Bible says, **"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"** (Gal. 1:6-9).

### **THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE BIBLE**

Since God is the author of the Bible, it manifests His infallibility. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). The truthfulness of God is unchanging (Heb. 6:18). One of the "good and perfect gifts" that has come down from above is the Bible. James wrote, **"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures"** (Jas. 1:17, 18). It is interesting that immediately following James reference to "good and perfect gifts" he next discusses the Will of God, the Word of Truth.

The Word of God is specifically designed to accomplish God's purpose in the world. Isaiah the prophet wrote, **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"** (Isa.55:8-11).

### **THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF THE BIBLE**

As the Word of God, the Bible carries the assurance that it will stand forever. The Psalmist declared, **"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"** (Psa. 119:89). The Lord Himself said, **"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"** (Matt. 24:35). The indestructibility of the Bible is guaranteed in another statement of Christ in which He said, **"If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken"** (Jn. 10:35).

### **THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE**

A pressing need exists especially among the children of God today for the all-sufficiency of the Bible to be stressed. As more and more mimic the denominations, the surpassing value of the Bible to "thoroughly furnish unto all good works" should be

elevated in the thinking and practice of members of the church of Christ. Bill Hybels, founder of the Willow Creek Community Church, in his book *Rediscovering Church* and Rick Warren in his book *The Purpose Driven Church* have captured the attention of many in the denominations and some in the church of Christ. These works of mere men are viewed as containing excellent strategies for church growth. They are the real source from which five Community Churches have sprung up among the churches of Christ in Memphis. The pattern they represent has replaced the New Testament pattern in those Community Churches. These Community Churches are being accepted by the churches of Christ as is evidenced by the inclusion of the Cordova Community Church in the area church directory published by the Harding Graduate School of Religion.

The Bible is God's all-sufficient rule of faith and practice regarding all matters including the important subject of church growth. If the apostles penned the New Testament detailing every aspect of the establishment, growth, and development of the church in the first century, no one today without the credentials and authority of an apostle should be elevated in esteem above them in learning what should and must be done to advance the gospel of Christ through Whom God is to be glorified through the church world without end (Eph. 3:21).

The all-sufficiency of the Bible not only pertains to the subject of evangelism but to all things necessary to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Matters like personal spiritual growth and development, marriage relations, family concerns, church organization, reverent worship, and vocational responsibilities just to name a few are all discussed in great detail in the Word of God. In fact, according to the apostle Paul, not one good work which may be done by a faithful child of God is omitted from inclusion in the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:17). Who would prefer the word of limited, fallible human beings over the Word of the living God Who created all things and by Whom all things continue to be perpetuated?

## **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Basic to the establishment of a relationship with Deity is an understanding and appreciation for the church of Christ. Jesus in Matthew 16:18 promised to build the church. In Acts 2, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon His chosen apostles and through the preaching of the gospel the church was established. Obedient believers were added to it (Acts 2:47). It was in reference to the church of Christ that the apostle Paul said, "There is one body" (Eph. 4:5) and "there is but one body" (1 Cor. 12:20). Anyone who does not understand the nature of the church of Christ needs to be grounded in this important fundamental of the faith.

## **THE PLAN OF SALVATION**

The gospel plan of salvation is another vital element of saving faith. This plan was devised by God, The Father from eternity past (Eph. 3:11). The Holy Spirit of God revealed the plan to a lost humanity (1 Cor. 2:9-13). And, Jesus Christ, the Son, carried out the plan. Elements crucial to the plan were the virgin birth of Jesus (Isa. 7:14, Matt.

1:21-23), the incarnation of Christ (Phil. 2:5-8, Heb. 2:14-18), the sinless life and atoning death (1 Pet. 2:22-25, Jn. 3:16, Col. 1:14), the bereaved burial (Matt. 27:55-61), the triumphant resurrection (Rom. 1:1-4), the ascension (Acts 1:9-11), the coronation (Acts 2:14-36), and the officiation of Christ as the head of the church (Eph. 4:7-16).

Obedience to the gospel includes: Hearing the gospel (Eph.1:13), believing (Acts 15:7-9), repenting of sins (Lk. 13:3), confessing Christ (Rom. 10:9, 10), and baptism into Christ (Rom. 6:3-5). "Believest thou this?" (Jn. 11:26).