

The Primary Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith

The primary fundamental doctrines are those which no person can deny and still be a Christian. That is to say, if a person denies one or more of these doctrines, that person is not a Christian, does not have the forgiveness of sins, and shall suffer eternal damnation. Over the years theologians have described these articles in different ways. But the following list includes all of the doctrines that must be believed.

1. The knowledge of sin and its consequences.

- Isaiah 64:6
We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.
- Ezekiel 18:20
The soul that sinneth, it shall die.
- Romans 3:12, 23
There is none that doeth good, no not one, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
- Romans 6:23
The wages of sin is death.

2. The doctrine of the Person of Christ (true man and true God)

A. That Christ is true man

- 1 Timothy 2:5
There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.
- Luke 21:27
And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

B. That Christ is true God.

- John 1:1, 14
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

- Colossians 2:9
For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the deity bodily.
- John 10:30
I and the Father are one.

3. The doctrine of the work of Christ

. He lived a sinless life for us.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21
God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Hebrews 4:15b
[Christ] was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

A. He died for the sins we committed

- John 1:29
Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.
- John 3:16
God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
God made Him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
- 1 Peter 1:18-19
Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.
- Romans 5:10-11
For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

- 2 Corinthians 5:19
God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them.
- 1 John 2:2
He [Jesus] is the propitiation [i.e., wrath appeasement] for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

4. **The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity**

By confessing that we believe in the Trinity, we mean to say the following:

There is only one true God, and that

- Deuteronomy 6:4
- 1 Timothy 2:5
- Ephesians 4:6
- Isaiah 45:22

A. The one true God exists in three distinct and coequal Persons, namely, God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit.

1. The Father is God.

- 2 Peter 1:17
- 1 Corinthians 8:6
- Philippians 2:11
- John 17:1-5

2. The Son is God.

- John 1:1, 14
- John 8:58 (together with Exodus 3:14)
- John 10:30-33 (together with Leviticus 24:16)

- John 20:28
- Colossians 2:9
- Isaiah 9:6
- Isaiah 44:6 and Rev. 22:12-13, 16

3. The Holy Spirit is God.

- Acts 5:1-4 (the Holy Spirit is identified as God)
- Acts 13:2 (the Holy Spirit has personal attributes)

In the Athanasian Creed we confess the following:

Whoever will be saved shall, above all else, hold the Christian faith, which faith, except everyone keeps whole and undefiled without doubt he will perish eternally. And the Christian faith is this, that we worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three eternal but one eternal. As there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. . . This is the Christian faith which, except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

5. **The Doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (the central doctrine of the Christian faith).**

- Romans 3:28
Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified [declared righteous] by faith without the deeds of the law.

- Ephesians 2:8-9
For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.
- Galatians 2:16
Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

6. The Doctrine of the bodily resurrection of Christ.

- 1 Timothy 1:19-20
- 2 Timothy 2:17-18
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-19