

Impact Core Beliefs

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) God is eternal. He has no beginning or end, He just is.¹ "In the beginning" refers to the beginning of time as we know it. There was nothing, and then "God created." "The heavens and the earth" refer to the universe as we know it, and everything that is on this earth, including man.²

God created the universe and everything in it to glorify Himself.³ God created man for the same reason, as well as to have an intimate personal relationship with Him.⁴ The first people, Adam and Eve, were placed in the Garden of Eden where everything they needed for life was provided. This included physical needs such as food, water, and oxygen, as well as spiritual needs: they had a perfect relationship and walked with God in the Garden.⁵ That perfection was broken when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. They ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God had commanded them not to eat from. When that happened, sin entered the world and with sin, death.⁶

1. *Exodus 3:14, Deuteronomy 33:27, Isaiah 9:6* 2. *Genesis 1* 3. *1 Chronicles 16:29, Isaiah 6:3, 66:1-2, Romans 11:36* 4. *Isaiah 43:7, Hosea 6:3, John 17:3, Romans 9:23, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 19-20, 2 Peter 1:3* 5. *Genesis 2-3:9* 6. *Genesis 3:10-24*

I. God

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD.¹ He reveals Himself to mankind as three persons: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each with distinct attributes, but no separation or division of nature, essence, or being.² He is eternal, and infinite in holiness.³ He is everywhere at all times (omnipresent),⁴ all-powerful (omnipotent),⁵ and all-knowing (omniscient).⁶ He created time and space, therefore He is not bound by the limitations of time or space. He is the living creator and active ruler of the universe.⁷

1. *Isaiah 45:14-25, Jude 25* 2. *Genesis 1:1-2/John 1:1-3, 14, Matthew 3:16-17, 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:35* 3. *Revelation 1:8, 4:8, 11* 4. *Psalms 33:13, 139:7-12, 145:18, Jeremiah 23:23-24, Matthew 28:20* 5. *Job 40:6-42:2, Isaiah 14:27, Revelation 11:17, 19:6* 6. *Psalms 139:4, 15-16, Romans 11:33, Hebrews 4:13* 7. *Psalms 98:9, Isaiah 45:18*

A. God the Father

- The Father is sovereign over all (*Psalms 115:3, Isaiah 40:25, 66:1-2a, Daniel 4:35*)
- He created man to glorify Him and have an intimate, personal relationship with Him (*Isaiah 43:7, John 17:3*)
- He has provided a way, through His Son, for mankind to have that intimate fellowship with Him (*John 3:16, 17:3*)
- He has a plan and purpose for every person on earth (*Jeremiah 29:11*)
- He is Father to all who believe in His Son (*Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6*)

B. God the Son

- Jesus Christ is eternal and has been and always will be God (*John 1:1, 10:30*)
- He came to the earth in the form of a man, born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:34-35, Galatians 4:4*)
- While on this earth He was fully man and fully God (*John 10:30-38, Philippians 2:5-11*)
- He lived a sinless life (*John 18:38, 19:4, 6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:21-22*)
- He willingly died, as a man, on the cross for the sins of mankind. This enables man to be reconciled to God (*Matthew 26:39, Romans 3:23-26, 5:1, Philippians 2:8*)
- He descended into Hell (*Matthew 12:40, Ephesians 4:7-10*)
- Being fully God, He has power over death. God the Father, through the Holy Spirit, raised Christ's human body from the dead, defeating death, three days later (*Matthew 17:22-23, 28:5-6, Mark 16:6, Luke 24:36-43, Romans 8:11, 10:9, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4*)

Impact Core Beliefs

- Through this victory, God raises Christians to be with Him when their mortal bodies die (*Romans 6:4-5, 2 Corinthians 4:14*)
- He ascended back to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father (*Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:9, Colossians 3:1*)
- He is the only way to heaven, perfect in truth, and the only provider of eternal life (*John 14:6*)
- He is coming back to judge the earth, defeat Satan, and bring all believers home to Heaven (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, Revelation 20:7 - 21:8*)

C. God the Holy Spirit

- When someone accepts the redeeming work of Christ's death on the cross, the Holy Spirit takes residence in their spirit (*Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17*)
- It is by His regenerating work that salvation is possible (*Titus 3:5*)
- Everyone is destined for eternal death because of sin. The Holy Spirit gives life to everyone who accepts the gift of Christ (*Romans 6:23, 8:10-11*)
- When the Spirit takes residence in someone, He seals them as a Christian and guarantees that they will be in heaven upon earthly death (*Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30*)
- Through the work of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, Christians are able to call God 'Father' (*Galatians 4:6-7*)
- Through the work of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, Christians can come before God the Father in prayer (*Hebrews 4:15-16, 1 Peter 3:12*)
- After coming to faith in the redeeming work of Christ, Christians are able to glorify God and worship Him in the Spirit through their actions (*Romans 12:1, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:27*)
- The Holy Spirit imparts gifts to every believer. Every believer and every gift has a place in the Kingdom of God (*1 Corinthians 12:4-31*)
- Spiritual gifts are for the glory of God and for the edification and unity of all believers (*Ephesians 4:11-16*)

II. Scripture

- The Bible is the eternal, infallible word of the one true God (*Psalms 119:9-11, 105, Ephesians 6:17, Colossians 3:16*)
- The Bible contains true historical events, as well as truth about life and death (*John 17:17, 2 Timothy 2:15*)
- God reveals Himself, His characteristics, and covenants to us in the Bible (*Genesis 8:20-22, 15:1-21, 17:1-14, 26:1-5, 35:9-15, Psalm 18:2, 23:1-6, 27:1-3, 60:12, 98:9, 99:9, Philippians 4:13, 19*)
- The Word of God is also living, meaning that the teachings of the Bible apply just as much today as they did when they were written (*Hebrews 4:12, 1 Peter 1:23*)
- While teaching, Jesus told many stories. These aren't literal accounts of actual events, they are parables: stories used to illustrate a point or teaching (*Matthew 13:1-50, 25:14-30*)
- The writers of the Bible were divinely inspired by God (*2 Peter 1:20-21*)
- The Bible has authority over any and all teachings of man (*Psalms 19:7-8, Proverbs 30:5-6, 2 John 9-10*)
- The Bible is complete as it is, and any attempt by any man to add to or take away from the truth revealed in the Bible is heresy (*Deuteronomy 4:2, Revelation 2:18-19*)

III. Hell and Satan

A. Hell

Impact Core Beliefs

- Hell is a real place, where the wrath of God is poured out on the unrighteous, a lake of fire, brimstone, sulfur, eternal darkness, pain and suffering (*Matthew 8:12, 13:49-50, 22:13, 24:51, Romans 9:22, 2 Peter 2:4 Revelation 20:14-15*)
- Hell was originally created for Lucifer (Satan) and his angels (demons) who rebelled against God, but when Satan embodied himself as the serpent in the Garden of Eden and led Adam and Eve into sin, Hell became the final residing place for all who die, having remained dead in their sin. More clearly stated, it is the destination for all who haven't accepted the gift of Christ, whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life (*Revelation 20:14-15*)

B. Satan

Satan was once the highest ranking angel, the Day Star, son of Dawn. He became proud and tried to make himself like God. God cast him out of heaven and away from His presence. Satan's home is now Sheol, or Hell.¹ Satan is also the father of this world, lying to everyone in it.² Satan's goal is to steal, kill and destroy the lives of everyone in the world.³ He seeks to destroy Christians by: Accusing them and getting them to question their faith,⁴ Always looking for a weakness he can pounce on,⁵ Tempting Christians by enticing them with the things of this world and causing them to fall into sin and out of fellowship with God.⁶ He seeks to destroy non-Christians by blinding them to the saving truth of the Gospel.⁷

1. *Isaiah 14:12-15* 2. *John 8:44* 3. *John 10:10* 4. *Revelation 12:10* 5. *1 Peter 5:8* 6. *Matthew 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 3:5* 7. *2 Corinthians 4:4*

- God has given Satan limited power in this world, but ultimately Satan has been defeated by Christ. One day Christ will permanently cast Satan into the pit of Hell (*Job 1:6-12, 2:1-6, Psalm 60:12, Luke 10:17-19, 1 John 5:4-5, Revelation 20:7-10*)
- We need to be aware of and understand his power, but not be afraid of it, because God is more powerful (*Isaiah 40:25, Romans 16:20*)

Satan has many names and characteristics, including:

- Adversary of Christians (*1 Peter 5:8*)
- Devil (*Matthew 4:1*)
- Disguised as an angel of light (*2 Corinthians 11:14*)
- Father of Lies (*John 8:44*)
- Father/god of this World (*John 8:44, 2 Corinthians 4:4*)
- Lucifer or false morning star, a former angel (*Isaiah 14:12-15*)
- Man of Sin (*Ezekiel 28:12-19, 2 Thessalonians 2:3*)
- Tempter (*Matthew 4:3*)
- Wicked One/Evil One (*Matthew 13:19*)

IV. Man

- Every person is created in the image of God with a mortal body and immortal soul (*Genesis 1:27, 1 Corinthians 15:53*)
- Each person has their own unique purpose and place in this world (*Psalm 139:13-14, Ephesians 2:10*)
- Everyone is born spiritually dead, and inherently evil, there is no good in anyone apart from God (*Psalm 51:5, Romans 3:10-12,23*)
- Everyone is responsible for the decisions they make and the sin they commit throughout their entire life (*Deuteronomy 10:12-13, Micah 6:8, Romans 1:32, 2:6-10, 5:12*)
- Apart from God, everyone is destined for eternal punishment (*Romans 6:23, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9*)

Impact Core Beliefs

- Through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus, man can be reconciled to God, their sin paid for, and their spirit raised up to be with Him in heaven when their mortal body dies (*Romans 3:23-30, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*)

V. Salvation and Election

A. Salvation

There are three terms people use to help describe salvation: Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification

Justification - Being made just: when one is declared not guilty before God and God credits the righteousness of Christ to that person. When a person becomes a Christian, Christ's sacrifice covers their sin and the wrath and justice of God is satisfied (*Romans 5:15-18*)

Sanctification - Being made holy or Christ-like: the lifelong process of the Holy Spirit preparing Christians for eternal life. Sanctification is the Holy Spirit changing a person's heart, mind, and will, making them Christ-like (*Ezekiel 20:12, Romans 6:19,22, 2 Thessalonians 2:13*)

Glorification - The culmination of salvation: when Christ returns, all believers will be given a spiritual body and glorified with Him in heaven (*1 Corinthians 15:35-49, Colossians 3:3-4,*)

- Salvation is a free gift available to all (*Acts 2:21, 16:30-31*)
- God desires everyone to come to the knowledge of, and faith in Him (*2 Peter 3:9*)
- If you repent of your sin, confess that Jesus is Lord, and believe that God raised Him from the dead, you will receive the gift of salvation (*Psalms 7:12, Mark 1:15, Acts 3:18-19, Romans 10:9-10*)
- Jesus' death was and is the only way for man to be reconciled to God (*John 14:6*)
- Salvation is entirely by the grace of God, through the redeeming work of the Holy Spirit (*Titus 3:5*)
- There is nothing we can do to add to or complete our salvation. Christ's death was, and is, the perfect, complete sacrifice (*Ephesians 2:8-9*)
- Salvation is a one-way door. You cannot "lose your salvation," and none can pluck you from God's hand (*John 5:24, John 10:28-29, Romans 8:30, 9:14-24, 10:9-10, 11:6, Ephesians 1:13-14, Titus 3:4-5, 1 John 5:13*)

B. Election

- God is sovereign over all. This includes salvation, man, and who enters Heaven and Hell (*Romans 8:28-30*)
- Before the foundation of the world, God planned to send His Son to the earth to save those He elected for salvation (*Ephesians 1:4-5, 9-11*)
- This keeps the love of God, made manifest in the sacrifice of Christ, central to our salvation (*Romans 8:14-17, 31-39*)
- Before the foundation of the world, God chose to redeem a people in Christ (*Ephesians 2:4-6*)
- Those whom God does not redeem in Christ will be justly and eternally punished for their sin and rebellion against their Creator. (*Romans 6:23*)
- Punishment in Hell isn't unfairness; it reveals the beauty of the righteousness, justice and mercy of God (*Romans 9:14-23*)
- Predestination for Heaven isn't unfairness, it is the beauty of the grace of God and the advancement of His Kingdom (*Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 3:10-18,23, 6:23, 11:5-6, Ephesians 2:8-10*)

Impact Core Beliefs

- God doesn't tell Christians they are elect. He provided a way, through His Son for all people to be reconciled to Him. "Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself." (1 John 5:10) When someone accepts the gift of Christ they know they are elect. (1 John 5:11-13)

God has predestined the eternal destination of every person who will enter the kingdom of heaven. He chose Christians in Himself before the world was founded. In love He predestined Christians for adoption. The fact that God is perfectly just and holy also means that He will punish eternally all those who are not found in Christ on judgment day.

Since God has predestined the eternal destination of every person, it is easy to see why Christians are called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation. God is in control of every person who enters that race. This shows us God's sovereignty over salvation. If God isn't sure who is going to become a member of the Kingdom of Heaven, then He isn't in control, and is no longer sovereign.

If God is sovereign, then we have to believe in predestination. Salvation is at the center of Christianity. The crux of a Christian's faith is the saving power of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If the God we follow and worship isn't in control of the most crucial issue in Christianity, what kind of a God are we serving? We cannot separate salvation and sovereignty. The two must go hand-in-hand if we are going to truly call ourselves a Bible-believing Christian ministry.

"For those whom He predestined He also called, those whom He called He also justified, those whom He justified He also glorified." (Romans 8:30)

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

VI. Good Works and the Kingdom of God

A. Works

- Works are not an avenue to salvation, because if they were, it would call the sacrifice and death of Christ insufficient and in essence worthless (Romans 11:6, Galatians 2:21)
- Works apart from faith in God are no better than filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6)
- Faith without works is dead; true, active faith will always result in a desire to work for the Lord (James 2:14-26)
- Good works are the evidence, result, and outpouring of true faith in the redeeming work of Christ on the cross and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (James 2:14-26)
- Works are evidence of the love of God being poured into a person (1 John 2:5-6, 15-17, 4:9, 5:20-21)

Good works are defined as, but not limited to:

- Taking care of the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:9, James 1:27)
- Contributing to the needs of the saints (Romans 12:13)
- Loving your enemies (Romans 12:20-21)
- Loving your neighbor (Mark 12:31)
- All the law is summed up in this one word: love (Romans 13:9-10, 1 Corinthians 13)

B. Advancing the Kingdom

- Christians are commanded to give their lives to Christ to fulfill the Great Commission and advance the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:8, Romans 12:1, 11, 2 Corinthians 5:20)
- Christians are commanded to make disciples, literally "Christ followers" (Matthew 28:18-20)

Impact Core Beliefs

- A Christ-follower must first be shown the truth and saved from their sin (*Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:14-17, 1 Corinthians 9:16-23*)
- While everyone is called to fulfill the Great Commission, everyone will not do everything. Christians may work alongside each other, but God has prepared specific things for every Christian (*Ephesians 2:10*)