

Biblical Christianity

An Overview and Standard by which to Evaluate Other Truth Claims

Key features to look for:

Revelation – Is the Bible the Word of God and only revelation needed? Are other books, visions, or revelations added?

God – Is there one God (monotheism) or many gods (polytheism)? Is God triune? If not, Jesus is not God incarnate, and the Holy Spirit is not deity. Is God eternal, transcendent, and immanent? Is God holy and loving?

Creation – Is creation eternal (Hinduism) or did it have a starting point? Is God distinct from creation or a part of creation (pantheism – Buddhism, Hinduism)?

Man – Is man made in the image of God? Are people inherently good? Is man distinct from God (e.g. some Hindus believe man is part of God [Brahman]). Is it man's goal to become a god?

Sin – Is humanity sinful? Most religions deny the fall or sin. Is evil real or an illusion (Buddhism, Christian science)?

Christ – Is Jesus fully God **and** fully man or just a man/teacher/prophet? Did Jesus die on the Cross and arise from the dead? Almost every religion and cult denies this historical fact or the efficacy of His atonement.

Salvation – Is salvation by grace through faith (a gift) or by works? Every other religion has a list of good works or requirements to merit salvation. Buddhism – 8-fold path, Islam – 5 pillars, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, New Age - self-actualization or liberation from reincarnation. Does salvation change the person to be more like Christ or give them license to sin?

After Life – What happens after you die? Reincarnation? Heaven or hell? Purgatory? Dissolve into "God" and cease to truly exist (Hinduism)?

I. GOD

A. Existence of God

There is one God, the Creator and the Preserver of all things, omniscient and omnipotent, infinite in being and perfection. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are co-eternal in being, and equal in essence, power, and glory.

1. There is one living and true God (Deut 6:4; Is. 45:5-7).
2. Scripture assumes the existence of God (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 6:4; Is. 45:5-7).
3. God is personal, spirit, infinite and perfect (John 4:24, 1 Tim. 1:17, Acts 17:28).

B. Attributes of God

1. Creator (Gen 1; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).
2. Self Existent (John 5:26, Rom. 11:36).
3. Sovereign (Ps. 115:3, Isa. 45:4, Jer. 32:17, Matt. 19:26, Rom. 11:36).
4. Unchanging (Mal. 3:16; James 1:17).
5. Perfect (Matt. 5:48; Ps. 18:30; Heb. 1:13).
6. Eternal (Ps. 90:2; Is. 46:10; 2 Peter 3:8).
7. Infinite (1 Kings 8:27; Ps. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:24).
8. Holy (Job 34:10; Is. 6:1-3; Matt. 5:48)
9. Truthful (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:13).
10. Gracious (Matt. 5:45; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8-9).
11. Loving (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
12. Merciful (Rom. 11:32; Titus 3:5).
13. Righteous (Ps. 119:137; 145:17; Hab. 1:13).
14. Just (Rom. 2:6-8; Rom. 1:18; see more attributes below)

C. Trinity

Unity of God is one in essence, eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Is. 48:16; Gen. 1:1-2, Mat. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14).

1. God the Father is:

1. The first person of the Trinity
2. The Father over all creation (Acts 17:29; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 12:9; James 1:17).
3. The Father of Christ (John 2:17; Acts 13:33; 17:5, 24; Col. 1:15).
4. The Father of believers (Matt 6:8-9; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6)

2. Christ is:

1. The second person of the Trinity.
2. Deity-i.e. fully God (Isa 9:6; Matt. 26:63-65; **John 1**, 6:38, 8:56-58, 10:30, 20:28; **Col. 1**; Phil. 2; **Heb. 1**; Rev. 22:13; Matt. 28:20; 2 Pet. 1:1; Titus 2:13. Compare

Acts 2:21 and Joel 2:32. Hundreds of times, passages about Yahweh, [the LORD] in the OT, are applied to Jesus).

3. Equality with the Father (John 5:18, 10:29-31, 14:8-9; Phil. 2:5-6; Col. 2:9)
4. Creator (John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2)
5. God incarnate, fully man (Matt. 1:18-25; Phil. 2:5-11, Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:14).
6. Virgin born (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:25, Luke 1:26-35).
7. Sinless (Luke 1:35; John 8:29, 46; Acts 3:14; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15, 7:26-28; 1 Pet. 2:22-23).
8. The one who voluntarily gave up His life as a substitute to redeem mankind (Mark 10:45; Eph. 1; Rom. 3:25; 5:8, Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 John 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:24; Rev. 5:9).
9. The Resurrection-He was literally and physically resurrected, ascended to the right hand of the Father, the believer's Advocate & High Priest (Matt. 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Heb 7:25; 9:24).
10. The Head of the Church (Eph 1:22; 5:23, Col. 1:18).

3. The Holy Spirit is:

1. The third person of the Trinity.
2. A person, not a force (John 14:26, 16:13).
3. Deity-The Holy Spirit is fully God (Acts 5:3,4; Heb 9:14; 1 Cor 2:10; Romans 5:13; Psalm 139:7-10).
4. Involved in Salvation-At salvation, the Holy Spirit regenerates, baptizes, indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers, and seals (1 Cor. 12:13; John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13).
5. Inspiration- The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of Scripture and all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21).
6. Illumination-The Holy Spirit causes believers to understand God's Word (1 John 2:20, 27; 1 Cor. 2).
7. Indwells believers (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9,13, 1 Cor. 3:16, Eph 3:16).

ATTRIBUTES OF THE TRIUNE GOD

Attribute	Father	Son	Holy Spirit
Life	Joshua 3:10	John 1:4	Romans 8:2
Omniscience	Psalm 139:1-6	John 4:17-18	1 Corinthians 2:10-12
Omnipotence	Genesis 1:1	John 1:3	Job 33:4
Omnipresence	Jeremiah 23:23-24	Matthew 28:20	Psalm 139:7-10
Eternity	Psalm 90:2	John 1:1	Hebrews 9:14
Holiness	Leviticus 11:44	Acts 3:14	Matthew 12:32
Love	1 John 4:8	Romans 8:37-39	Galatians 5:22
Truth	John 3:33	John 14:6	John 14:17

This chart reflects the unity and the equality of the Triune God. The Holy Spirit exhibits the same attributes of deity as the Father and the Son.¹

II. THE BIBLE

The inspired Scriptures contain the 66 books of the Old and New Testament and were finished with the completion of the New Testament (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3, Heb. 1:1-2; 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Rev. 22:18,19).

A. Revelation

Revelation is God's disclosure of Himself to mankind.

1. **General**- God's foundational revelation is based on creation and demonstrated in history, nature and the conscience (Rom. 1:18-20, Ps. 19:1-6, Romans 2:14- 15).
2. **Special**- God's special revelation is found in Christ and the Bible (John 1:1, 14-18; Heb. 1:1-2; Rom. 1:16).

B. Inspiration

Inspiration of the Holy Spirit worked through the individual personalities and different styles of the human authors so that, they composed and recorded God's Word to man. Inspiration extends to the very selection of the words of Scripture (Matt. 5:18; 2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Tim 3:16-17).

C. Inerrancy

The Scriptures are absolutely without error in any part in the original manuscripts (Is. 30:8; Matt. 5:18, John 10:35, 2 Tim 3:16).

D. Interpretation

1. Each passage of Scripture has one intended meaning which is found by applying the grammatical-historical-literal method of interpretation. Our goal is to find that meaning and its life application.
2. The Holy Spirit helps the believer to understand the Scriptures (John 7:17; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20).
3. **Infallible** signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters. True, trustworthy. (Ps. 12:6, 19:7, 119:89, 160; John 10:35 [cannot be broken means, "proven to be false"] 17:17; Prov. 30:5; TTT Lesson 2, Podcast)

¹Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997, c1989), 251.

4. **Inerrancy** signifies the total truthfulness of a source of information that contains no mistakes. Free from error.

E. Authority

Scripture is the only infallible rule of faith and practice for individual believers and for the church (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12).

III. MAN

A. Created

1. Man was created in the image of God, male and female, with an intellect, emotion and will (Gen. 1).
2. Man was created totally free from sin (Gen 2).
3. Mankind's primary reason for being is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever (Is. 43:7; Col. 1:16).

B. Fallen

1. When tempted by Satan, Adam rebelled against God and disobeyed (Gen. 3:12, Ps. 14:1-3, 51:5).
2. Adam's sin resulted in spiritual and physical death (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19).
3. Man became inherently corrupt and incapable of pleasing God (Is. 64:6; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim 2:13-14).

C. Sinful

1. All humans were in Adam, and the consequence of that sin has been passed on to all (Except Jesus Christ).
2. All persons are sinners by divine declaration, choice, and nature (Ps 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18; 5:10-12; James 2:10).

D. Redeemable

Unlike the rest of God's created beings (angels and animals) mankind is redeemable from his sin through the death of Christ (Rom. 5:8-10, 18; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

IV. SALVATION

Salvation is that gracious act of God, where, through the atoning blood (death) of Christ and faith in His finished work, He redeems and reconciles certain individuals to himself. Salvation is not on the basis of merit, or works (John 1:12, 3:3; Rom. 3:24; 8:15, 23; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:7;

2:8-10; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2 Peter 1:4).

A. Regeneration

1. Regeneration is that instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit through the truth of the Word of God, which enables persons to believe the Gospel and imparts new life to them (John 1:13; 3:3-8; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:29).
2. Regeneration will result in good works and a transformed life (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10).

B. Saving Faith

Saving faith is that gift of God which brings a person into intimate relationship with Christ (Rom. 10:9-10). It is based on God's grace rather than a person's works and when genuine has several main aspects (Acts 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9, Phil. 1:29, 2 Peter 1:1). These are not "steps" a person must work through, but are elements that will be present as a total package when there is true saving faith.

1. **Knowledge of the Facts**- Faith must be based on the facts of the Gospel found in the Word of God (Rom. 10:17, 1 Cor. 15:3-5, 2 Tim. 3:15).
2. **Assent to this Knowledge**- A person must agree that the facts of the Scriptures are true (Heb. 11:6).
3. **Repentance**- Saving faith includes a turning from sin and turning towards God (Acts 2:38, Acts 20:21, Acts 26:20, 1 Thess. 1:9).
4. **Trust** is synonymous with faith. If someone truly believes in Christ, they have trusted Him alone to be their sin-bearer and Savior. (see John's Gospel, Galatians, and Romans)

C. Justification

1. The act of God whereby He declares righteous those who believe in Christ (Rom. 3:20; 5:1; 8:33, Philippians 3:9).
2. It is apart from any virtue or work (Col. 2:14; 1 Peter 3:18).
3. The believer's sin is imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer (Col. 2:14; 1 Peter 3:18; Rom. 4:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

D. Sanctification

1. **Position**- The act of God, whereby the believer is made positionally holy and perfect through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30 6:11; Heb 2:11).
2. **Process**-The Holy Spirit's ministry of progressively bringing the believer into conformity with the character of Christ (John 17:17,19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 5:26, Rom. 8:29).
3. **Perfection**-That act of God which occurs when a believer gets to heaven whereby their practice is conformed to their position-perfect and blameless without spot or blemish

(Rom. 8:23 ; 1 Cor. 15:5; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

E. Security

1. All of the redeemed are kept eternally secure in Christ by the power of God (John 5:24; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; Eph 4:30).

F. Assurance of Salvation

1. The subjective realization by a person that he/she is a child of God is a ministry of the Spirit to every obedient believer (Rom. 6:15-22; 8:16; 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:3, 9-10, 15-23; 3:9, 17, 24; 4:7, 13, 20; 5:1, 10).

V. THE CHURCH

A. Defined

1. The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 4:14-16).
2. It consists of born again believers of the Church age (Eph. 2:11-3:6).

B. Gifts

1. Permanent, edifying gifts - Each believer has been given spiritual gifts in order to edify and build up the body (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

C. Ordinances

1. **Baptism** - By immersion for anyone who confesses faith in Christ (Acts 2:41; 8:36-39; Rom. 6:1-11). Baptism is a public profession of faith of the inward salvation one possesses. "Baptism" means to immerse or identify, therefore the believer is publically identifying with Christ and the church.
2. **Lord's Supper** - A remembrance and proclamation of Christ's death until He comes again (Matt. 26:26-30; Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 10:16 & 17; 11:17-34).
3. **Not Salvific** - Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.

VI. ANGELS

A. Holy Angels

1. Angels were created by God to serve and worship Him (Heb. 1:6-7, 14, Isa. 6:3, Ps. 103:20-21, Ps. 148:2). They are not lesser "gods." They are creatures.
2. Angels are spirit beings (Heb. 1:14, Luke 24:39, Matt. 22:30).
3. Angels are rational, moral, and immortal beings (Matt. 24:36, 1 Pet. 1:12, 2 Pet. 2:4, Luke 20:34-36).
4. Angels were created to an estate higher than mankind. Yet, saved humans will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3; 2 Pet. 2:10-11, Heb. 2:6-7).
5. Angels serve mankind (Heb. 1:14).
6. Angels have a role in the Second Coming (Mark 13:27, 2 Thes. 1:7b).

B. Fallen Angels (Demons)

1. Satan rebelled against his Creator, and led numerous angels in his fall (Job. 1:6-7; Is. 14:12-17; Ez. 28:11-19; Rev. 12:3-4).
2. Angels were created holy, but some sinned (2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6; cf. 1 Tim. 5:21).
3. Satan was defeated by Christ at the cross, yet continues as the "God of this world" until his final judgment and condemnation (Rom. 16:20; Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:1-10).
4. Satan will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).
5. Satan and Demons are active in the world (Matt. 8:16; Eph. 6:12)

VII. THE FUTURE

A. Death

1. Believers

1. *Physical*- There is a separation of the physical and immaterial, and the spirit of the believer immediately passes into the presence of the Lord (Luke 23:43; Phil.1:21-24).
2. *Once* – The Bible denies any kind of reincarnation. See Hebrews 9:27. The Bible consistently teaches one life, one death, and no chance for salvation after death if not embraced before death (e.g. Luke 16:19-31). There is no such thing as purgatory or soul sleep (unconsciousness – see Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8).
3. *Resurrection*- At the first resurrection, the believer's spirit and body are reunited to be glorified forever (Phil 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

2. Unbelievers

1. *Physical*- At death, the spirits of the unsaved descend immediately into Hades, a place of torment (Job 3:11-19; Luke 16:19-26; Rev. 20:1-15).
2. *Resurrection*- At the second resurrection they will be united with their body,

judged, and cast into the lake of fire to be punished and separated from God forever (John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:11-15. Dan. 12:2).

B. The Rapture

Christ will gather up Christians from the earth and take them with Him (1 Thess 4:16; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 15:50-51). Some believe this happens at Second Coming, others that it happens before the Tribulation.

C. The Judgment Seat of Christ

After the rapture, believer's will be rewarded according to their works (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

D. Tribulation

God will judge the world through various plagues (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 16:1-21).

E. The Second Coming

Christ will return to the earth at the end of the Tribulation (Second Coming-Matt. 25:31) at which time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised, and the living will be judged (Dan. 12:2-3; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 6:9-11; 20:4-6). Christ will reign on this earth.

F. Final Judgment

1. Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone forever (Rev. 20:7-10).
2. Great White Throne judgment - The unsaved dead will be resurrected, and will be committed to eternal, conscious punishment in Hell (Rom. 14:10-13; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15).

G. Eternity

1. A new heaven and a new earth will be created (Rev. 21:1).
2. Believers will be with the Lord for eternity in the new earth (John 17:3; 1 Thess. 4:17).
3. The story of the Bible is Creation, Fall, Salvation, New Creation. Believers will live on the new earth, just as Adam did in paradise, but as in the Garden, heaven and earth will be merged, God's presence will not be shielded from us, and we will enjoy His love and grace forever. Believers enter "heaven" now in terms of the intermediate state, but our eternal destiny is to be in a resurrected body, in the new heaven and earth.

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