

Introduction to Theology

- Fundamental Christian Beliefs -

The Apostle's Creed

The Apostle's Creed - According to ancient church tradition, "The Apostles' Creed" was established by the Apostles 10 days after the ascension of Christ. The earliest known written version is from 215 AD.

I believe in God the Father Almighty,

And I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was born by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, Was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried; He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; from where he will come to judge the living and the dead.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Church, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the body.

Summary of Core Doctrines – The “Fundamentals” or “Dogmas”

Note: The term “Fundamentalist” originally meant someone who believes these 7 statements. The term has since been associated with various related/unrelated negative connotations, so usually the broader term, “Conservative” is now used to describe these churches/individuals.

1. **The Bible** - We believe in the Absolute and Plenary Inerrancy, Inspiration, and Authority of the Holy Bible. It is the completed special revelation of God to man and is comprised of the 66 books recognized as the Protestant Canon.
2. **The Trinity** - We believe in the Holy Unity and Trinity of God; that God is one God, and that there are also three persons of the Godhead - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We accept this as an unfathomable truth of Scripture.
3. **Jesus** - We believe in the literal virgin birth and the preexistent eternal state of Jesus Christ, that He is both fully man and fully God.
4. **Salvation** - We believe that all mankind is sinful, that atonement for sin is only through the blood of Jesus Christ, and that salvation is by grace, through faith, without works of human righteousness. We believe that saving faith is the act of calling upon the Lord in humility, placing our faith in Him, and is inseparable from repentance of sin. Furthermore, we believe that the believer is eternally secure in the righteousness of Christ.
5. **Resurrection** - We believe in the literal, physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the literal, physical resurrection of believers.
6. **The Second Coming** - We believe in the literal, personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. **Heaven & Hell** - We believe in the literal, eternal states of either everlasting blessedness in Heaven with Christ, or everlasting torment in Hell, separated from Christ forever.

The Revelation of God

- *The Source of Theology* -

I. The General Revelation of God

- i. Key verses for General Revelation - Romans 1:18-23 (19-21)
- ii. Reveals God, but insufficient to reveal the Gospel

II. The Special Revelations of God

a. By Direct speech

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, OT prophets, NT witnesses of Jesus' baptism and transfiguration

b. By the Old Testament prophets, "...thus saith the Lord..."

To both Israel and Judah, and to other nations (Assyria, Babylon, Egypt)

c. By Jesus Christ, with the authority of God – John 8:12-30 (26)

- i. As recorded in the Gospels
- ii. As given to His disciples during His life.

d. By the Apostles of Jesus Christ, as Jesus gave authority

- i. Commission with authority – Luke 6:12-16
- ii. Command to go - Matthew 28:18-20

e. By Divinely Inspired Scripture, with the authority of God

- i. Derived from the Special Revelations listed above
- ii. Supported by the ministries of the Holy Spirit listed below
- iii. The direct source for all conservative Christian theology.

f. By the ministries of the Holy Spirit

- i. Illumination of Scripture, aiding the individual believer personal understanding and application of Scripture
- ii. Testifying the truth of Scripture, so that we "automatically recognize" the truth of Scripture when we read it or hear it.
- iii. Conviction of sinners for repentance, bringing the lost to salvation.
- iv. Guiding believers in ascertaining the will of God in daily life