

FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIANITY

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The word “fundamental” suggests something that is an essential part. Sometimes in religious circles we forget to distinguish between those things that are incidental, those things that are important, and those things that are essential or fundamental.

This lesson has to do with some fundamentals of Christianity. Not “the” fundamentals, because there are some that I will not talk about, such as; the nature of God, the incarnation of Jesus, and the atoning power of the blood of Christ. These are all fundamental, but they are on Gods side. I want to discuss the things that are fundamental on our part.

In this study of the fundamentals of Christianity, I want you to understand that by Christianity, I mean that system of religion that was established by Christ and for which he shed his blood. There are hundreds, even thousands of religions that have been started since then, and many of them refer to themselves as being Christian religions. But the truth is that not one of them was set up by the authority of Christ, and not one drop of his blood was shed to bring a single one of them into existence.

So, what are some of the fundamentals of New Testament Christianity?

1. The first fundamental that I would suggest to you is, “BELIEF IN THE DEITY OF JESUS.”

There are many who acknowledge Jesus as a great man. In John 3:1-2 the Bible says, *“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”* Nicodemus was convinced by the miracles that Jesus had performed that He was sent from God.

The woman at the well also acknowledged Jesus as a great man. In John 4:19, the woman said unto him, *“Sir I perceive that thou art a prophet.”* Then in Matthew chapter 16, some thought that he was Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist or one of the prophets. But Jesus was more than a great man. He was the Son of God. He was Deity. And it is necessary that one must believe Him to be the Son of God.

We find these words of Jesus in John 8:24, *“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”* Those who refuse to believe in the Deity of Christ will die in their sins and be lost in a devils hell for eternity.

One must believe as Peter did in Matthew 16:16. In verse 15 Jesus said unto them, *“But who say ye that I am?”* And Simon Peter answered and said, *“...thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* The impetuous and quick spoken Simon Peter had made the good confession.

He uttered the sweetest name on mortal tongue; the sweetest carol ever sung, Jesus, blessed Jesus. This confession is the foundation of the New Testament Church. It is the foundation of the New Testament itself and of every thing that we hold dear and each person who comes into the church must make this confession.

Notice also what Paul said in Romans 1:1-4, *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,) concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”* Christ was not only declared to be the Son of God, He was declared to be the Son of God with power.

It was the resurrection of Christ that removed all doubt from the minds of the apostles that Jesus was the Son of God and that gave them a conviction, which was theirs until the day, they died.

In Matthew 3:17 and 17:5, God Himself said that Jesus was his Son. Matthew 3:17 says, *“...AND BEHOLD, A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAID, This is my beloved son...”* Then in Matthew 17:5, *“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.”*

Dear friend, to believe in the Deity of Jesus is a fundamental of the New Testament Christianity.

2. Another fundamental of New Testament Christianity is “Belief in the inspiration of the Bible.” Note what is said in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17, *“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.”*

God directed (by means of the Holy Spirit) to the writers of the Bible what He wanted to go into the sacred text, and for that reason it is said to be a volume inspired of God. In 2 Peter 1; 21, Peter said, *“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men: but holy men of God spoken as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* Here again is a correct explanation of the inspiration of the Bible.

The prophecies were not the production of mere human beings. Instead, they spoke as by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guided and directed them. In 1 Corinthians 2:10, the apostle Paul says, *“but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”* Also in verse 13 he says, *“Which things also we speak, not in the words which mans wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”*

In Ephesians 3:1-5, we read, 1. *“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,* 2. *if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God that was given to me for you,* 3. *How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I have briefly written already,* 4. *By which when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),* 5. *Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Holy Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets...?”*

In verse 3 Paul reminded them that his message came from God and that he was not taught it by man. He said in verse 5 that it was revealed by the Holy Spirit. We can see by these verses that belief in the inspiration of the Bible is a fundamental of New Testament Christianity.

3. Another fundamental of the New Testament Christianity is, “One must be added to the Lord’s Church.” I am talking about the church that we read about in the New Testament. It is the one that Jesus purchased with HIS own blood.

Acts 20:28 says, “*Therefore take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He, (Jesus) purchased with His blood.*” For one to say that the church is of no importance is to say that the blood of Christ is of no importance. Christ gave Himself for the church.....that is.....to bring it into existence.

In Ephesians 5:25, the apostle Paul says, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.*” Friend, there is no Christianity separate and apart from the church. Acts 2:47 shows that the Lord adds the saved to His church. The latter part of that verse reads, “*...and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*” WE NEED TO BE SURE THAT WE UNDERSTAND SOMETHING HERE. The church does not save anybody. The church is the saved! Christ is the savior and the LORD automatically adds each save person to the church. No one joins the church.

Now, please be sure that you do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that membership in some humanly devised church is essential. In fact Jesus said in Matthew 15:13 that, “*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.*” The church is a fundamental, but it has to be the Church that Christ purchased with His blood. It cannot be any church!

The church that we read about in the New Testament was:

1. *Purchased* by God through all eternity (Ephesians 3:10, 11).
2. *Spoken of* by the Old Testament prophets (Isaiah 2:2-4 and Daniel. 2: 44).
3. *Promised* by Jesus while he lived on earth (Matthew 16:18).
4. *Prepared* for by John the “Baptizer” (Matthew 3:3).
5. *Established* with the power of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2: 1-47).

It can and must be said, being added to this church is a fundamental of New Testament Christianity.

4. Another fundamental of New Testament Christianity is, “Scriptural Worship.” In John 4:24, we read, “*God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*” In that statement of Biblical truth there are three simple, but vitally important aspects of true worship set out. (1. We must worship God. (2. We must worship God in spirit, in other words, rationally and sincerely. (3. We must worship God in truth, as His word directs. Only those who worship this way are assured of the divine approval.

The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 15:4, “*...that whatever things that were written before were written for our learning...*” Now, careful reflection upon the Old Testament scripture will reveal two things: God has always given detailed instructions with reference to worship. He has always seriously punished those who took His instruction lightly.

We have examples of this in Genesis chapter 4 with Cain and Able and in Leviticus chapter 10 with Nadab and Abihu. The truth is, “One cannot worship God in just any way that he pleases.” Scriptural worship is a fundamental of New Testament Christianity.

5. Another fundamental of New Testament Christianity is “Godly Living.” Titus 2:11-12 says, “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us*

that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age...” Now to live soberly is to do our duty to ourselves. Living righteously is our duty to other people. And living godly is our duty to God. It is not enough just to be right with reference to religious activities...We must live right.

Romans 12:2 still says, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* James 4:4 still says, *“Adulterers and adulteresses!”* Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

In the temporal world a person who commits unlawful intimacy is guilty of immorality. Likewise in the realm of the family of God, those who are intimate with the sinful pleasures of the world are guilty of spiritual adultery because they are untrue to Christ who is their lawful partner. This intimacy here in is called “friendship” and James says it is “enmity” or at war with God. And on this principle James declares that a person cannot be a friend of the world without being an enemy of the Lord.

In Galatians 5:19-21 the apostle Paul writes, *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry witchcraft, hatred, variances, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murder, drunkenness, revelries, and such like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in times past, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* We need to remind ourselves often what is said in 1 Timothy 5:22, *“Keep thyself pure.”* Of what is said in 1 Corinthians 6:18, *“Flee fornication.”* And what is said in 2 Timothy 2:22, *“Flee also youthful lusts.”*

Peter counsels us how to do these things in 2 Peter 1:5-11, as he says, *“And beside this, give all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to your virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brother kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacks these things is blind and cannot see afar off and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Therefore brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall: for so an entrance, shall be ministered (supplied) unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

God calls upon us to do our part as Christians. He calls upon us to add what is commonly called the Christian graces. We were elected when we obeyed the gospel and we must make this election sure by living as God has said for us to live. If we do this, Peter says, *“You shall live forever.”* There is no doubt that living pure and godly lives is a fundamental of New Testament Christianity.

6. Still another fundamental of New Testament Christianity is “The proclamation of the gospel.” If the seed is the word, and it is, then the only way to produce the church is by planting the seed. Luke 8:11 says, *“Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.”* It makes no difference how well the ground may be prepared, fertilized, and watered, unless the seed is planted, there can be no harvest.

The programs of the church are many and good, but without the teaching and preaching of the word, souls cannot be saved. 2 Timothy 4:2 says, *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and*

doctrine.” Romans 1:16, the apostle Paul says, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”*

If there was any place where one would be ashamed of a crucified savior, that place was in Rome during the reign of Nero. Paul had suffered much. He had been cast out of Antioch of Pisidia, stoned at Lystra, beaten and imprisoned at Philippi. He had been mocked by the philosophers at Athens and persecuted in Corinth. A great mob at Ephesus had sought to harm him and in spite of all this, Paul was ready to preach in Rome. Why should anyone be ashamed of the gospel?

The gospel originated with God. The Holy Spirit directed the apostles as they wrote it for us and it is the only means of saving sinners. Without the gospel we would have no hope. *“The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”* (Romans 1:16). The gospel is God’s informing power...His reforming power...His conforming power...and His transforming power.

The power of God is manifested in many ways such as in the creation of the world and in the operation of the universe, but His power to save men is the gospel. When our Lord gave the Great Commission, He commanded that the gospel be preached to all (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).

In the book of Acts every person who became a Christian heard the gospel preached and obeyed it in order to be saved. None were saved by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, or separate and apart from the word of God. The plan that God gave to save man is adapted to man as he is and to say that something beside the gospel is used to save man is to accuse God of giving a plan that would not work. The gospel is the “Power of God unto salvation” and this gospel when preached can save souls when it is obeyed. It is a fundamental...

7. Another fundamental of New Testament Christianity is “The defense of the gospel.” Paul said in Philippians 1:17, *“I am set for the defense of the gospel.”* The truth is under constant attack. It has always been and it will always be. There are many today who will not defend the gospel or anything else as far as that is concerned.

In Jude verse 3, the Bible says, *“Beloved when I give all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* The word *contends* means that Christians should face the foe wherever he is met. Question...If faithful Christians will not defend the gospel then who will? I can tell you who will.....NOBODY!

Many of the New Testament books were written to refute error. The attitude that we should have toward error is set forth in 2 John verses 10 and 11, *“If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that bids him God speed is partakers of his evil deeds.”*

8. The final fundamental of New Testament Christianity is, “Obedience to God.” The defense of the gospel is a fundamental of New Testament Christianity plan of salvation. There are two important facts with reference to God’s plan of salvation. Number one, God has the right to stipulate the terms of pardon. And number two, God has done so. Yes, sinners are saved by grace, but salvation is conditional. Sinners are saved by grace when they humbly bow in submission to the will of God and obey His commandments.

The five steps of obedience are simple: *Hear*, John 6:44, 45; *Believe*, John 8:24; *Repent*, Acts 17:30; *Confess*, Romans 10:9, 10; *be baptized for the remission of sins*, Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16.

In Hebrews 2:9, the Hebrew writer tells us that Christ tasted death for all men by God's Grace. Hebrews 2:9 says, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that by the grace of God should taste death for everyone.*" Hebrews 5:9 tells us that Christ saves those who obey Him, "*And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.*" Dear one(s), God will not save people who live in disobedience. Obedience to God's plan of salvation is a fundamental of New Testament Christianity.

These eight things that were named herein are fundamental and if we leave off a single one of them we have lost the right to call ourselves Christians.

This study is closed by the following comments: "The scriptures and commentary that have been set forth in this study have been of great benefit to me. The wonderful scriptures and principles that we studied together have been motivating to my conscience. It is my prayer that you have read and studied this lesson and that you will accept all truth herein and that it will be a conscience server to you also. Accepting truth and acting responsibly is truly a great blessing.

"The well-trained conscience is equal to the knowledge, abiding faith, and love to which we expose or submit to our mind. With confidence I say that you studied this lesson with faith and love, and that it will be of great benefit to you.

"With confidence I also say, that you desire to be blessed and to gain more knowledge. True abiding biblical knowledge is associated with responsibilities. In faith and love please seek and search diligently for responsible knowledge. It is found, in the study of God's word, the truth. Please accept it as your duty—your obligation. Your duty must be associated with and become an active part of your abiding faithfully in the Lord's Church until death.

"The church that I am speaking of is [the church you read about in the Bible. The cost was the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church is His Body, His Kingdom, which is His Church. Please be an obedient dedicated part of the church of the Bible. You cannot pass through Heaven's gate if you are not in Christ's' Body, His Church. It surely is the Church, the only Church that you read about in the Bible. That is the truth. Note more of what is said in the Bible about truth and the church

"*Buy the truth, and sell it not*" (Proverbs 23:23). Do not compromise the truth. Where the Bible speaks definitively on a subject, we must be firm in our resolve concerning that truth. The Bible speaks clearly as to the number of churches having a scriptural right to exist. ONE! Jesus promised to build His church, not "Churches" (Matthew 16:18). On the day of Pentecost, the saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). Paul said there is one body (Ephesians 4:4). Earlier in the same epistle Paul equated that body with the church (Ephesians 1:23). Later, Paul uses 12 nouns and pronouns to describe the church—all of them singular (Ephesians 5:23-32). This settles the matter of how many churches Jesus built and how many existed in the New Testament.

"We must not be ashamed to say what the Bible says on this subject (Mark 8:38). Let us all prepare ourselves to speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11). Anything less is to do God and His word a terrible injustice.

"I invite you to view my Website, www.geocities.com/dubbyt please note other consecrated writings. I request also that you please advertise my Website. There is a writing posted on my Website that I am sure you will want to view and copy. The writing title is, "The Church of The Bible, Christ's Church." It has a two-page enclosure, which has the title, "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED".

Please note that pages 8 and 9 of this writings are furnished as a convenience for you. We should offer the "Invitation of Christ at every opportunity we have. God bless you and please, please, study these "biblical-truth" writings along with your Bible. And always study with an honest and receptive heart to gain truth and knowledge. Also, accept the truth and become obedient, and walk with the LORD. You will be blessed! Heaven will be your home. God bless you for studying with me on this great subject. God loves you...and I do too! I am your servant in the Lord!" Please know that and use me.

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PS: Any and all of this "Study Writing" may be copied and passed to others, or if you want to contact me I will furnish you as many copies as you need.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

There are five acts of obedience that one must be diligent to manifest in their life and to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" They are:

1. Hear God's Word, (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:23).
 2. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
 3. Repent of passed sins, (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
 4. Confess Christ as the Son of God. (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37).
 5. Be baptized (immersed) into Christ for remission (forgiveness) of past sins, (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; and Romans 6:3-4).
- **NOTE**:** After obedience to the above five steps live faithful unto death and He will give you the crown of life (1 Peter 2:11-12; Revelation 2:10).

Framing of these acts are listed below for learning and obeying, and for teaching of obedience.

1). HEAR GOD'S WORD: (Romans 10:14, 17), *"How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?"*

"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

Faith developed by hearing the Word precedes all acts that one must do to be saved.

Faith is our confidence in and the realization of our dependence on and great need to be obedient to the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

To attain those attributes one must hear the Word and gain knowledge from the Word so as to know one's duty and responsibility.

This is such a great blessing! Always covet this great blessing when being taught to gain knowledge for obedience and teaching this great-coveted blessing to others after their obedience.

2). BELIEVE: (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:30, 31; Romans 10:10), Faith alone will not save.

Faith in JESUS CHRIST developed into confessed belief is just the beginning. If you confess with your mouth the LORD JESUS and believe in your heart and faith that GOD has raised CHRIST from the dead, you will be saved.

3.) REPENT: Man is a sinful creature! (Acts 17:30) teaches us that, *“In times past, time of ignorance God overlooked, but now HE commands all men everywhere to repent.”* Repentance is expressed by remorse or regret for past wrongful acts done or of the failure of not doing, and with determination changes to one’s heart to do good and to do GOD’S will.

4.) CONFESS: (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32, 33), JESUS said, *“Who ever confess HIM before men, HE will confess them before MY FATHER who is in Heaven.”* The confession one makes is the belief that JESUS CHRIST is the Son of God. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

5.) BE IMMersed- (BAPTIZED), (Acts 22:16: Romans 6:3-5). After the acts of 1 through 4 above one is baptized into Christ. Jesus died, was buried, and was resurrected on the third day. The act of baptism symbolizes a *death*, a *burial*, and a *resurrection*. So the question, “Why be baptized?”

- A). for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT;
- B). to be saved;
- C). to put on CHRIST in baptism;
- D). to be added to the church, THE BODY OF CHRIST!

These are the true words of the Bible. These are words of truth to hear, or read, study, learn, accept, and obey, then live by them. May GOD bless us in our diligent effort in learning, obeying, and teaching these great truths to others and enjoying the blessings of them in our lives!

Please use this outline and build on it when teaching others. Fold it up and keep it in your Bible. Please, pray always for the success of all our efforts in teaching and serving others, and in doing God’s Will.

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