

The Existence of Fundamentals

Mat 23:23-24... *ye have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

Jesus rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees because they bothered the people with their human opinions and rules that they got from traditions and twisting Scripture, and in the process, they lost everything of real value, even true salvation. For all their religious zeal, it served them nothing. Equally God gives the strongest condemnations against the false prophets and teachers that have changed the gospel to be something else that does not render salvation in the end, nor works in other ways (**Gal 1:6-9**).

The words of Jesus about founding our faith and Christian life before God upon "a rock" are very important. It is so important that Jesus proposes that to err in this is to not be saved and fall into a "great ruin." (**Luke 6:48-49**) We can differ with other good Christians on some issues, but there are certain matters that are so important (fundamentals) that to deny these teachings or to err on them is to invalidate being really saved.

The Criteria for a Fundamental of the Faith

The Fundamentals have to come from the very essential part of our faith, and are only to be discerned from the Scriptures. These are the centerpieces of Christian doctrine, the center concerns seen in the Bible such as: God, His Deity and Character, Jesus Christ, sin, salvation, the person and work of Jesus, the reality of human sinfulness and need, the approval of the work of Jesus by God (which is the resurrection), things dealing with the communication and reception of this salvation by man, such as the Scriptures, and the immanent return of Jesus in judgment, and finally the belief in fundamentals of the faith and separation from those who refuse them.

Jude 1:3-4... *that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares...* *ungodly men, turning the grace of our*

*God into lasciviousness, and **denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.***

God advised us of the attack against our faith from people that supposedly are "one of us" and who will change the grace and Christ liberty to be license (there are no rules or moral restrictions) trying to enslave us in their systems, who denying God as an authority and as the Saviour. God demands that we watch out for these people and their attacks, and oppose them. **Fundamentalism essentially is holding firm this fight against error and false prophets.**

What are the Fundamentals?

(1) The inerrancy and sufficiency of the Scriptures (this is referring to the originals autographs). We cannot speak with certainty of anything if the source of all our knowledge is contaminated with error, imprecise statements, and falsities. We have to begin with the Bible being the true and sure message of God as God wants us to have it. Moreover we have to affirm this, and only the Scriptures are sufficient in informing us of how to be saved (**Psa 19:7** *converting the soul*), to serve God, and to please God in our lives (live in God's will) **Psa 12:6-7; Rom 15:4; 2Tim 3:16-17; 2Pet 1:20**. The twisting or perverting of the Word of God is equal to losing our salvation (perdition) **2Pet 3:16**.¹

(2) The Person and Work of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. **2Jn 1:9-11** *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.* We can say with certainty that anybody who denies Jesus Christ² as the Saviour cannot possibly be saved, and has erred in the very heart of salvation. John refers to these most important points about Jesus

¹ 2 Pet 3:16 puts the emphasis on a high view of inspiration in Scripture, and a healthy method of interpreting the Scriptures. This is at the heart of fundamentalism and really being saved.

² We should see many religions propose other saviours, but the Bible is exclusive in its focus on Jesus. **To know him and have is to be saved, and to not is to be eternally lost.** 1 Jn 5:11-13, 20; 1 Tim 2:5; Acts 4:12. John 5:23; 20:31.

and his origin³ and his substance (eternally God, but incarnated⁴ 1 Jn 2:23; 4:2-3; 2 Jn 1:7), in his birth by the Virgin Mary, and his deity⁵, If Jesus isn't impeccable (without any sin **Heb 4:15**) then his sacrifice for us would have been in vain. If he was not fully human, one of us, then he could not have identified with the human race. If he was not completely God⁶, then his sacrifice would not have been sufficient for the salvation of the entire world.

The Trinity – God is defined in **1 John 4:8, 16** thusly, "God is love." Moreover John makes the argument that anybody who does not love⁷ (taken godly love as part of their character and soul), simply is not saved. Love needs 3 things to exist: he who loves, he who is loved, and the evidence of that love. This is the relationship within God that explains the different persons of God, or the Trinity⁸: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and defines our relationship with each one of these.

The atonement for sin through the substitution of Jesus Christ on the cross in our place⁹. This is the very thing we believe in to save us. Without faith it is impossible to be saved (**Heb 11:6**). We are just (we have merit before God) because of our faith (**Rom 4:4-5**) and not because of anything else. The Jews erred in this **Rom 10:3-4**.

(3) Sin and the inability of man to gain merit before God, and his need of the mercy of God. This we can express in another way, the salvation of man is only through the grace and mercy of God (who paid the price obtaining salvation to offer) and it is by means of faith (how man gets it), and we are not saved through good works¹⁰.

³ **Origin:** Isa 7:14; Mat 1:23; Luke 1:27

⁴ "Coming in the flesh" is a sign of his humility, which arrogance and haughtiness is the opposite. Brokenness and humility are essential to the Christian life.

⁵ **Deity:** John 1:1; 20:28 Hebrews 1:8-9

⁶ Belief in the miracles are frequently identified as a fundamental, because this proves His deity.

⁷ This love is for Christ 1 Cor 16:22 and for the redeemed 1 John 3:10, 14; 4:8.

⁸ **Trinity:** 1 John 5:20, John 8:58; 10:30

⁹ **Atonement:** Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; Hebrews 9:12-14, 22; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor 5:21;

¹⁰ **By faith, not by Works:** Rom 4:4-5; 3:27-28; Gal 2:16-3:29; Tit 3:5; Eph 2:8-9.

Antinomianism¹¹ – 1 John 1:8 declares that we are all sinners, and 1:10 affirms that none are saved if we deny that we are sinners. According to 1 John 1:6, even the Christian of the N.T. has moral restrictions. If we deny that we are obliged to follow the moral example of Christ (in the process making him “Lord” Rom 10:9) then we deny that salvation saves us from sin and makes us righteous like Christ. It is powerless then? We are not saved just by following Christ’s example, but those that refuse to submit their lives to God’s will¹² and to fight sin just don’t have saving faith.

(4) **The bodily resurrection¹³ of Jesus Christ from the grave.** The Bible says that Jesus, being completely God and completely man and without sin, died for the sins of the world on the cross of Calvary, shedding his blood, and dying at the end. On the third day, Jesus rose from the grave in a demonstration of the approval of God for his sacrifice. This is the essence of Christianity.

(5) **The immanent return of Jesus Christ in judgment and to close the book and finish the time that God has given man to accept salvation.** Acts 1:11 and John 14:3 make clear that Jesus will return the same way he left. The books of Daniel and Revelation give us an orientation about the final events of this time when God cuts short the work on the earth. According to these, God will judge with violence the world and humanity for the sin of not seeking God. 1 Thess 1:10 says that the return of Jesus is for the purpose of removing the saved from the earth¹⁴ and this pending judgment. Although the exact sequence and order of these events are not as clear as we would like them to be, but the fact is that Jesus will return in any moment. This fundamental is the motive which causes us to do

¹¹ **Antinomianism** – That Christians are neither under the law nor moral restrictions of any type.

¹² **Will of God:** Mark 3:35, 1 John 2:17 *he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.* Eph 6:6 *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;*

To be saved is to subject oneself to the will of God.

¹³ **Resurrection:** Lukes 24:36-46; 1 Cor 15:1-4; 15:14-15; Romans 10:9; 1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 1:7

¹⁴ **Rapture of the believers:** This is a taking away of the believers from the earth. 1 Th. 4:16.

everything possible to live piously, to serve God with all our being, to evangelize, pray, and preach all that we can. Because the time is short, we want to be found faithful towards reaching the unsaved which will go to hell when God finishes everything, so the fundamentalist works hard because the time of grace is ending quickly.

(6) **A belief in the fundamentals and a practice of separation against those who do not hold the fundamentals or who live in sin.** Part of the fundamentals of the Christian faith is a realization and prioritizing of the fundamentals for what they are: essential for salvation, essential for pleasing God, and essential for fellowship with other Christians. This belief causes us not to accept just whomever that says “*he is a brother is Christ*” if he does not align himself with the essential truth of the Word of God. If they do not resort to and live in these fundamentals, involving themselves in them such that their attitude is to reject sin and affirm these teachings of Scripture, then we must cut our fellowship and communion with that person, church, or group. This is essentially church discipline against an unrepentant “brother” who refuses to work to change his life of sin and error. If we deal with a group or church instead of an individual, it is called ecclesiastical separation.

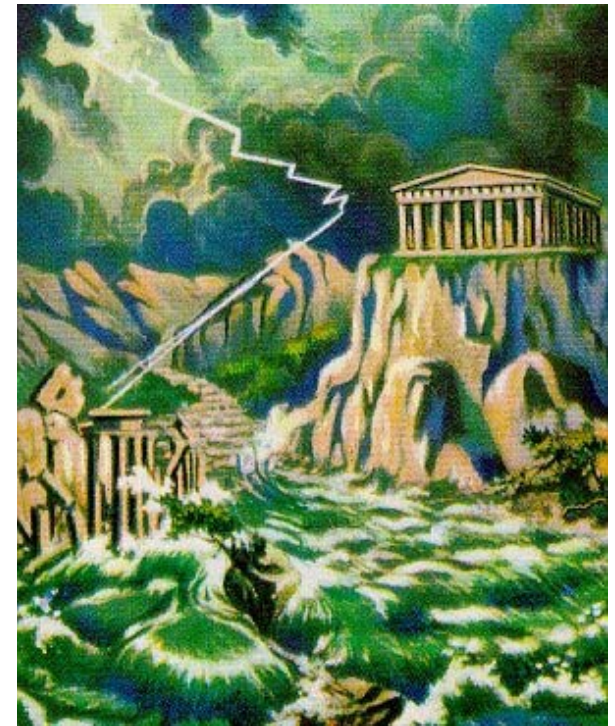
We cannot proclaim eternal punishment on these people (John 5:22) because God has left this for Jesus, but neither can we accept these people as brothers without the criteria of correct doctrine and conduct. We see the many biblical condemnations against false prophets, false teachers, and against false brethren, and we conclude that doctrine and conduct is what determines our reception of someone as a brother and our fellowship with him or not. We also see in 1 Corinthians 5 that God condemned the church for not exercising discipline and separation when it had reason to do so, in the case of open sin without repentance.

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials liberty, in everything, charity” - Augustine

The Fundamentals of the Christian Faith

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*He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and **laid the foundation on a rock**: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: **for it was founded upon a rock**. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that **without a foundation** built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and **the ruin of that house was great**. Luke 6:49*

Jesus proposed the concept of fundamentalism, that there are certain essential parts of the Scriptures (biblical beliefs) that in erring on them it would result in the perdition of everything, even your soul in hell and your salvation.