

It Is Believed

Major Doctrines And Who Believes Them

Outlines by Tim O'Hearn

The Lessons

1. Islam
2. Inspiration
3. Sabbath & the Law of Moses
4. Trinity & the Divinity of Jesus
5. Baptism
6. Church Organization
7. Lord's Supper
8. Afterlife
9. Divorce & Remarriage
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Note: Some doctrines such as the nature of God (theology), the study of angels (angelology), Mariology, saints (hagiology), and many others, were arbitrarily left out of this study. Reasons include that they were commonly agreed upon, were unique to one group, I simply didn't want to discuss them, or the study was getting too long with the ones included. Eschatology (last things), and particularly the variations on millennial doctrine were not included because that would be a full study in itself. Islam was included as a topic of current interest about which most Americans knew very little. Other religions such as Buddhism, Judaism, and Sikhism, although more common in American than Islam, were not included because they did not have the currency Islam has had since September 11, 2001.

Islam

- I. A brief history
 - A. Mohammed, the Prophet (570-632 AD)
 - B. The Caliphs
 - C. Sunni Sect
 - 1. The largest sect
 - 2. Follow the first five Caliphs
 - D. Shiite Sect
 - 1. Persian (Iranian) Islam
 - 2. Reject the first three Caliphs
 - 3. The twelve Imam's and the Mahdi
- II. The Five Pillars
 - A. LA-ILAHA-ILLA-ALLAH "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His prophet."
 - B. Prayer
 - 1. Five times a day
 - 2. The earth is God's holy place
 - 3. Washing with running water or sand
 - 4. The raka'h, the ritual for prayer.
 - C. Fasting during Ramadan
 - 1. From dawn to sunset
 - 2. Commemorates the first contact of Jibril (Gabriel) with Mohammed
 - D. Alms
 - 1. According to a mathematical formula, but voluntary
 - 2. Usually given to government or schools/mosques today
 - E. Pilgrimage to Mecca
 - 1. If possible (only about 10% do so)
 - 2. Earns the title Haji and the right to wear the green turban
- III. Fundamental Doctrines
 - A. Monotheism
 - 1. One God
 - 2. No trinity, no begotten Son
 - 3. Equality before God. No man needs an intercessor.
 - B. The Nabis (Prophets)
 - 1. Possibly as many as 124,000
 - 2. Each prophet was suited for his time
 - 3. The six People of Determination
 - a. Adam, the chosen of God
 - b. Noah, the preacher of God
 - c. Abraham, the friend of God
 - d. Moses, the speaker of God
 - e. Jesus, the word of God
 - f. Mohammed, the Apostle of God
 - 4. Every man is a Muslim
 - C. The Qur'an (Koran)
 - 1. Given by God through Jibril to Mohammed

2. The only uncorrupted, never changed text of God's revelation (although some non-Muslims would argue it has been changed)
 3. Untranslatable
- D. Kindness
1. Required of all
 2. Elevation of women
 3. Kindness to animals
- E. The Afterlife
1. To those who Submit to God, do good works, and gain God's favor
 2. Good works weighed against evil
 3. Paradise and Hell
- F. Adultery and drunkenness prohibited (limited polygamy is not adultery)
- G. Tell the truth at all times.
- IV. So where do we differ?
- A. The nature of God
1. God's love vs Allah's love (1 Jn 4:7-10; Rom 5:6-10)
 2. God is not the author of evil (Gen 1; 1 Cor 14:33)
 3. "The man who is led astray by Allah" (Jas 1:13-15)
- B. Inspiration
1. 2 Tim 3:16-17
 2. The Qur'an as the only uncorrupted word of God
 3. The Abraham story (Isaac as chosen son vs. Ishmael as chosen son)
 4. Gal 1:8-9
- C. Jesus
1. Only a prophet (Jn 1:1-14; 1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 10:30; Jn 17)
 2. No substitutionary sacrifice (Heb 9:26-28)
 3. Second coming (2 Thes 1:6-10)
- D. Salvation
1. By works (Eph 2:8-10)
 2. By God's good favor (2 Pet 3:9)
 3. Can't know until judged whether saved (1 Jn 3:24; 1 Jn 5:13)

Inspiration

- I. The Doctrines
 - A. Inspiration
 - 1. Verbal—Word for word inspired, but using personality of the writer; Baptists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Latter Day Saints (KJV only), Roman Catholic, Adventists
 - 2. General—Thought for thought inspired, writer had personal choice of phrasing; Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Quakers
 - 3. Common (like Shakespeare or Stephen King)—Modernists, Unitarians
 - B. Interpretation
 - 1. Literal—Most who accept verbal inspiration, “Fundamentalists”
 - 2. Fluid—Christian Science, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Methodists
 - C. Completeness of Bible
 - 1. Canon of Bible without Apocrypha—Eastern Orthodox, Protestants
 - 2. Additional scriptures
 - a. The Apocrypha—Roman Catholics
 - b. The Book of Mormon—Latter Day Saints
 - 3. Tongues—Pentecostals, many in each group
 - 4. Vital concept relating to authority of scriptures.
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Inspiration
 - 1. 2 Tim 3:16—literally “Breathed by God”
 - a. Not “inspired” (breathed in)
 - b. Does not address method but origin
 - 2. 2 Tim 2:15—Word of truth
 - 3. 2 Pet 1:21—“As moved by the Holy Spirit.”
 - 4. 1 Cor 2:13—“Words” which the Holy Spirit teaches
 - B. Interpretation
 - 1. If verbal inspiration, then each word is important.
 - 2. 2 Pet 1:19-20
 - 3. 2 Tim 1:13-14
 - C. Completeness
 - 1. At no point does Bible say this is the last inspired writing.
 - 2. What about 2 Pet 1:3?
 - 3. Have tongues ended?
 - a. 1 Cor 13:8-10—Can not be second coming or end of world
 - b. Acts 8:14-20—“through laying on of the apostles’ hands”
 - c. If not, then why not accept the Qur’an?

The Sabbath and the Law of Moses

- I. The Doctrines
 - A. Entire Law required—Some Messianic Jews
 - B. Ten Commandments—Seventh Day Adventists, Seventh Day Baptists
 - C. Ten Commandments but Sabbath changed—Some Catholics and others
 - D. Ten Commandments less Sabbath—Most Protestant groups
 - E. None of the Law—Some churches of Christ
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. The Sabbath
 - 1. Commanded
 - a. Ex 16:22-30
 - b. Ex 20:10-11
 - c. Deut 5:12-15
 - 2. Does it apply today?
 - a. Matt 24:20
 - b. Acts 15:23-29—Notable for not mentioning Sabbath
 - c. Col 2:16-17—Does not prohibit Sabbath keeping, but does not require it
 - 3. Has it been changed?
 - a. As pointed out by Sabbatarians, no scripture says so.
 - b. Rev 1:10—Sunday or Saturday? Don't know.
 - B. Are the Ten Commandments binding on Christians?
 - 1. “All but one are repeated in the New Testament.” Does that mean we keep the Law of Moses? Laws of England repeated in U.S. Constitution.
 - 2. Eph 2:14-18—Jesus abolished separation between Jew and Gentile
 - 3. Acts 15 applies here as well.
 - 4. Jas 2:8-13—If keep part of Law, bound by whole law

Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus

- I. The Doctrines
 - A. Trinity
 - 1. One God, no trinity—Unitarians, Jehovah’s Witnesses
 - 2. One God experienced in three manifestations—Christian Scientists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians
 - 3. One God in three Persons—Congregationalists, Orthodox, Lutherans, Latter Day Saints, Roman Catholics, some among Baptists, Disciples of Christ, churches of Christ
 - 4. Not a doctrine essential to understand—most Baptists, many Disciples of Christ, many in churches of Christ, Quakers
 - B. Deity of Christ
 - 1. Christ was not divine—Unitarians, Jehovah’s Witnesses
 - 2. Christ became divine—some minor groups
 - 3. Christ was fully God and fully man—Roman Catholics, Orthodox, most Protestant Groups not previously mentioned.
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Trinity
 - 1. Matt 28:19-20
 - 2. Jn 8:54; Jn 1:1; Acts 5:3-4—All are called God
 - 3. Matt 3:13-17 et al.
 - 4. 1 Cor 12:4-6
 - 5. 2 Cor 13:14
 - 6. 1 Pet 1:2
 - 7. 1 Jn 5:6-7
 - 8. Does Genesis 1 (“Let US ...”) teach the Trinity? No.
 - a. Ex 7:1
 - b. Jud 11:24
 - B. Deity of Christ
 - 1. Jn 1:1-14
 - 2. 1 Jn 4:14-16
 - 3. Jn 10:30
 - 4. Jn 17:11
 - 5. Mt 1:23
 - 6. Acts 20:28

Baptism

- I. The Doctrines
 - A. The Necessity of Baptism
 - 1. Necessary for and the point at which one receives salvation—Catholics, Orthodox, some Disciples of Christ, most churches of Christ, Seventh Day Adventists
 - 2. Necessary but after salvation—Baptists, some Disciples of Christ, some churches of Christ, Lutherans,
 - 3. Necessary for entrance into the church—Congregationalists
 - 4. An act of dedication—Episcopals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Methodists, Latter Day Saints, Presbyterians, Unitarians
 - 5. Not normally practiced—Christian Science, Quakers
 - B. The mode of Baptism
 - 1. Immersion—Baptists, Catholics, Orthodox (triple), Disciples of Christ, churches of Christ, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists
 - 2. Usually sprinkling or pouring—Congregationalists, Episcopals, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Unitarians
 - C. Infant Baptism
 - 1. As a result of Original Sin—Catholics, Orthodox, some Episcopals, most Presbyterians
 - 2. As a form of Dedication—Congregationalists, Methodists, some Episcopals, some Presbyterians, Unitarians
 - 3. Not practiced—Baptists, Disciples of Christ, churches of Christ, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Necessity
 - 1. Matt 28:19-20
 - 2. Mk 16:16
 - 3. Acts 2:38, 41
 - 4. Acts 10:47-48
 - 5. Acts 22:16
 - 6. Rom 6:3-5
 - 7. 1 Cor 1:17
 - 8. 1 Cor 12:13-14
 - 9. Gal 3:27
 - 10. 1 Pet 3:21
 - B. Mode
 - 1. *Baptizo* means “to immerse”
 - 2. Jn 3:23
 - 3. Acts 8:36-39
 - 4. Rom 6:4
 - 5. Col 2:12
 - C. Infant Baptism
 - 1. Original Sin
 - a. Ps 51:5—does not say he inherited sin
 - b. Ezek 18 (particularly v. 20)

- c. Rom 5:12
 - d. What about “all have sinned”?
 - (1) Rom 3:9, 23
 - (2) Rom 5:12
 - (3) Gal 3:22
 - e. Heb 4:15—Original sin necessitates Immaculate Conception of Mary and/or the Gnostic view that Jesus was not man
2. Are infants subjects of baptism?
- a. Mk 16:16
 - b. Acts 8:36-38
 - c. Acts 16:15
 - d. Acts 16:33

Church Organization

- I. The Doctrines
 - A. Each congregation autonomous, pastors=elders=bishops—churches of Christ, some Disciples of Christ, some Orthodox, some Quakers
 - B. Each congregation under a higher human authority—pretty much all others, although Presbyterians claim but don't always practice congregational autonomy
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Congregational Autonomy
 - 1. Acts 14:23
 - 2. Tit 1:5
 - 3. 1 Pet 5:2—"among you"
 - 4. Acts 15—Does this show one church legislating for others?
 - 5. Apostolic succession
 - a. Acts 1:21-26
 - b. Acts 8:18-19—If the apostles couldn't pass on the ability to confer the gifts of the Spirit, why should we think they could pass on other authority?
 - B. Pastors (shepherds), elders (presbyters), and bishops (overseers)
 - 1. Acts 20:28—Pastors=Bishops
 - 2. 1 Pet 5:1-2—Elder=Pastor=Bishop

The Lord's Supper

- I. The Doctrines
 - A. Frequency
 - 1. Weekly—Catholics, most churches of Christ, many Disciples of Christ, many Episcopalians, Orthodox
 - 2. Monthly—Most Baptists
 - 3. Quarterly or 4 times yearly—Orthodox (minimum standard), Seventh Day Adventists
 - 4. Once a year—Jehovah's Witnesses (on Passover)
 - B. The elements
 - 1. Unleavened bread & wine/grape juice for all—Some Catholics, Most Protestants, churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ (some churches of Christ specify unfermented grape juice; others require fermented wine)
 - 2. Leavened bread and wine/grape juice—some among several groups
 - 3. Unleavened bread for most & wine for priests—some Catholics
 - 4. Bread & water—some Latter Day Saints
 - 5. No physical elements—Christian Scientists
 - C. Sacrament (confers special holiness or forgiveness of sins)
 - 1. Yes—Catholics, some Orthodox
 - 2. No—most others
 - D. Transubstantiation (whole substance of bread and wine become body and blood of Christ)
 - 1. Yes—Catholics
 - 2. No—almost everyone else
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Frequency
 - 1. 1 Cor 11:25—"As often as you drink it."
 - 2. Acts 20:7—May refer to Lord's Supper
 - 3. Jehovah's Witnesses hold that since it was part of Passover meal (Mtt 26; Mk 14; Lk 22) it would be sinful to take it more often.
 - B. The Elements
 - 1. Unleavened bread
 - a. Mtt 26:17
 - b. Mk 14:12
 - c. Lk 22:7
 - 2. Fruit of the vine
 - a. Mtt 26:29
 - b. Mk 14:25
 - c. Lk 22:18
 - d. Ex 12:20—must the fruit of the vine be unfermented? Leaven only applied to grain products.
 - C. Sacrament—1 Cor 11:28-29
 - D. Transubstantiation
 - 1. Mtt 26:26-28 (and parallel passages)
 - 2. Jn 8:12
 - 3. Jn 10:7
 - 4. Jn 15:1-5

Afterlife

- I. The Doctrines
 - A. Heaven
 - 1. Literal place of reward—some among most Protestant groups, most church of Christ, Latter Day Saints, Catholics, Orthodox, Seventh Day Adventists (but no consciousness between death and Heaven/Hell)
 - 2. Not reward, but presence of God—Congregationalists, Episcopalians
 - 3. Limited to 144,000 people plus inhabitants of spiritual realm, all other righteous to live eternally on New Earth—Jehovah's Witnesses
 - 4. Heaven and Hell are states of mind on earth—Christian Science
 - B. Hell
 - 1. Literal place of punishment—most but not all who believe in heaven as such
 - 2. Merely absence of God—Congregationalists, Episcopalians
 - 3. Place of rest in hope of resurrection—Jehovah's Witnesses
 - C. Purgatory—Roman Catholics
 - D. Annihilation
 - 1. Total—Unitarians (God will neither punish nor reward)
 - 2. Partial—Jehovah's Witnesses (for unrighteous)
 - E. State of soul between death and judgement
 - 1. Unaware—Seventh Day Adventists, some others
 - 2. Aware—Most Christian groups
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Heaven
 - 1. 550 references to heaven (though some refer only to the skies), 230 in NT and 54 in Revelation
 - 2. Matt 8:11—shows that men will be in heaven with God
 - 3. Jn 14:1-3
 - 4. 1 Thes 4:16-17
 - 5. 1 Pet 1:3-5
 - 6. All other passages, including those in Revelation, do not speak of men being in heaven, except perhaps references to the elders and others around the throne.
 - B. Hell
 - 1. Many places translated Hell refer to the grave
 - 2. Matt 25:31-46
 - 3. 2 Thes 1:7-10
 - 4. Rev 20:11-15
 - 5. Rev 21:8
 - C. Purgatory—Lk 16:26
 - D. Annihilation
 - 1. Matt 25:31-46
 - 2. Lk 16:19-31
 - E. State of soul between death and judgement—Lk 16:19-31

Divorce and Remarriage

- I. The doctrines
 - A. Divorce
 - 1. Under no circumstances—Episcopalians (in America), Roman Catholics
 - 2. Only for marital infidelity—Baptists, Disciples of Christ, churches of Christ, Jehovah's Witnesses, Quakers, Seventh Day Adventists
 - 3. For marital infidelity and certain serious causes (desertion, abuse)—some churches of Christ, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, Methodists, Latter Day Saints, Presbyterians
 - 4. No doctrinal position—Christian Scientists, Congregationalists, Unitarians
 - B. Remarriage
 - 1. No, as long as both partners are still alive—Quakers, Roman Catholics
 - 2. The wronged party—some churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Eastern Orthodox (but no more than three marriages), Methodists, Presbyterians (after a minimum of a year)
 - 3. Either, under some circumstances—Baptists, some churches of Christ, Episcopalians, Lutherans
 - 4. No doctrinal position—same as above
 - 5. A remarried person divorced for other than adultery must stop living with second mate if becomes a Christian—some churches of Christ
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Divorce
 - 1. Deut 24:1
 - 2. Ezra 10:1-14
 - 3. Mal 2:14-16
 - 4. Matt 5:31-32
 - 5. Matt 19:3-12
 - 6. Mk 10:2-9
 - 7. 1 Cor 7:10-16
 - B. Remarriage
 - 1. Deut 24:2-4
 - 2. Matt 19:9
 - 3. Mk 10:10-12
 - 4. Lk 16:18

Medical Matters

I. Divine Healing and Christian Science

A. The Doctrines

1. Miraculous, instantaneous healing by certain individuals—Pentecostals, some Catholics, some in most groups including churches of Christ
2. Only through divine intervention as a result of prayer and physicians—most Baptists, most churches of Christ, many in other non-Pentecostal groups
3. Sickness is an illusion. God heals by taking away illusion through prayer and understanding of scriptures—Christian Science (note: the only “pastors” in Christian Science are the KJV Bible and Mrs. Eddy’s Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures)

B. What does the Bible say?

1. Goes back to the question of the ending of miraculous gifts (see outline on Inspiration)
2. Mk 16:20—purpose of miracles
3. Lk 22:50-51; Jn 11:38-44; Acts 3—faith by recipient not required
4. 2 Sam 12:15; Deut 7:15; Acts 28:8—among examples of real diseases

II. Transfusions

A. The Doctrines

1. Unnecessary—Christian Science
2. Never to be done—Jehovah’s Witnesses, some others in various groups
3. No objection to transfusions—most others

B. What does the Bible say?

1. Gen 9:4-6
2. Lev 19:26
3. Deut 12:16, 23; Deut 15:23
4. 1 Sam 14:32-35
5. Acts 15:20-29

III. Birth Control and Abortion

A. The Doctrines

1. Birth Control—opposed by Catholics; accepted by most others as individual choice
2. Abortion—opposed by Catholics, most churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ/Baptists, many in other groups; accepted by most others as individual choice

B. What does the Bible say?

1. Birth Control
 - a. Gen 1:28
 - b. Ps 127:3
 - c. Does not state requirement for number of children
 - d. Is it a sin, then, not to have any children?
2. Abortion
 - a. Jud 13:5-7(?)
 - b. Jer 1:5(?)
 - c. Ex 21:22-25 (pre-born not considered a life?)
 - d. Lk 1:41-44

Calvinism

- I. The doctrines
 - A. Total Depravity
 - a. Man is totally sinful, he can do no good unless elect of God
 - b. There is nothing man can do to remove sin or guilt
 - B. Unconditional Election
 - a. God chooses whom to save on His terms, not on man's merit
 - b. God chooses whom not to save on His terms, not on man's lack of merit
 - c. No matter how much good a man does, if not elect he will not be saved
 - d. Because God is just, his choices must be just
 - C. Limited Atonement
 - a. Jesus only died for the elect
 - b. Only a certain predetermined number will be among the elect
 - D. Irresistible Grace
 - a. If you are of the elect, you cannot refuse God's grace
 - b. If you are of the elect you have no choice but to live righteously
 - c. If you live sinfully you must not have been among the elect even if it appeared so once
 - E. Perseverance of the Saints
 - a. Since God's grace is irresistible, elect can not later choose to leave God's grace
 2. Commonly expressed as "once saved, always saved"
- II. What does the Bible say?
 - A. Total Depravity/Original Sin
 - a. Rom 3:23—Not saying each individual has sinned, but that Jew and Gentile both have sinned
 - b. Rom 5:12
 - c. 1 Jn 1:8-10
 - d. But Total Depravity necessarily denies Jesus came in the flesh
 - (1) Heb 4:15
 - (2) 1 Jn 4:2-3
 - e. See also "original sin" in the outline on baptism
 - B. Unconditional Election
 - a. Jn 1:12-13
 - b. Acts 13:48
 - c. Eph 2:4-10
 - d. Rom 9:15
 - e. Predestination—individuals or the church?
 - (1) Rom 8:29-30
 - (2) Eph 1:3-14
 - f. Php 2:12
 - g. Acts 10:34-35
 - C. Limited Atonement
 - a. Rom 5:6-11—But doesn't say how many are saved
 - b. 1 Cor 15:3—Again, doesn't say whether the "our" is limited or universal
 - c. Matt 20:28; 26:28—"Many", not "all"
 - d. Jn 17:2

- e. Acts 17:30-31—(take with Isa 46:10)
 - f. Jn 1:7
 - g. Rom 5:18
 - h. 1 Tim 2:3-4
 - i. Tit 2:11-14
- D. Irresistible Grace
- a. Rom 11:26-32 (using “irrevocable” in v 29 instead of the more proper “unregretted/unrepented of”)
 - b. Rom 2:4
 - c. Matt 16:24-25
- E. Perseverance of the Saints
- a. Jn 10:28-29
 - b. Php 1:6
 - c. 2 Pet 1:10-11
 - d. Gal 5:4—Only time where “fall” and “grace” come together
 - e. 1 Cor 9:27
 - f. 1 Cor 10:12
 - g. Jude (the entire book)
 - h. Someone once counted over 200 passages showing the possibility of falling from grace
- F. Some other thoughts
- a. If these doctrines are true, what is the value of evangelism?
 - b. If these doctrines are true, what is the value of the church?
 - c. If these doctrines are true, what is the value of Christ’s blood; if only for the saved, why necessary at all?
 - d. Many will accept a modified Calvinism, accepting T and P but rejecting the rest (most Baptists).