

# A SUMMARY OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN BELIEFS & CHALLENGES TO BIBLICAL TRUTHS

| BELIEFS                                               | ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN BELIEFS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | HERESIES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE TRINITY</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>God is Triune - One God in Three Persons -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God the Father • Jesus Christ the Son • Holy Spirit</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>All Three Persons of the Trinity are -</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>consubstantial (of one substance),</i><br/><i>co-equal (all equal)</i><br/><i>co-eternal (all eternal)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>There was never a time when they did not exist.</b><br/><b>Jesus Christ existed before the creation of the universe and was co-Creator.</b></p> | <p><b>Arianism</b> asked How can the Son be the Father? Arius claimed the Father existed before the Son and they were not co-eternal</p> <p><b>Islam</b> denies the Trinity, claiming Jesus was simply a prophet like Mohammed. Muslims also believe Christians worship three gods, not one.</p> <p><b>Jehovah's Witnesses</b> also deny the divinity of Christ, claiming he is the Archangel Michael in human form.</p> <p><b>Macedonianism</b> said the Holy Spirit was not God, just a servant like the angels.</p> <p><b>Marcionism</b> claimed that the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New.</p> <p><b>Modalism</b> claimed God is One Person in three modes - one mode at a time.</p> <p><b>Monarchianism</b> denied three separate beings in the Trinity - they are just three facets of the one Person (just as the sun is hot, round &amp; bright at the same time)</p> <p><b>Mormonism</b> uses the term trinity to mean three gods among many gods. PH 03 03 08</p> |

## JESUS CHRIST

The Biblical doctrine of the Christian Church has maintained that Jesus Christ is

- *co-eternal & co-equal* with the Father & Spirit
- *co-creator* of the universe with Father & Spirit
- He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (*supernatural conception*) and born of the Virgin Mary (*natural birth*)
- He is thus *both* fully divine *and* fully human.
- He was crucified on a cross by Pontius Pilate for our sins,
- died a physical death and was buried, and
- rose again bodily from the dead to give us eternal life & the promise of physical resurrection.
- He ascended back to heaven
- He is coming again to judge the living & the dead and to bring in God's eternal reign.

**Arianism** claimed that Jesus Christ was not co-eternal with God the Father but was created. The Nicene Creed of 325AD was an answer to this heresy.

**Docetism** claimed that Christ was wholly divine but only seemed human (Greek *dokesis = appearance*).

**Ebionites** believed Jesus was just a prophet, not divine as God incarnate.

**Eutychianism** claimed Jesus was just divine, not human

**Islam** acknowledges the humanity of Jesus born of Mary, but denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, saying he was just a prophet. Muslims also deny the death for sins and the physical resurrection of Christ.

**Jehovah's Witnesses** deny the physical resurrection of Christ

**Monophysitism** denied Christ's humanity, saying he had a single (*mono*) divine nature. This is the doctrine of Eastern orthodox churches today.

**Mormonism** claims that Christ's death bought general atonement for all. They also practise baptism on behalf of the dead for remission of sins.

**Nestorianism** claimed that Jesus was born a human being only and was filled with the divine logos, or spirit.

**New Age beliefs** claim there is no such thing as sin, judgement, heaven or hell, and therefore no need for faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. PH 03 03 08

## MANKIND, SIN & SALVATION

### Biblical doctrine holds that

- Mankind is subject to original sin as a result of Adam & Eve's disobedience.
- Man cannot save himself by good works - only by responding to God's gracious offer to all of salvation through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.
- Mankind has free will to choose to accept this or not, but God knows who are his children (election and pre-destination).

**Original sin & mankind's inability to save himself**, which was denied by Pelagius in **Pelagianism**.

**Donatism** held that the validity of baptism depended on the holiness of the person baptising you (thus denying the finished work of Christ on the cross)

**Gnosticism** was a heresy Paul wrote about in his letters to churches in Asia Minor (especially COLOSSIANS), and which has become popular again through the Gnostic gospels (eg of Thomas) found at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. It claimed that salvation was only for those with secret spiritual knowledge (Greek word *gnosis*= knowledge). Angel worship is part of this pseudo-super-spirituality, which denies the finished work of Jesus Christ's death & resurrection.

**Other heresies, including New Age beliefs**, deny the need for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ's death on the cross for sins. You simply need to seek the god within YOU PH 03 03 08