BASICS OF CHRISTIANITY

A Biblical Overview of Six Key Elements of the Christian Faith

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BASICS OF CHRISTIANITY - PART 1: THE SCRIPTURES

A. INTRODUCTION

God is a Spirit. Man cannot discover God by physical sensory means e.g. eye, ear etc. Therefore, if man is to know God, God must reveal Himself. God has revealed Himself to man in two main ways.

B. REVELATION

1. General Revelation (Nature)
   a. Creation reveals (Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:18-20)
      i. That there is a God
      ii. Something of God's nature & character e.g. goodness, wisdom, power
   b. Human conscience – God's moral law is written on man's heart (Romans 2:15)
      N.B. In the Bible the "heart" is the control centre for man's being
   c. Providence – governance of the world e.g. rain etc (Acts 14:17)
   d. Collectively a,b & c (above) reveal God to man
   e. Problem
      i. Man is a sinner who suppresses and distorts these truths (Romans 1:18)
      ii. Man does not correctly interpret the truths that general revelation reveals
      iii. Man is unable to discover how to be free from sin and how to get right with God
      iv. Man needs to receive additional or special revelation
2. Special Revelation (Bible)
   a. Reveals who God is and what man must believe about God (Exodus 20:2,5,6)
   b. Reveals who man is and what God requires of him (2 Kings 17:13)
   c. Reveals man's condition before God i.e. man is a condemned sinner facing certain judgment (Romans 1:18; Hebrews 9:27)
   d. Reveals the only way that man can get right with God (2 Timothy 3:15)
   e. Reveals Jesus Christ: God's final "word" to man (John 1:18; Hebrews 1:1-2)
3. General revelation is only properly understood through the lens of special revelation

C. The BIBLE IS UNIQUE

1. Original manuscripts (autographs) were "inspired" by God
   a. "God breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16)
   b. The human authors were "moved" by God to write His word (2 Peter 1:21)
   c. The Bible (Scripture) is not like other books: God used human authors to write His book
   d. As a result, the Bible is true and free of error (Numbers 23:19)
2. The Bible is God's standard
   a. It contains God's complete and sufficient *final r*evelation
   b. It is God's rule for faith and practice – it reveals how man should live a life that pleases God (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
3. Evidences which confirm the uniqueness of the Bible
   a. Countless prophecies accurately fulfilled
      i. Jesus Christ's birth place cf Micah 5:2 (700BC) and Matthew 2:1
      ii. Christ pierced for our sins cf Isaiah 53:5 (700BC); Zechariah 12:10 (520BC); John 19:37; Revelation 1:7 (Christ's 2nd coming)/Revelation 6:15-17
      iii. Christ's garments not torn but divided by lot cf Psalm 22:18 (1000BC) and John 19:24
   b. Archeological discoveries – verify the Biblical record of history
   c. Harmony and continuity of the subject matter (John 20:31) despite being:
      i. Written over a 1500year time span

ii. Written by > 40 authors from every walk of life including kings (Solomon), shepherds (Amos), politicians (Daniel), fishermen (Peter), statesman (Moses), poets (David), doctors (Luke), military generals (Joshua), tax collectors (Matthew) etc.

iii. Written in different places and times
e.g. palace, desert, prison, travelling, military campaign

iv. Written in:
- three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek)
- on three continents (Asia, Africa, Europe)