

Essential Beliefs

Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a perfect sinless life. He fulfilled God's promises to redeem and save humanity through his death on the cross as an atonement for our sins. He was resurrected and has ascended into heaven where we await his return. (2 Cor. 5:21, 1 John 2:1-2, 1 Cor. 15:19-25)

Why Virgin Birth/Conception?

- Jesus must have been divine from conception to be God.
- He cannot have assumed or taken over a human body.
- Some believe this was essential to keep Christ free from original sin.
- This is also further evidence that life begins at conception.

Objections

- There are many who object to the virgin birth.
- Their objection is understandable because it goes against all we know of nature.
- However, it is not something we can discard because it is essential to the faith.
- It is more essential than miracles like the universal flood or Jonah and the whale.

Maryology

- The immaculate conception is the Roman Catholic doctrine that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin.
- This doctrine developed out of a genuine concern to preserve Christ's sinlessness.
- They were worried that Christ could somehow receive original sin from Mary.
- This fully develops into the doctrine of Mary's continual sinlessness.

Sinlessness of Christ

- We believe Jesus was conceived and lived continually without a single hint of sin.
- This sinless perfection is required because He is God.
- This sinlessness is required in order to atone for our sins.
- To be imperfect or sinful is not part of being truly human.

Atonement

- He has kept all of God's promises.
- He came to save humanity and to atone for our sins.
- There are different ways to view the atonement.
- Moral influence: Christ's death begins to restore us from the disease of sin.
- Exemplar: Christ's death is the example humanity is to follow.
- Ransom: His death paid our ransom to free us from sin.
- Recapitulation: He became like we are so we can become like He is.
- Satisfaction: Jesus satisfies the debt and injustice our sin has created.

- Substitutionary: Christ died in our place to redeem us.
- Christus Victor: Christ's death defeats sin and the kingdom of darkness.
- The essential is that our sin has been atoned for and have been redeemed.
- There are many who would deny substitutionary atonement, but they are not necessarily denying an essential of the faith.

Resurrection

- We believe that Christ did not just die but was miraculously brought to life.
- It is not a nice belief that developed later.
- It was not a case of the disciples being mistaken or deceived.
- If Christ has not been raised, then our entire faith is futile.
- Christianity makes no sense if the resurrection of Christ is untrue.

Ascension

- We believe Jesus has ascended into heaven.
- This is an ignored and underappreciated portion of Christ's work.
- Jesus did not die again or simply disappear.
- This answers the question, "where is Jesus now?"

Return

- Revelation and eschatology are widely contested by believers.
- The essential everyone must share is that Christ will physically return one day.
- We have freedom to disagree on plenty of particulars.
- It is heretical to claim He has already physically returned, or that His return will only be spiritual and not physical.
- The final return of Christ is our hope.