

Fundamental Doctrines - I

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Chapter -- 1

Divinely Inspired Scripture

Every family needs someone to unite it, and every group of people also need something to unite it. In the same way, every faith group also needs a factor to unite it. For the Christian faith, it is the Bible that is the uniting factor.

However, there is something unique with the Bible that is not there with any other factor that unites people. Inspiration of the Bible is that unique factor. Of course, the word inspiration can confuse many people. For example, we often say that a picture, a place, or a person has given us much inspiration. However, when we use that word in relation to the Bible, it is used in a totally different way.

In 2 Timothy 2:16 we read, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness". Here the word is used in the sense that God gave His word to the writers the way they breathe -- as a totally integrated part of their being, and that they then wrote it exactly the way God gave it to them. This was not some kind of a mechanical dictation, nor did God use these writers the way one uses a typewriter to type what one has in

mind. Rather, in a perfectly natural way the Spirit of God allowed them to write exactly what He wanted them to pen down.

Since the Holy Bible has come to down to us in a unique way, the book is unique in many ways and we need to understand these things clearly. Some of these are:

- God has given Scripture in Old Testament times only through the Jewish Nation. In Psalms 147 verses 19 and 20 we read "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD"
- In the New Testament period, as is obvious, He has give us the Scripture only through Christians.
- There is no revelation outside the Bible. They have never understood it, and their scriptures do not contain Holy Spirit inspired revelation.

This means that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has added several other qualities to this book that is not found in any other book. Some of these qualities are:

- Bible is totally inerrant or free of errors. There are no scientific or historical errors in the

Scripture.

- The Bible is totally infallible. If it makes a pronouncement on any subject, that pronouncement is infallible. It is always right and nobody has the authority to change it.
- The Bible is the final court of authority for faith and conduct for believers. If it makes a statement, we accept it whether we understand it or not. An attempt to understand should be made, but our ability to understand should never become the criterion of its authority.

Human sin nature is in rebellion against God. It dislikes anything that claims to be from God. More so if that Scripture claims to be infallible and inerrant. Thus worldwide there is a movement to challenge and attack the Scripture. The problem is not with the Scripture but rather with the rebellion in human heart.

However, the inspiration, authority, infallibility and inerrancy are not negotiable doctrines. If someone does not want to believe them, then he cannot claim to be a committed Christian. He might be a born-again person but his commitment and obedience is to be questioned. He is in immediate need to subdue his rebellious mind to the discipline and discipling of the Scripture.

Summary: Have you ever seen a person who questions the reliability of the Bible? Be sure that this person is in rebellion somewhere in his/her life. The doctrine of inspiration of the Scripture is an essential foundation for, and of, the Christian faith.

Chapter -- 2

Justification by Faith

Justification by Faith is such an essential doctrine of the Christian faith that the entire Protestant Reformation came up because of this doctrine. It all starts from the question of man's condition before God.

Even those who do not have access to the Bible or the Christian message know that man is a sinner. "All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God" is inherently recognized by people of all nations, times, and cultures. That is the reason why people worldwide do all kinds of penance and other things to get rid of their sins and iniquities.

While they struggle in their own man-made methods, never getting an assurance of forgiveness because no human method can earn forgiveness, the Scripture explains the subject to God's children in great detail.

According to the Scripture, sin has created a number of needs and if a person needs to get a solution all these problems need to be solved. One of them is death. According to Romans 3:23, "The wages of sin is death" and the Holy Spirit makes it clear in the same passage that "the gift of God is everlasting life in Christ".

Thus everlasting death is a problem solved by God.

Another need of the sinner is to get forgiven for his sins. Again the Scripture in Ephesians 1:7 makes it clear that "In whom (Christ)we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace". Now the question is, is the forgiven person going to live as a former-sinner or as a totally-righteous person. Consider for example a person who has been jailed on a crime. It can be any crime. He pays for his crime either via a fine or through imprisonment or both. Once it is paid, he comes out as a former-criminal. He is no longer a criminal, he cannot any longer be punished for the crime for which has paid the price, but the stigma of "former" remains with him. The label of former-criminal is not something pleasant. The same is the problem in spiritual life.

When a person accepts Christ, His sins are surely forgiven. But the question is, does he continue as a former-sinner the way the world usually projects offenders who have paid their fine or served their sentence? The clear answer of the Scripture is "no". God, after He forgives people, also grants them a totally new status so that the forgiven sinner is no longer required to carry with him an identity full of stigma. God transforms the person by giving him a totally

new identity. This process is called "Justification" or justification by faith.

Some of the key verses about justification by faith are:

- Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
- Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.
- Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What the Scripture says in these passages is that once a person comes to Christ, and once he accepts Christ as his personal Saviour, God not only grants him forgiveness of sins, but He also "justifies" him. In other words, God not only forgives him, but also announces that this person has a totally new identity where God views him not as a former-sinner, but rather as a totally righteous person. This is purely an act of divine grace, and man cannot do anything to contribute to this process of justification. That is why we read that we are justified "freely" and by "grace". What is more, when God grants something freely and in His grace, it can be appropriated by man only and only by faith.

When God gives a gift, man can appropriate it only as a "gift" that he cannot earn. His human merits do not play a role. Since faith is a "non meritorious" response, humans obtain God's gifts by faith. That is why justification granted by God is called "Justification by Faith".

Summary: For many centuries the doctrine of Justification was suppressed by the Church. However, Martin Luther declared this doctrine openly, and that was the spark that ignited the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation came to its highest point when the Brethren movement started around the world. It came forth in India also around 110 years ago as a totally independent work of the Holy Spirit. Since we are heirs to that Reformation of Reformation, we need to stand strong for the doctrine of Justification by Faith.

About The Authors

Dr. Saneesh Cherian is an evangelist-teacher-writer from Plymouth Brethren Background. He studied under some of the greatest Brethren teachers of this generation at the Brethren Bible Institute during his BTh years.



He then went on to study for MDiv, ThD and PhD under scholars of repute. He made a substantial academic contribution by serving as the Academic Dean of several Bible Seminaries.

He is the author of more than 100 books and 1000 articles. This includes epochal works such as Systematic Theology and Christian Apologetics (800 pages each), Bible Encyclopedia (4 volumes), Dictionary of Theology, etc. He is also the Managing Editor of the prestigious Verpad (Separation) magazine.

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Dr. Johnson C. Philip is a senior Christian communicator, expositor, and apologist. A specialist in Quantum-nuclear Physics, he has done advanced studies in physics, archeology, communications and numismatics. He has authored more than 100 books and 10,000 articles.



Most of his books are available for free download. They are in Creative Commons copyright, which means that you can distributed them in any form that you like. You can also translate them into any language, provided the name of the author remains there.

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Every reform movement comes to slumber in a century or less. There are practically no exceptions in the last two millennia of church history. Thus each generation needs Ezras and Nehemiahs to rebuild the foundations that were once laid down but which are in ruins now! The only solution is to go back to the Bible and its fundamentals.

The authors stand unashamedly and without wavering on the following fundamental principles: Bible Alone (Sola Scriptura), Faith Alone (Sola Fide), Grace Alone (Sola Gratia), Christ Alone (Solus Christus). With this in mind we bring to you a set of writers who stand strong on these principles.

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