

THE JOURNEY OFFICIAL DOCTRINE



The Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, God's inerrant, infallible word given to humanity reveals his truth (*John 17:17*), his heart (*John 3:16*), and his purpose to the world (*Psalms 46:10*). There is no other literature like the Bible, no other writing that contains the revelation of God to man. It alone guides us in our daily living (*Psalms 119:130*) and is useful for teaching and training and correcting us. It alone is what we must measure all claims of truth against. God himself inspired the authors of every book contained in the Bible (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21*), so that what was written may be kept for all time by his sovereign protection (*1 Peter 1:23-25*), never to be added to and never to be changed (*Deuteronomy 12:32*).

God is not hidden, as though we must search to find him. Rather, he has revealed himself to us, that we might know him. He is the creator of the universe (*Genesis 1:1; Psalms 102:25*). He has always existed, never having a beginning, never ending (*Revelation 21:6*), and never changing (*Psalms 102:27; Malachi 3:6*). He is the most beautiful of all things (*Psalms 27:4*). He is love (*1 John 4:16*) and he loves the world (*John 3:16*). He is holy (*Isaiah 6:3*), he is merciful and forgiving (*Daniel 9:9*), he is compassionate (*Exodus 34:6*) he is just and rules the world with justice (*Psalms 67:4*) and will judge the world in righteousness (*Psalms 9:8*). He knows everything before it happens (*Psalms 139:4, 16*), everyone before they exist (*Psalms 139:14-15*), and he has the power to do as he sees fit and as he desires (*Psalms 115:3; 135:6*). He is one God (*Deuteronomy 6:4*), revealed in three persons (known as the trinity), the Father (*Matthew 6:9*), the Son (*Acts 9:20*), and the Holy Spirit (*John 17:26*). The trinity has always existed in perfect power, unity and community (*Genesis 1:26, Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14*), with a glory unmatched by any other (*Psalms 24:10*).

Jesus Christ was not merely a good man or a moral teacher; rather he is the Son of God (*John 20:31*), born of the virgin, Mary (*Luke 1:34-35*). He has always existed as a member of the trinity (*John 8:58*). He walked the earth as a man, yet maintained his complete deity (*Colossians 1:19; Hebrews 1:3*), worthy of our worship. He was without sin, (*2 Corinthians 5:21*) living a perfect life before laying his life down (*John 10:17*) to pay the price for the sins of the world (*1 John 2:2*) on a Roman cross nearly 2000 years ago. He died a physical death and was buried in a tomb (*John 19:38-42*). After 3 days, he physically rose from the grave (*1 Corinthians 15:20*), conquering the power of sin and death. He then showed himself to his disciples and many others, giving proof of his resurrection and offering hope to the world (*1 Corinthians 15:3-11*). After a time, he then ascended through the clouds (*Acts 1:9*) to sit at the right hand of the Father, where he now intercedes in prayer for the church (*Romans 8:34*). But he will not stay there forever, because he promises that he will return to the earth to claim those that are his (*Matthew 24:30-31*).

Jesus Christ's death and resurrection are vital for all of mankind because without his sacrificial death on the cross, humanity would be utterly hopeless of ever reaching the presence of God (*Hebrews 12:14*). While man is made in the image of God, there is a problem. Because of the fall of Adam and Eve (*Genesis 3:6*), all of humanity is stained with sin (*Romans 3:23*), alienated from God and incapable of rendering our lost situation on our own. No amount of good work or effort or church attendance or religious activity can be done to make up for the depravity of our souls (*Isaiah 64:6*). Left to our own devices, humanity can do nothing to meet the standards that God requires. We all stand guilty before God, worthy only of damnation (*Romans 6:23*).

But thankfully, God, who is rich in mercy (*Ephesians 2:4*), sent his son Jesus to live the life we should have lived and pay the price of death we should have to pay. Salvation is the gift of God, given to those who put their trust and faith in Jesus Christ (*Ephesians 2:8-9*). Upon trusting in Christ, one becomes a totally justified child of God (*Acts 13:39*), forgiven and redeemed (*Ephesians 1:7*), freed from the reign of sin and the power of death, secure for all eternity. This process is also known as being born again (*John 3:3*), and is not the end, but the beginning of a journey of walking with God and becoming more like him in character and conduct (*2 Corinthians 3:18*). Though we still struggle with sin, we can be confident that we have forgiveness (*1 John 1:9-10*), and nothing will ever separate us from the love of Christ (*Romans 8:38-39*).

The Holy Spirit is active in the world to convict of sin, righteousness and judgment (*John 16:8*). He is the chief agent in the process of bringing people to salvation in Jesus (*John 3:6*). He is the one who then dwells in the hearts of believers (*Galatians 4:6*), baptizing them into the body of Christ, sealing them and guaranteeing their inheritance into the eternal kingdom of God in heaven (*Ephesians 1:13-14*). He is the one who comforts us in our pain, the one who counsels us in our trials, and the one who guides us to live in all truth (*John 15:26*). He produces fruit in us that does not earn our salvation, but rather that is evidence that our salvation has and is taking place (*Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:8*).

Every believer in Christ makes up the body of Christ, which is the church. The church is not something we go to, nor is it something we do. Instead, the church is something we are. The Bible portrays the relationship between Christ and the church as that of a groom and his bride, with Jesus as the groom, and we the church as his bride (*Ephesians 5:32*). He is the leader of the church, the sanctifier of the church, the lover of the church (*Ephesians 5:23-27*). He is also the head of the church, and we are members of his body (*Ephesians 1:22-23*). While the church is universal, comprised of all believers throughout history, it is also comprised of local, autonomous, self-governing bodies, free of any external authority. The church is to gather regularly for worship, teaching of the word, fellowship, remembering Christ's death by taking of the Lord's Supper, and

celebrating changed lives by the water baptism of new believers (*Acts 2:41-47*). Male elders are charged to direct the affairs of the church (*1 Timothy 5:17*), deacons and deaconesses are the lead servants of the church (*1 Timothy 3:10-13*), all working together to equip the members of the church to minister to each other and to the community in which it lives. This is accomplished through spiritual gifts that God has given to every member of his church (*Ephesians 4:11-13*). Every believer is instructed to diligently pursue and develop their gift or gifts (*1 Corinthians 14:1*). It is both a privilege and a responsibility to minister according to the grace and gifts that God has given us (*1 Peter 4:10-11*). Because God is the one who enables us to minister, it is God who is glorified.

Ultimately, the church is not here just for itself. Rather, the church, submitting itself to Christ, is the hope of the world. The church exists as the result of a God who pursues people and intervenes in our lives, changing us for all of eternity (*Matthew 16:18*). The church is what it is because God is a “missional” God, desperately in love with humanity and actively drawing us to himself (*Ephesians 1:4-6, John 6:44*). Because this is the heart of God, it is also the heart of the church. Mission is not something that is just done overseas, rather mission is something that is done every day of our life (*Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8*). As God is on a mission to redeem humanity, to bring hope out of desperation, to bring freedom out of bondage, to bring life out of death, so the church is on mission to be a light to all people (*Matthew 5:14*) of every race, and every nation (*Psalms 46:10*). As God is on mission to transform the world, so the church is on mission to transform the lives of family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The good news of the gospel and love of Jesus Christ is what compels us to be on mission in our world (*2 Corinthians 5:14-20*). If we are to truly follow Christ as he has called us to, then we will also be on mission with Christ (*Mark 1:17*).