

## ***The Ordinary Christian's Creed*** *The Essential Core of Typical Christianity in 25 Simple Assertions*

- 1) Before the beginning of created reality, there was God, an eternally triune being.
- 2) From nothing, God gave existence to everything that makes up the cosmos so that the cosmos could now exist right alongside himself.
- 3) God created human beings in his image. Accordingly, just as the three persons of the eternal triune godhead were in an eternal, ongoing relationship with one another, human beings, to reflect God's image, were created with the capability of being in personal relationship with other persons, including God.
- 4) God desired a personal relationship of mutual love with each of his human creatures. The potential for this love relationship was the reason he made them.
- 5) When God created the first human beings, a male and a female, he gave them a free will so that they had complete, absolute autonomy with respect to their choice to either love and obey God or not.
- 6) God knew that any "love" directed toward God that was not given from the human creatures' autonomous choice was not really love at all.
- 7) God so structured the cosmos that, if a human being chose to love and obey God, his just reward would be an everlasting existence wherein he would endure forever in an eternal relationship of love between himself and God.
- 8) The first couple, Adam and Eve, chose, out of their freedom, to disobey God.
- 9) God had so structured created reality that, if a human being were to choose to disobey God, it would be required of that human person that he be sentenced to eternal torment in Hell in order to satisfy the justice built into the fabric of God's cosmos. Accordingly, Adam and Eve now had the sentence of condemnation to Hell hanging over them.
- 10) God had furthermore so constructed reality that the state or condition of the cosmos would be decided and determined by the choice that this first couple made. Hence, when Adam and Eve chose to disobey, the whole cosmos fell from a state of perfection to a state of imperfection.
- 11) Since the cosmos now existed in a state of imperfection, any children of Adam and Eve that came into existence would now be "imperfect"—they would have a predilection to disobey God. In other words, every child of Adam and Eve would be born a sinner and would be subject to the same sentence of condemnation to Hell as his or her parents.

**12)** As a consequence of the sinful moral condition of mankind, it was now impossible for God to grant any human being Life rather than condemnation to Hell without violating the justice that he himself had built into the fabric of his created cosmos—a justice that was also inherent within the very being and character of God himself. Mankind justly deserved condemnation. For God to grant anything other than that would be unjust. This restriction on God's dealings with his human creatures existed only because of the autonomous choice of Adam and Eve.

**13)** This divine dilemma was a major obstacle to God's will for his human creatures. God is profoundly merciful, and it was his merciful desire to grant Life to mankind. The fact that he could not grant such mercy to any human being without violating his own inherent justice was an obstacle to his merciful desire to save mankind.

**14)** In order to circumvent this problem and devise a way whereby he could save mankind from Hell, God devised a plan of salvation. God decided that the second person of his triune godhead would become the savior of mankind. He would descend from heaven, dwell on the earth in and among human beings, and do what was needed in order to make it possible for any human being who wanted Life to have the opportunity to receive Life rather than Hell.

**15)** Jesus of Nazareth was the unique human being who came into existence when the second person of the Trinity, the Logos, united his being with the created being of a human person and mysteriously became one person in whom the divine nature and a human nature were both present without intermingling. In this sense, Jesus was both fully and truly God while being wholly and truly human.

**16)** The very reason of Jesus' existence, the sole purpose for his coming into the world, was to die the Life-giving death he died.

**17)** In Jesus' death on the cross, the sins of all of mankind throughout all of human history were placed on Jesus. As such, Jesus became the locus for all of humanity's sins. At Jesus' crucifixion, God directed his just wrath against all the sins of all of humanity. In Jesus' crucifixion, all of God's wrath against all human sin was fully vented and fully spent against Jesus. Accordingly, the just penalty for all of human sin was paid in full against Jesus at his crucifixion.

**18)** Having paid out the just penalty for all the sins of all of mankind, the debt due to the divine justice that God had built into the fabric of his cosmos was fully paid by Jesus' death on the cross.

**19)** Because Jesus was fully and truly God (at the same time that he was fully and truly human), Jesus was infinite in his being and power. Accordingly, he could absorb the full measure of God's wrath against the sinfulness of humanity and not be destroyed by it.

**20)** The evidence that Jesus was not destroyed by the wrath of God against sin is seen in his resurrection from the dead. At his resurrection, we see an event wherein Jesus conquered death. Jesus' victory over death means that mankind will have victory over death.

**21)** After his resurrection, Jesus ascended back up to heaven to return to his place in the godhead as the eternal second person of the Trinity. (He retains the name "Jesus" such that we can now refer to the second person of the Trinity as "Jesus.")

**22)** Having accomplished his saving purpose, Jesus left mankind in a state where escape from condemnation to Hell was now possible. The debt that any given individual owed to divine justice had been fully paid by Jesus' death on the cross. Accordingly, God now had the freedom to grant him eternal Life without being in violation of his own inherent justice.

**23)** A person's debt to divine justice was not automatically cancelled by Jesus' death. God placed a condition on one's debt being cancelled. God's condition was that a person have faith in Jesus. If, and only if, one chose to have faith in Jesus would Jesus' death be credited to that person as payment against the debt he owed to divine justice. Accordingly, any person who had faith in Jesus would not go to Hell (the penalty for his sinfulness having been paid), but would be granted eternal Life instead.

**24)** The "good news" that Jesus came to proclaim, therefore, is this: if you—by the free, autonomous choice that has been given to you—will choose to have faith in Jesus, then you will be rewarded with eternal Life.

**25)** There remains a penalty for anyone who does not—by the free, autonomous choice that has been given to him—choose to have faith in Jesus. He will be condemned to Hell. Jesus' payment of the penalty to divine justice is not credited to such a person.