Fundamentalists

It's not uncommon these days to hear the word "fundamentalist" used in a negative way. Some people accuse certain Christians of being this, as if it were a bad thing. There are even professed believers who mock the idea of being a fundamentalist.

This raises an important question: just what does it mean to be a fundamentalist? The term was originally defined in 1910 by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. At that time a great many Biblical doctrines were being attacked, and the Assembly wanted to define the "fundamentals" of the Christian faith. They laid out these five points[1]:

1. Belief in the inspiration of the Bible

2. Belief in the Virgin Birth

3. Belief in the substitutionary atonement (meaning we are saved because Jesus died in our place)

4. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus

5. Belief in the miracles of Jesus

People who believed in these five points were called "fundamentalists." That's where the term comes from.

If this is what it means to be a fundamentalist then I don't think it's radical at all. All Christians should believe that the Bible is inspired:

> **Proverbs 30:5:** "<u>Every word of God is pure</u>: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

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1   Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalist%E2%80%93modernist_controversy

2 Peter 1:21: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but <u>holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost</u>."

The Bible is the book that tells us about Jesus, and the gospel, and the way to be saved. It's the solid foundation of Christianity because it contains all the doctrines of the faith.

All Christians should believe that Jesus was born of a virgin:

Matthew 1:18-23: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, <u>she was found with child of the Holy Ghost</u>. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And <u>she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus</u>: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, <u>a virgin shall be with child</u>, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

If Jesus wasn't born of a virgin then He would have inherited the sin nature of Adam, which means He would have been a sinner just like everyone else. If Jesus was a sinner then that would have made it impossible for Him to die in our place to save us from our sins. Only a sinless man can take upon Himself

the punishment for sinners! That means Jesus had to be sinless in order to die for us, which means He had to be born of a virgin. That makes this a foundational part of the gospel.

All Christians should believe that the miracles which are recorded in the Bible are true:

> **John 11:43-45:** "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And <u>he that was dead came forth</u>, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."

Why does it matter whether or not Jesus actually raised Lazarus from the dead? The miracles of Jesus prove that He was more than just an ordinary man; He was the long-awaited Messiah. If Jesus wasn't the Messiah then He wasn't our Savior either and we're all still in our sins. His miracles firmly establish His credentials that He was exactly who He claimed to be.

All Christians should believe that the death of Jesus on the cross paid for our sins. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the "propitiation" for our sins. According to the dictionary, that word means "to appease"[2]:

> **Romans 3:25:** "Whom God hath set forth to be a <u>propitiation through faith in his blood</u>, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"

> **1 John 2:2:** "And he is the <u>propitiation for our sins</u>: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

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2   Source: https://www.dictionary.com/browse/propitiate

1 John 4:10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be <u>the propitiation for our sins</u>."

Why does the death of Jesus on the cross appease God's wrath? It's because Jesus took upon Himself the punishment that we deserved for our sins. Since Jesus suffered the wrath of God on our behalf, the wrath of God has been fully satisfied. If Jesus didn't fully satisfy the wrath of God then that means God is still angry with us, which means we're all headed for Hell. The gospel depends on this doctrine.

All Christians should believe that Jesus rose from the dead:

1 Corinthians 15:16-19: "<u>For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised</u>: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, <u>we are of all men most miserable</u>."

If the dead aren't raised then the gospel is false and everyone who has ever died has perished. The gospel is only worth believing if Jesus actually rose from the dead! If He didn't then Christianity is false and not worth believing in.

As you can see, these fundamentals are some of Christianity's most basic tenants! If any of these points are false then the gospel is false as well, and we're all still guilty before God and headed for Hell when we die. However, if these fundamentals are true (and I believe that they are) then the gospel is the power of God to save them which believe (Romans 1:16).