

My theology in a nutshell

1. Ironically, the main tenet of my theology is that theological correctness has nothing at all to do with our standing with God. It is the acting out of our faith through acts of human kindness that makes all the difference. When we are loving others, that is exactly the same as loving God, whether we realize it or not. God always was, still is, and always will be everyone's loving Heavenly Father. Christian salvation is a process of becoming aware of this and becoming more like Christ.
2. God loves all of us unconditionally, and everything that God does, even His harshest judgments, is an expression of that love. God chastises those whom He loves, and the purpose of those chastisements is to help us find our way back to Him. Most of those chastisements take the form of the natural consequences of our actions.
3. The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are a historical record of mankind's evolving and improving ideas about the nature of God and how we should be interacting with Him. The Scriptures are inspired by God, and full of God's truth, but they are definitely not infallible and inerrant.
4. Heaven and Hell are not places, but states of mind, both in this life and the next. Technically, "Hell" is not a Biblical term. A literal Hell, similar to Dante's Inferno, does not exist at all. The "flames" of Gehenna, the Lake of Fire, and the fires of God's judgments in the Bible are not literal. They are symbolic of purification and cleansing, not retribution.
5. Christian salvation is not an instantaneous event, but a series of events, beginning in ages past and culminating with the eventual perfection of all mankind in the heavenly realms. Salvation is not about who goes to Heaven or Hell after they die. Jesus did not come to save us from God, but from our ignorance of how loving God really is, and from our unwillingness and/or inability to live Godly lives. He came not to condemn us but to save us from the Hells of our own making.
6. Jesus has a divine nature, as do we all. He would be best regarded as our elder brother, rather than as a God who is separate from us. We are ALL quite literally the children or offspring of God, created, so to speak, from God's own spiritual DNA. God and Jesus' higher nature, the *Logos* of John 1, are one and the same. The Spirit, or higher nature, of Jesus resides within each of us, and is identical in many respects with our own higher natures. Individually, we are like drops of water existing as part of an ocean which we call God. We are separate and distinct from God, and at the same time a part of God. That is what the Bible is talking about when speaking of God as being in Christ, Christ being one with the Father, Christ in us, and us in Christ. When Jesus was accused of blasphemy, He quoted from Psalms 82:6 "*Ye are all gods, sons of the Most High.*"
7. On Calvary, Jesus died for us in the sense that He died for our benefit. He did not die instead of or in place of us. Calvary did not change the way God relates to us. Instead, it changed the way we view God. He became sin for us in the sense that He identified

Himself with our sinful condition. He saves us from sin, not in the sense that He artificially removes our sin, but in the sense that He carries us on His back and by His Spirit helps us overcome the sin in our lives and become more like Him. Jesus physically appeared to his disciples after his death in order to demonstrate to them (and us today) that there is life after death.

8. All truth is God's truth. Modern science is not the enemy of religion, but instead helps us to more completely understand both physical and spiritual realities and the true nature of God and mankind. Eventually there will be a unification of science and religion.
9. Extra-biblical sources of truth, such as near-death experiences and various communications with the other side, although highly subjective in nature, shed much light on Christian theology and the nature of the afterlife. They provide evidence to us of the reality of life after death. Both Christians and non-Christians have similar near-death experiences.
10. All world religions, including Christianity, represent a mixture of truth and error, but they agree on many of the most important core spiritual truths. Adherence to a non-Christian religious tradition does not disqualify anyone from God's love and approval.
11. We are all quite literally the children of God, and are endowed with God's creative powers. We have the ability to alter, and/or rise above, the circumstances of our lives and achieve our heart's desires.
12. We serve an equal-opportunity God, who is not a respecter of persons. God loves and appreciates the value and worth of everyone regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender-identification, and religious tradition. Society's negative prejudices against the LGBTQ community, for example, are for the most part based on ancient cultural norms which do not apply today. The main standard that God has given us on which to base our moral and ethical decisions is the rule of love. We are to love God and others as ourselves. The law of love takes precedence over culturally-based norms that unfairly discriminate against people who are born in circumstances over which they have no control.
13. Although we all take unique paths in life and have different specific life goals, we share a greater overriding life purpose, as Christians, which is to spread the true Gospel of Christ by word and example.

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