

*A Simple Way to Learn
About Christian Beliefs!*

Know the Truth

**60 Questions and Answers on Christian Beliefs
A Catechism for Boys and Girls**

Based on the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message

Edition 2.1

Current as of June 9, 2007

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What's a Catechism and Why Should We Use It?

"These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

— Deuteronomy 6:6-7

What is a catechism?

A catechism is a way of teaching the doctrines of the Christian faith in a systematic way using a series of questions and answers.

Why do they call it a catechism?

Our English word, catechism, comes from *katecheo*, a Greek word used in the New Testament, meaning to teaching in an systematic manner.

Do Baptists use catechisms?

Certainly, Baptists believe in the orderly teaching of Biblical truth! Though in recent decades this particular tool has fallen into disuse by Southern Baptists, Baptists have indeed used catechisms. For example, one Baptist catechism dates to 1689 and another to 1742. The famous British Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, published "A Puritan Catechism" in 1855. You can find Baptist catechisms in print. This catechism differs in that it is based on the Baptist Faith and Message rather than on the Westminster Confession.

Knowing the doctrines of the Christian faith is important!

The Bible commands it... "Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me..." (2nd Timothy 1:13). Our Christian growth requires a firm grip on the truth.

What do we do with it?

Use this guide with your family or for your personal development. The key is to review the material over and again. Do so over a period of weeks or months until it is mastered. The ability to quote every answer word for word is not as important as being able demonstrate a clear understanding of each question and answer. Parents, there is additional material in the back to help you when questions arise.

Question 1: Where do we learn about God, ourselves, and the world around us?

Answer: From the Bible. Through the Bible God revealed himself to us. It is the supreme standard for what we should believe and how we should live.

Scripture: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness" — 2nd Timothy 3:16 (See also: Psalms 19:7-10)

Question 2: How did we get the Bible?

Answer: The Holy Bible was written by men inspired by God. Therefore God is its author. The Bible is without any errors. So all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.

Scripture: "First of all, you should know this: no prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God." — 2nd Peter 1:20-21

Question 3: Who is God?

Answer: God is the first and best of all beings. There is one and only one living and true God.

Scripture: "Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One" — Deuteronomy 6:4

Question 4: What is God like?

Answer: God is a spirit. He is a personal Being, not an impersonal force. God is the Creator, distinct from the creation, existing without needing to be created. He is perfect in holiness and is all-powerful and all-knowing.

Scripture: "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever." — 1st Timothy 1:17

Question 5: What do we mean when we say God is a trinity?

Answer: God expresses Himself in three Persons— Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While each Person of the Trinity has distinct qualities, all three Persons of the Trinity are made of the same stuff. Each Person is fully God, not one-third God. You cannot divide the Trinity; there is only one God.

Scripture: "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one."
— 1st John 5:7 (NKJV) (See also Matthew 28:19, Mark 1:9-11)

Question 6: How does God relate to the creation?

Answer: God is the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.

Scripture: "You alone are the Lord. You created the heavens, the highest heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them, and the heavenly host worships You." — Nehemiah 9:6

(See also: 2nd Chronicles 20:6, Romans 11:36, Colossians 1:15-22)

Question 7: What does the Bible tell us about Jesus?

Answer: Christ is the eternal Son of God. Joseph took care of Jesus like a dad, but God is His real Father. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, He had a real body and a human spirit. Jesus is fully God and fully human.

Scripture: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word..." — Hebrews 1:3

Question 8: How good a life did Jesus live?

Answer: He obeyed all of God's commandments and followed God's will for His life perfectly.

Scripture: "...We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin." — Hebrews 4:15

Question 9: Why did Jesus come to earth?

Answer: To die on the cross as a substitute for our sins. By taking our punishment, He secured the forgiveness of our sins.

Scripture: "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree... by His wounding you have been healed." — 1st Peter 2:24

Question 10: What happened after Jesus died?

Answer: He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples.

Scripture: "For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then He appeared to over 500 brothers at one time..." — 1st Corinthians 15:3-6

Question 11: What happened after Jesus' resurrection?

Answer: Jesus went back up into heaven and is now exalted to the place of honor and power.

Scripture: "He demonstrated this power in the Messiah by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens" — Ephesians 1:17

Question 12: What part does Jesus have in the end of the world?

Answer: He will return in power and glory to judge the world.

Scripture: "God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day on which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead." — Acts 17:30-31

Question 13: Who is the Holy Spirit?

Answer: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and is fully divine.

Scripture: "For who among men knows the concerns of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? In the same way, no one knows the concerns of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, in order to know what has been freely given to us by God." — 1st Corinthians 1:11-12

Question 14: What are some things the Holy Spirit did in the Bible days?

Answer: He was involved in the creation of the world. He inspired holy men to write the Scriptures. He empowered Jesus in His earthly ministry. He raised Jesus from the dead.

Scripture: "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." — Genesis 1:2

"...the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead..." — Romans 8:11

Question 15: What does the Bible teach about humankind?

Answer: Mankind is the special creation of God, made in God's own image as His highest creation. He created them male and female; each person was born a boy or a girl as a part of God's good plan. Our life purpose is to know God and enjoy Him forever.

Scripture: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness... So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.'" — Genesis 1:27-28

Question 16: Did God create people bad or good?

Answer: In the beginning man was innocent of sin. God created man with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin and death into the human race.

Scripture: "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.'" — Genesis 2:16-17

Question 17: Why is there so much sin in the world today?

Answer: After the temptation of Satan, man fell from his original innocence. That's why everyone is born with a nature inclined toward sin and why we live in an environment so full of temptation. It is also why children, as soon they are capable of making decisions about right and wrong, begin to break God's laws.

Scripture: "...through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners... — Romans 5:19

Question 18: What is sin?

Answer: Sin is anything a person thinks, says, or does that is contrary to how God tells us to live. Anything that is not done as an act of faith or for the glory of God is sin. Every sin deserves God's punishment.

Scripture: "Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law." — 1st John 3:4

(See also 1st Corinthians 10:31 and Romans 14:23)

Question 19: Even though everyone offends God by their sins, does He still consider people to be of value?

Answer: Every human being is greatly valued by God and every human life is sacred. We know this because God created man in His own image and because Christ died for people. Therefore, every person of every race should be respected and treated with Christian love.

Scripture: "What is man that You remember him, the son of man that You look after him? You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor." — Psalm 8:4-5

Question 20: Do we have to earn God's love?

Answer: No! God loved us first.

Scripture: "Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son..." — 1st John 4:10

Question 21: How has sin ruined our relationship with God?

Answer: Because God is holy He hates sin. Because He is a God of justice He must punish those responsible for sin. Sin separates us from God and brings us under condemnation.

Scripture: "The LORD is slow to anger but great in power; the LORD will never leave the guilty unpunished."— Nahum 1:3

"But your iniquities have built barriers between you and your God, and your sins have made Him hide His face from you so that He does not listen." — Isaiah 59:2

Question 22: How many ways to be saved are there?

Answer: Only the grace of God can bring man into fellowship with God. Salvation is possible because Jesus died on the cross and shed His own blood to obtain forgiveness of sins. Salvation is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Scripture: "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" — John 14:6

Question 23: What is election?

Answer: Election is God's eternal plan, formed before the world began, to save sinners. Election is consistent with the sovereignty of God and with the freedom of man. Election includes evangelism; God chose to save people through spreading the Gospel. We cannot boast of our salvation. God chose us; we didn't choose Him.

Scripture: "But we must always thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth." — 2nd Thessalonians 2:13

Question 24: Do people simply make up their minds to become Christians?

Answer: For a person to come to Christ, God must first work in his or her heart to attract that person to Himself. This is because people are sinful and do not want God to rule their lives. God must first melt their hard hearts.

Scripture: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" — John 6:44

Question 25: How does the Holy Spirit work in lost people to bring them to Christ?

Answer: He enables people to understand the truth and makes them appreciate the goodness of Jesus. He "convicts" people of sin and judgment, making them understand its seriousness. He calls people to Jesus as Savior.

Scripture: "When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment" — John 16:8

Question 26: How does God command people to respond in order to be saved?

Answer: In repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are like two sides of the same coin.

Scripture: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!" — Mark 1:15

"I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus." — Acts 20:21

Question 27: What is repentance?

Answer: Repentance is a sincere change of mind and of attitude in which the sinner turns to God from sin.

Scripture: "Therefore repent and turn back, that your sins may be wiped out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" — Acts 3:19

Question 28: What is saving faith?

Answer: Faith is trusting Jesus to do things for you that you cannot do for yourself. Faith is trusting Jesus to forgive you, to change your life, and to provide you a home in Heaven. Faith is not just believing with one's mind certain facts about God. Nor is it merely knowing the answers to questions, like those in this booklet. Faith is trusting Christ alone.

Scripture: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast." — Ephesians 2:8-9

Question 29: What is regeneration?

Answer: The word "regeneration" means new life. It's another way of saying, "born again." The Holy Spirit makes people alive to God and renews their will, fixing their "want to." This changes the direction of a person's life.

Scripture: "Jesus replied, 'I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" — John 3:3

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come." — 2nd Corinthians 5:17

Question 30: What is justification?

Answer: To be pardoned of sin and declared right with God. Sinners are justified on the basis that Christ paid their penalty on the cross. Only those who trust Christ for salvation are justified.

Scripture: "Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." — Romans 5:1

Question 31: What is adoption?

Answer: When a person becomes a Christian, God makes him or her part of His eternal family. While everyone is God's offspring in the general way of being His creation, only Christians are children of God in this special way.

Scripture: "But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name" - John 1:12

Question 32: What is sanctification?

Answer: When a person is born again, he or she is set apart from all else for God. Sanctification is the process of growing toward spiritual maturity through the power of the Holy Spirit living within.

Scripture: "Some of you were like this; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." — 1st Corinthians 6:11

Question 33: What is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

Answer: At the that very moment of salvation the Holy Spirit baptizes believers into the Body of Christ, coming to live inside them from that moment forward.

Scripture: "...But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." — Romans 8:9 (See 1st Corinthians 12;13)

Question 34: What does the Holy Spirit do in the life of believers after they become Christians?

Answer: The Holy Spirit assures the Christian that he or she is saved. He empowers Christians in developing good character. He helps them to pray and enables them to reach the lost. He gives believers spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He makes them understand the Bible and God's leadership for their lives. The Holy Spirit comforts Christians in sorrow.

Scripture: "All those led by God's Spirit are God's sons... The Spirit Himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children..." — Romans 8:14-16

Question 35: What is glorification?

Answer: Glorification is when God completes salvation. It includes being set totally free from all temptation, being made like Jesus, knowing God perfectly, and receiving a glorified body suited for Heaven. This will be the condition of the saved for all eternity.

Scripture: "...the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed... we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies." — Romans 8:19-23

Question 36: What is the final perseverance of the saints?

Answer: It means real Christians stick with it. Those who have truly been born again will never become lost again, but shall continue in faith to the end. Believers may stumble into sin for a time, making themselves miserable and grieving the Spirit; yet they shall be kept by the power of God for final salvation.

Note: Some refer to this belief as "Once saved, always saved." Unfortunately this term has given some the impression that people can "get saved," live without any sign of God being at work in their lives, and then expect to go to Heaven. The proper term is "perseverance," or "the final perseverance of the saints."

Scripture: "I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." — Philippians 1:6

"I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." — John 10:28-29

Question 37: What is a local New Testament church?

Answer: A New Testament church is a local congregation of baptized believers, who have voluntarily joined themselves together in covenant with Christ and with each other.

Scripture: "So those who accepted his message were baptized... And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers." — Acts 2:41-42
(See also Philippians 3:20)

Question 38: What are the purposes of the local church?

Answer: The church is to glorify God in worship and observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. The mission of the church is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire world through evangelism and missions. The fellowship of the church is like a "colony of heaven," providing encouragement and accountability to its members.

Scripture: "I have written so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth." — 1st Timothy 3:15

Question 39: How is a New Testament church governed?

Answer: Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In the decision-making process, this means every member should seek to follow the leading of Jesus Christ as the Head of the church.

Scripture: "He is also the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He might come to have first place in everything." — Colossians 1:18

Question 40: Who are the Biblical officers of the church?

Answer: Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. Both men and women are gifted for service, but the office of pastor is limited to biblically qualified men.

Scripture: "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus: To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons." — Philippians 1:2

Question 41: What is the Church Universal?

Answer: The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Scripture: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope at your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." — Ephesians 4:4-6

"After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were robed in white with palm branches in their hands." — Revelation 7:9

Question 42: What is the first ordinance of the church?

Answer: Believer's baptism. Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer beneath water and raising him or her back up — in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" — Matthew 28:19

Question 43: Is Baptism required for church membership?

Answer: Yes. Being a church ordinance, baptism is required to observe the Lord's Supper and before the privileges of church membership.

Scripture: "So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about 3,000 people were added to them." — Acts 2:41

Question 44: Is baptism required to become a Christian?

Answer: Baptism is a testimony that a person has already been saved. It is an outward act representing the inward baptism of the Holy Spirit that really does bring us into the family of God.

Scripture: "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh?" — Galatians 3:3 (See also 1st Corinthians 12:13 and Ephesians 4:4-6)

Question 45: What does baptism represent?

Answer: Baptism pictures what Christ has done for us and in us. It symbolizes Jesus' death and resurrection, testifying, in effect, "It counts for me." It is also a testimony that the believer has died to the old life and has been raised to new life in Christ.

Scripture: "Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life." — Romans 6:3

Question 46: What is the second of the two ordinances?

Answer: The Lord's Supper. It is a symbolic act in which members of the church eat the bread and drink the cup. They think about the death of the Jesus and look forward to His return.

Scripture: "...the Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, 'This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way He also took the cup, after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." — 1st Corinthians 11:23-26

Question 47: What is the Lord's Day?

Answer: Sunday is the first day of the week and is the Lord's Day — that is, a day for the Lord. It celebrates the resurrection, since Jesus' resurrection took place on the first day of the week. This day should be respected as a day to spend time with God, in Christian fellowship, and in worship. Since it is a day for the Lord, a Christian should carefully consider the activities the Lord would want him or her to be involved in on this day.

Scripture: "On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark. She saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb." — John 20:1

"And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, not staying away from our meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." — Hebrews 10:25

Question 48: What is the kingdom of God?

Answer: In general, God rules over everything in the universe through all of history — He is the King. The Kingdom means that God rules in a special way in the hearts of His people now. The Kingdom of God will be completed in its fullness when Jesus returns.

Scripture: "My kingdom is not of this world,' said Jesus. 'If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here.'" — John 18:36

Question 49: How will the world end?

Answer: According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly to the earth. He will return in glory; everyone will recognize Him and know He is God and in charge. The dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all people in righteousness.

Scripture: "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." — Luke 21:27

"We wait for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." — Titus 2:13

Question 50: What will happen to those who don't know Jesus when He returns?

Answer: The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

Scripture: "This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His powerful angels, taking vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of everlasting destruction, away from the Lord's presence and from His glorious strength" — 2nd Thessalonians 1:7-8

Question 51: What will happen to those who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior at the end of the world?

Answer: The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will be higher than the angels. They receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Scripture: "When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." — Colossians 3:4

Question 52: What does the Bible tell us about Heaven?

Answer: It is the place from which God reigns over the universe. It is a perfect place without sin or suffering.

Scripture: "...Look! God's dwelling is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will exist no longer; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away." — Revelation 21:3-4

Question 53: What is the responsibility of every Christian?

Answer: It is the duty of every Christian to seek to win the lost to Christ by telling them about Jesus and by the example of their lives. Every Christian and church should make disciples.

Scripture: "Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" — Matthew 28:18-20

Question 54: What is missions?

Answer: Missions is evangelism that reaches people from another culture or who speak another language. It is not enough to reach people like us in our own community. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations.

Scripture: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." — Acts 1:8

Question 55: What is Christian stewardship?

Answer: Stewardship is managing something that belongs to someone else, using it the way its owner wants it used. Everything we have comes from God and belongs to Him. Christians are stewards of their time, talents, and material possessions. Most importantly, we are stewards of the Gospel.

Scripture: "In this regard, it is expected of managers that each one be found faithful." — 1st Corinthians 4:2

Question 56: How should the Christian give to the Lord's work?

Answer: Christians should give to the Lord's work cheerfully, regularly, and generously. The more they make the more they should give.

Scripture: "Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not out of regret or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful — 2nd Corinthians 9:8

Question 57: What is a family?

Answer: God created the family as the most important kind of group in human society. Marriage involves one man and one woman, joined by covenant, in a lifetime commitment. Children are a blessing and treasure from the Lord.

Scripture: "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh." — Genesis 2:25

Question 58: What is a Christian home supposed to be like?

Answer: Parents are to be an example to their children of God's good plan for marriage. Parents are to teach their children about God and moral values. They are to lead their children through loving discipline. Children are to honor and obey their parents. They are to learn to make wise choices based on biblical truth.

Scripture: "These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." — Deuteronomy 6:6-7

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother..." — Ephesians 6:1-2

Question 59: Are Baptists the only true church?

Answer: We do not believe Baptists are the only ones going to heaven. One is saved when he or she receives Jesus as Lord and Savior, not by becoming a Baptist. We are Baptists because that set of teachings comes closest to the Bible. Sometimes we cooperate with other Christian denominations on projects of mutual concern.

Scripture: "John responded, 'Master, we saw someone driving out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him because he does not follow us.' 'Don't stop him,' Jesus told him, "because whoever is not against you is for you." — Luke 9:49-50

Question 60: Is what a person believes important?

Answer: The Bible commands us to think about things that are true and to believe only sound doctrine. Right thinking leads to right living. Christians are warned because there are many false teachers in the world.

Scripture: "Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." — 2nd Timothy 1:13

The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:1-19, King James Version

1. And God spake all these words, saying,
2. I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
3. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**
4. **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image**, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
5. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;
6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
7. **Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain;** for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
8. **Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.**
9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
11. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12. **Honour thy father and thy mother:** that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
13. **Thou shalt not kill.**
14. **Thou shalt not commit adultery.**
15. **Thou shalt not steal.**
16. **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.**
17. **Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.**

The Twenty-Third Psalm

King James Version

- 1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

9. After this manner therefore pray ye:
Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
10. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
11. Give us this day our daily bread.
12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.
Amen.

(Some use the word "trespasses" instead of "debtors")

Helping Your Child Think About Becoming a Christian

Children are just learning abstract thought. By nature, religious concepts *are abstract*. We should never assume that children know the meaning of the terms we take for granted: *Repentance, faith, sin, forgiveness, Christian*. Each concept should be carefully explained.

They can't believe what they don't understand. Sometimes in an attempt to "keep it simple," people try to make the Gospel simpler than it really is. They get as quickly as they can to, "Just pray this prayer" – and that is exactly what the child does, she "just" prays a prayer. She doesn't really understand what she has said. She may not have been expressing faith and repentance at all. They were just words she was told to say.

Make sure your child clearly understands the Cross. Being good or trying harder does not save us; we can be saved only because Jesus took our punishment on the cross.

Be sure to make clear the distinction between salvation and baptism. Distinguish also between salvation and church membership.

Give it enough time to sink in. Most folks are not ready to respond to the Gospel the very first time they hear about God. They need time to absorb the information and to decide how to respond.

Avoid scare tactics. The Holy Spirit can convict of sin without any help from us. And children's hearts are tender enough.

Let children answer in their own words. Children generally want to please you. If you ask, "You love Jesus, don't you, Fred?" little Fred will guess from your tone of voice what he is supposed to say and will tell you what you want to hear. Instead, find out what Fred really knows with open-ended questions: "What does a person have to do to become a Christian?" "What does the cross have to do with it?" Avoid yes/no questions.

Pray for your child's understanding. The Holy Spirit can "make the light come on."

Don't try to hold your child back. Encourage him in his thinking about God and spiritual things - even if he is not yet ready to commit to Christ. Don't make him feel dumb for bringing the subject up. Don't say, "You're not ready for that! We'll talk about this later when you are ready." That sounds too harsh. Instead, affirm his interest. Find out how much he knows and understands. Build on that knowledge. Answer his questions. If he is not yet clear on the Gospel - or he doesn't really understand the life commitment involved - lay groundwork for the future.

Be careful not to underestimate your child - or God. Our children are smart enough to remember their responsibilities at shortstop and to memorize the state capitals. Why assume that they can't understand what it means to become a Christian? The Gospel is simple enough to be understood. Sometimes, parents prevent a child from being baptized and joining the church when the real reason is that their children are ready for a commitment they themselves are unwilling to make.

Get help when you need it. You can sit down with your child and your pastor. That forms a team with the leading expert on your child (yourself) and with someone experienced in explaining the Gospel.

The ABC's of Becoming a Christian *Admit, Believe, Confess*

ADMIT: Admit to God you are a sinner

We Are Sinners

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

“There is certainly no righteous man on the earth who does good and never sins.” Ecclesiastes 7:20

Sin is Breaking God's rules

“But those who keep on sinning are against God, for every sin is done against the will of God.” 1st John 3:4 (Living Bible)

Sin is Trying to Live My Life Without God

“In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.” Psalm 10:4 (NIV)

Admitting We're Sinners

- It's not just *saying* we're sorry
- It is facing up to the truth
- It is turning from our sin
- It is turning to God

Things People Think and Feel As They Admit They Need Jesus

- I feel like there is a wall between Jesus and me
- I know that I am a sinner & deserve to be punished
- I understand my sin is a big problem
- I am sorry for my sins.
- I realize that I need a Savior
- I feel that it is urgent for me to respond to Jesus

God's Promise to Those Who Admit

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1st John 1:9

BELIEVE: Believe that Jesus is God's Only Son

Believe Jesus is God

“But he says to the Son, ‘You're God, and on the throne for good.’”
Heb 1:8 (Message)

Believe Jesus Became a Human Being

“Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil” Hebrews 2:14 (New Living Translation)

Believe Jesus is the Only Way to God

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” John 14:6

Believe Jesus Died For Our Sins and Rose Again – most important!

“...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures... He was buried... He was raised on the third day...” 1st Corinthians 15:3-4

To believe is to trust. (The words “faith” and “believe” both mean the same thing.)

Faith is Trusting Jesus

“Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” Acts 16:31

Faith is Trusting Jesus, Not Trusting Something You Can Do

“You have been saved through trusting Christ... Salvation is not a reward for the good we have done” Ephesians 2:8-9 (Living Bible)

Faith is Not Just Knowing About Jesus

“Do you still think it's enough just to believe that there is one God? Well, even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror!”
James 2:19 (New Living Translation)

Faith is Not Just Saying I Believe in Jesus

“Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it?” - James 2:14 (Message)

Things People Think and Feel as They Are Getting Ready to Trust Jesus

- I know that Jesus exists. I can tell He is there.
- Jesus makes me feel nervous about my sin.
- Even though He makes me nervous, I think He is cool and I want to know Him.
- I am so glad Jesus died for me, and paid the penalty for my sins!
- I am beginning to really believe that Jesus could make a big difference in my life.

God's Promise to Everyone Who Believes on Jesus

"The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who refuses to believe in the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him." John 3:36

CONFESS: Confess Jesus as Your Lord and Savior

What Does it Mean to Confess Jesus? It means to take your stand for Jesus and to side with Him.

"Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." Matthew 10:32-33 (New American Standard Bible)

Things People Think and Feel As They Are Getting Ready to Confess Jesus

- My friends might make fun of me if I become a Christian.
- They might not want to be my friends anymore.
- Having Jesus is more important to me than having these people as friends.
- The right friends wouldn't make fun of me.

God's Promise to Those Who Confess Jesus

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

When You Are Ready to Surrender Your Life To Jesus

Things People Think and Feel When We Are Ready to Commit to Jesus

- My big questions have all been answered.
- God is working in my heart, telling me this is what I ought to do.
- I feel nervous about it, but I need Jesus.
- This is what I really want.
- I am ready to surrender my life to Jesus now.

Words That Tell Us About God and the Church

- **Adoption:** When a person becomes a Christian, he or she is adopted by God into His eternal family. In this sense, we are not all God's children; only those who have received Christ are God's children (John 1:12).
- **Ascension:** This refers to the time Jesus returned to Heaven from earth after His resurrection.
- **Atonement:** The means by which sins are covered and reconciliation with God is accomplished. The cross is the place where the penalty of our sins was paid by Christ's substitutionary atonement. The result is "at-one-ment" with God.
- **Autonomous:** Not under the control of another. Baptist churches are not under the control of a denominational body. Each church owns its own property, calls its own ministers, and runs its own affairs as it sees fit, hopefully under the leadership of Christ.
- **Baptism of the Spirit:** When the Holy Spirit comes to indwell the believer and to make him or her a part of the body of Christ, the Church. Some Christians believe the Baptism of the Spirit happens as a second experience after a person has become a Christian. They see it as a special experience with the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that this baptism takes place at the same time we are made part of the body of Christ, that is saved.
- **Believers Church:** Baptists, among others, teach that a church should be made up only of believers and only of those who have freely chosen to be members. One is not "born into" a believers church.
- **Communion:** A term used by some Christians for the Lord's Supper. It is also used of the close fellowship believers have with God through the Holy Spirit.
- **Condemnation:** To be found guilty and awaiting punishment.
- **Condescension:** When Jesus came from Heaven to earth, He was leaving the worship and comforts to come to a place where He would be unrecognized and mistreated. The act of doing this — as well as His willingness to do this — is sometimes referred to as His condescension.

- **Conversion:** The change of life that comes when a person is saved. The new birth changes us on the inside. Conversion is the difference seen on the outside.
- **Conviction:** The internal working when the Holy Spirit makes us come to grips with our sinfulness and desperate need of Jesus.
- **Covenant:** An agreement or arrangement of solemn and binding force. God established a covenant with us through Christ. When we join a church we enter into covenant with Christ and each other. Marriage is established by entering into a covenant with our spouse.
- **Divine:** That is, God. For example, to say Jesus is divine or to speak of His divinity is to say that He is God.
- **Doctrine:** The beliefs that the Bible teaches and we should believe. These are truths about God, the world in which we live, and ourselves. These are the basic facts of life we can live by and die with.
- **Election:** The word means “to choose.” We became Christians because God took the initiative to save us, not because we took the initiative to seek God. Election is His eternal plan to save sinners.
- **Enlightenment:** When God makes the light come on and we understand the Gospel and our urgent need of it.
- **Evangelism:** To announce good news. That people can be made right with God and be forgiven is very good news! Sharing that news is very important.
- **Exaltation:** Jesus was exalted, first by His resurrection, then in His ascension to Heaven, and then by His being enthroned in the place of honor and power in Heaven.
- **Fallen:** This refers to the condition of humanity and the world after Adam fell into sin in the Garden of Eden. This was a huge spiritual “train wreck” that made everything malfunction. It brought death and sorrow into the world. Even the creation fails to function properly. Worst of all, humans have inherited a nature prone to sin. Since the fall, when people do what comes naturally, they sin.
- **Glorify:** When someone gets a glimpse of the qualities of God and begin to praise Him in recognition of those qualities, they are said to glorify the Lord. This should be done with life as well as word.
- **Glory:** When the invisible qualities of the invisible God are revealed, that is glory. It is when God “shows His stuff.”

- **Glorification:** When Christ returns, Christians will be given new bodies suited for heaven and will be set completely free from temptation. We will be made like Jesus.
- **Gospel:** Good news. It is the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins and peace with God through Christ upon repentance.
- **Grace:** Grace is God treating us better than we deserve, pouring out His favor on us and pouring into us the power to live for Him.
- **Heaven:** The place from which God reigns and of eternal reward for believers. It is a perfect, happy, and sin-free place.
- **Hell:** The place of eternal punishment for Satan, the demons, and all who reject Jesus Christ.
- **Humiliation:** Today this word refers to a proud person being embarrassed, but when referring to Jesus, it means that when He came to earth, He came in humility, not exercising His rights or privileges due Him as God.
- **Holy:** Different. In a way that is clean and pure and good, God is different from the world of sinners. Because Christians know God, they too should be holy.
- **Hope:** Hope is faith focused on the future. It is the certain expectation and joyful anticipation of our eternal future with Christ.
- **Immersion:** To dip or to plunge beneath water; the proper way to baptize.
- **Immutable:** One who does not change. Only God is immutable.
- **Incarnation:** In flesh. When God became a man, Jesus was born on earth He took on a human body—He came in the flesh.
- **Iniquity:** This is a term for sin that emphasizes how we distort the good things God gives us, using them in forbidden ways.
- **Jesus Christ:** Jesus is the earthly name of Jesus, meaning deliverer or savior. It is the same name as Joshua in the Old Testament. Christ is not His last name, but His title, meaning Messiah.
- **Justification:** To be pardoned of sin and declared right with God.
- **Law:** The Old Testament provided rules of living for God's people. This included moral law, ceremonial law, and civil law. Jesus did not remove the law; instead, He fulfilled the terms of the contract for us. The law still gives us guidance on how to show love to God and others.

- **Mercy:** When God doesn't give us the punishment we deserve. All mercy is shown through Christ.
- **Messiah:** The deliverer promised to God's people in the Old Testament. The word means "anointed one." The way people were inaugurated to high office was to pour olive oil over their heads. Jesus was anointed as Prophet, Priest, and King, though not with oil, but with the Holy Spirit. "Christ" is the New Testament word for Messiah.
- **Missions:** Evangelism that reaches people across language, cultural, or geographical boundaries. It's about reaching people outside our own backyard.
- **Old Testament:** The part of the Bible that records God's laws (the Torah), the writings of God's people, the prophecies, and the history of God's people before Jesus came.
- **Omnipotent:** All-powerful. Only God is omnipotent.
- **Omnipresent:** Present everywhere. Only God is omnipresent.
- **Omniscient:** All-knowing. Only God is omniscient.
- **Ordinance:** A church practice established by God's command. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances of the church.
- **Original Sin:** The understanding that our sin has its origins in the original sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden and that this is where we get our bent toward sin.
- **Perseverance:** Sticking with it. Real Christians persevere in trusting Christ, clinging to the faith.
- **Polity:** The particular way in which a church is organized to govern itself. It is like the word politics, but without the bad connotations.
- **Prayer:** Talking with God. Prayer involves spending time with God (communion), adoring God (praise), asking God to meet our needs (petitions), and asking God to help others (intercession).
- **Priesthood of Christ:** Jesus is our great high priest who offered, not an animal but, Himself as the perfect sacrifice to atone for sin, once for all time. He continuously intercedes for us before God.
- **Priesthood of All Believers:** All believers have direct access to God and the ministry of representing God to men in witness and ministry and of representing men to God in intercessory prayer.

- **Propitiation:** To turn away wrath. The Bible refers to Jesus as the propitiation for our sin. Jesus turned the just wrath of God away from us by taking that wrath upon Himself on the cross.
- **Providence:** God continuously preserves and governs all creatures. He directs all events, yet not in such a way as to be the author of sin (or even to approve of sin) or to destroy the free will and responsibility of people. God makes some things to happen, others He allows to happen, but nothing just happens.
- **Rapture:** This is not a word used in the Bible, but is used to describe an event described in the Bible; that is, when believers are “caught up to be with the Lord” at Christ’s return (see 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- **Redemption:** To buy out of slavery. People were in slavery to sin and Jesus’ death on the cross was the ransom that bought us out.
- **Regeneration:** New life. Another term for being born again. This is when God gives us new spiritual life.
- **Revelation:** Revelation is God revealing Himself. There is General Revelation in that God reveals Himself through creation and conscience (Romans 1:18-2:16). There is Special Revelation in which God reveals Himself through the Bible.
- **Sabbath:** The seventh day of the week, a day of rest and worship.
- **Sacrament:** Some denominations refer to the ordinances as sacraments. They may believe in other ordinances in addition to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These people generally believe that the “sacraments” minister grace to those who observe them; thus Baptists do not use this term. We believe the ordinances are symbolic acts and do not minister grace in that way.
- **Sacrifice:** Before Jesus came, animals were sacrificed to atone for sin. This taught the principle of substitution and that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” It wasn’t possible for animals to provide atonement for people. Jesus came and offered Himself as our sacrifice, once for all.
- **Salvation:** To be rescued when in a helpless and hopeless situation. Salvation includes being delivered from the penalty of sin, being delivered from the power of sin, and, one day, being delivered from even the presence of sin.
- **Sanctification:** To be set apart from the world, for God. Then, to

grow in holiness by the Holy Spirit's power.

- **Scripture:** The sacred writings. Another term for writings in the Bible.
- **Sin:** An archery term meaning to fall short of the target. Even at our best, we fall short of God's perfect righteous standard.
- **Theology:** The study of God (The Greek word for God is *Theos*) and of doctrine.
- **Total Depravity:** People are fallen and sin has effected their entire being. This does not mean people are as bad as they could be, that some are not worse sinners than others, or that they have never done a single decent thing in their lives. However, it means they are totally helpless to save themselves.
- **Transcendent:** God is above and beyond us. We couldn't have figured God out if He hadn't revealed Himself to us. Even with God revealing Himself, we know only a limited amount about Him. He is greater than we could ever imagine.
- **Transgression:** To step over the line. It is a term for sin, picturing the fact that God has given us boundaries in which we are supposed to stay and, instead, we choose to step out of bounds.
- **Satan:** The Christian's adversary and accuser, the one who tempts us. Satan is not the opposite of God. He was created by God, but rebelled against God and fell from his place in Heaven. He leads other fallen angels (called demons) who rebelled with him. His powers are great, but limited. He is doomed to the place of eternal punishment.
- **Trinity /Triune:** God is a tri-unity... one God expressing Himself in three Persons.
- **World Evangelization:** Includes evangelism in our own communities, in our general area, in our state, in our nation, and our missionary efforts in nations around the world. Act local; think global.
- **Wrath:** God's anger against sin. It is not God losing His temper, but His determination to punish sin. It is terrible to face and will come suddenly when the opportunity for grace ends.

The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His crea-

tures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the

creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. **Faith** is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of

the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be con-

signed to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of

Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one

another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philipians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising

their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon 1; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for

religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philipians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

