

Basics for Christian Living: A Study of the Apostles' Creed

Bible Basics has outlined in some detail the teachings of the Bible about Jesus Christ as the son of God and the centrepiece of his plan, which now includes us.

This booklet summarises the teachings from the very first Christian creed formulated at the close of the first century. The Apostles' Creed is the most popular creed used in worship by Western Christians. Legend has it that the Apostles wrote this creed on the tenth day after Christ's ascension into heaven. That is not the case, though the name has stuck. However, each of the doctrines found in the creed can be traced to statements current in the apostolic period. The creed was apparently used as a summary of Christian doctrine for baptismal candidates in the churches of Rome.

We have included an introduction about the Bible as the authoritative word of God, upon which we base all our understanding of God and his purpose for us. Then follows the Apostles' Creed, with each clause numbered for your convenience. Each clause has been expanded to explain the teaching from the Bible with references for you to investigate.

Please read the Bible to confirm its teachings for yourself. References have been provided at the end of each section.

We trust that this booklet, along with the more comprehensive Bible Basics, will lead to enquire further into God's love for each person who chooses to come to him. There are other materials we can offer you to assist in your search for a meaningful relationship with God and His Son.

I BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE, or the Holy Scriptures, is the **only source** of the **Truth** and **Purpose of God** that can show us **the way to salvation**; that can enable us to **live the life** that will please Him.

THEREFORE

*It is to that **whole book** that I will go for **the knowledge of God, reading** it each day, **believing, meditating and reflecting,** and **seeking,** through His promised help, to follow it in all my life.*

QUESTIONS

1. Why do we say the Bible is God's Word?

(i) 2 Timothy 3:15-16; (ii) 2 Peter 1:19-21; (iii) Hebrews 1:1.

2. How can I be sure that it is true?

(a) What does it say about Jesus?

(i) Micah 5:2; (ii) Daniel 9:24; (iii) Isaiah 53:2-5; (iv) Psalm 22;

(vi) Psalm 110.

(b) What does it say about the Jews?

(i) Leviticus 26:31-33; (ii) Deuteronomy 28:64-5; and (iii) Luke 21:24.

3. Why should I read the Bible?

(i) Joshua 1:8; (ii) Psalm 119:1-16 ; (iii) Matthew 5:17-20;

(iv) Revelation 1:3.

4. What else should I do?

(i) James 1:22; (ii) 1 Peter 1:23-25;

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE

1. in **God** Almighty
2. and in **Christ Jesus**, His only son, our Lord,
3. who was born of the **Holy Spirit** and the **Virgin Mary**,
4. who was **crucified** under Pontius Pilate and was **buried**
5. and on the **third day rose from the dead;**
6. who **ascended into heaven**
7. and **sits on the right hand of the Father**
8. whence **he will come to judge the living and the dead;**
9. and in the **Holy Spirit**,
10. the holy **church**,
11. the **remission of sins**,
12. the **resurrection** of the flesh,
13. the **life everlasting**.

1. I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD THE FATHER, Maker of heaven and earth. It is He who **created all things; He gives** to all living things **life and breath**; and I am convinced that **His purpose must triumph**.

THEREFORE

I must serve Him with a humble and obedient heart, if I wish to please Him and have a part in His eternal inheritance.

QUESTIONS

1. Where, in the Bible, does it say that there is only one God?

(i) Deuteronomy 6:4; (ii) Mark 12:29-30; (iii) Psalm 19;

(iv) 1 Corinthians 8:6; (v) 1 Timothy 2:5

2. What can I learn in the Bible about God's character?

(i) Exodus 34:5-7; (ii) Numbers 14:18;

(iii) 2 Chronicles 30:9; (iv) Psalm 103:9-13.

3. What does the Bible reveal about God?

(i) John 1:17-18; (ii) Mark 12:29-31;

(iii) John 6:44; (iv) John 14:8-11.

4. Believing this, what kind of person should this make me?

(i) John 17:3; (ii) Matthew 5:20;

(iii) Matthew 6:33; (iv) Matthew 5:7.

2,3 I BELIEVE in JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten SON of GOD, begotten by the **Father** by the operation of the **Holy Spirit**, and born of the **Virgin Mary**. I believe that **Jesus revealed** to all, in himself, **the glory and likeness of his Father**; and that he **shared with us** the **infirmities and desires** that we all experience. **Though** he was **tempted** in all points as we are, **he was able each time to overcome, by submission to his Father's will.**

THEREFORE

*I acknowledge myself to be a sinner; for I have a disposition that I am **unable** in myself to resist or conquer. Yet, by the grace of God, I see in the righteous life of the Lord Jesus Christ the pattern I should seek to emulate, and the means in him by which it can be achieved. I confess that, without him and his help I could never possibly reach that high ideal. I thank God for His work in Jesus that I am able to obtain forgiveness for my sins, restitution, and strength to overcome, and ultimately to achieve a state of righteousness in him.*

QUESTIONS

1. In what way was Jesus' birth different to any other?

(i) John 1:14; (ii) Hebrews 1:1-3; (iii) Matthew 1:18-21;

(iv) John 3:16; (v) Galatians 4:4.

2. Was he tempted as others are?

(i) Matthew 4:1-11; (ii) Hebrews 2:18; (iii) Hebrews 4:15;

(iv) 1 Peter 2:22.

3. What was the difference between Jesus and us?

(i) Mark 14:36; (ii) John 12:27-28; (iii) 1 Peter 2:23.

4. What can Jesus' example teach me about overcoming?

(i) Matthew 15:11; (ii) Mark 7:21-23; (iii) Galatians 5:19-24

4. I BELIEVE that JESUS CHRIST was CRUCIFIED, DEAD and BURIED. I believe that the **sinless Jesus**, in the greatest act of love, **submitted willingly to death on the cross**, taking out in himself, once and for all, the desires of self (the desires that, *in us*, inevitably lead to **sin**). In so doing, he **declared to us, that, if we will follow him, he can do the same in us**. For **he is the only way** by which the desires of self can be conquered. **God endorsed his righteousness by raising him from the dead** on the third day.

THEREFORE

*I know that **the same spirit is called for from me also**. I must take up my cross and follow him. **He must be my guide** in leading me to **deny myself**, and **all my worldly lusts**; I need to die to the old life so that I can be joined to him in a new one. This is what **being crucified with Christ** means to me. I see in **baptism** the proper **burial of my former self** as I rise to seek to **begin a new life in him**.*

QUESTIONS

1. Why did God want Jesus **willingly** to die?

(i) John 3:16; (ii) Acts 2:23; (iii) Acts 3:18;

(iv) Mark 14:36; (v) Matthew 26:42

2. Why did Jesus have to **actually** die?

(i) Romans 6:10; (ii) Hebrews 9:28.

3. Why do I only have to **figuratively** die?

(i) Romans 6:1-14; (ii) 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; (iii) Galatians 2:20-21.

4. After I am baptised *how must I live*?

(i) Galatians 5:16-24; (ii) Peter 2:18-25.

5. I BELIEVE in CHRIST RISEN; that, after three days, **Jesus rose in bodily form from the dead**, leaving behind him an empty grave. He **overcame the power of sin** (death) by his own death. I

believe that **death has no more power over him**, for **he is now immortal**, and that **his resurrection is the foundation for my hope of immortality**.

THEREFORE

His resurrection gives real meaning to my life now, and hope in death. It makes my baptism both the burial of a crucified life and a rising to a new regenerated one. Now, for me, to live is Christ, and to die is but to sleep.

QUESTIONS

1. Does the Bible teach that **Jesus actually rose from the dead**?

(i) Matthew 28; (ii) Mark 16:1-8; (iii) Luke 24:1-12;

(iv) John 20:1-10.

2. How can that help **me**?

(i) 1 Corinthians 15; (ii) 1 Thessalonians 4:13;

(iii) John 11:38-45.

3. Does that, then, mean that there is to be a **“future resurrection of the dead”**?

1 Corinthians 15:20, 23, 42, 49, 51-54.

4. How should I **behave** when I am baptised with this belief?

(i) Romans 6:1-14; (ii) Romans 8:11-17; (iii) Ephesians 2;3:14-21;

(iv) Philippians 3:8-11.

6,7. I BELIEVE in CHRIST ASCENDED who “sits at the right hand” of the Father in heaven, having been given **all power in heaven and earth**. And from there he **makes intercession for the believers (saints)**. He knows what it is like to be human, and **looks with compassion on all my struggles and sufferings**. When I **come to God through him for help**, or **forgiveness**, I know **he is there for me in all my needs**.

THEREFORE

*I should see that **my whole life is under His care and control**; before I do anything I should ask for his **guidance**; when **tempted**, I should seek his strength to resist; when I have **sinned** I should, in deep **contrition**, **confess** and **seek forgiveness**; **in need**, I should ask of him what is **right and best**; when I see **others in need**, I should fervently **pray for them**, and ask him to **help me to help them**. I am persuaded that, **then, he will**, by the power which God has given him, **minister to all my needs and keep me in the way of life**.*

QUESTIONS

1. **Jesus promised that he will not leave his disciples “comfortless”** after he ascended. How do you think he can help you from heaven?

John 14:18

2. How can we be “led by the spirit”?

Romans 8:9-17

3. What are the “**heavenly realms** in Christ Jesus”(NIV)?

(i) Ephesians 2:6; (ii) Ephesians 2:13-20; (iii) Philipians 4:4-9;

(iv) Colossians 3:1-2.

4. For **what** should I pray to Jesus?

(i) Hebrews 2:17-18;(ii) Hebrews 4:14-16; (iii) Hebrews 10:19-25;

(iv) Hebrews 12:18-25; (v) I John 5:14-15.

8. I BELIEVE in THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE EARTH, to judge the living and the dead. This will be to the joy of his friends, and the discomfort of his enemies. **All who have known their duty before God will be gathered before him for judgment,** whether living or dead, **to give account of their faith and works.** He will bless his **friends** with glorious **immortal bodies**, like his own; but his **enemies** will be punished with everlasting destruction and **oblivion.**

THEREFORE

*since **those who wait for him will be made like him** when he comes, I must labour **now** to be like him. At that time, earthly possessions will not be of any importance, so I must seek now to **store true “treasure” with him in heaven,** which he will bring with him when he comes - not to me, only, but to **all who love his appearing.***

QUESTIONS

1. Why do some people doubt the second coming of Christ?

(i) Acts 1:11; (ii) Matthew 24:29-31;(iii) Mark 13:24-27;

(iv) Luke 21:25-28.

2. Will **Jesus actually return to earth** the same way that he left?

(i) Revelation 1:7; (ii) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; (iii) Acts 1:11.

3. What is the **reward of the righteous** on the **Judgment Day**?

(i) Psalm 37:22; (ii) Matthew 5:5; (iii) Romans 2:6-7;

(iv) Revelation 5:10.

4. What will happen to **the unjust**?

(i) Malachi 4:1; (ii) John 5:29; (iii) Revelation 21:8.

5. What is the last prayer in the Bible? Look at *Revelation 22:20*.

9. I BELIEVE in the HOLY SPIRIT and know that **by this** (His almighty power) **God taught the prophets and inspired the Apostles, brought His Son to the birth and witnessed to the Gospel by mighty signs.**

THEREFORE

I know that, if I were left to myself to work out my salvation, I should fail. But I am convinced that the Lord Jesus works for me at the right hand of the Father and I know that my prayers are answered. God with His own power will work within me so that I will be able to serve Him.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the Bible say about **God being everywhere present by His Spirit**, which is a *unity* with His person in heaven?

(i) Psalm 139:7-12; (ii) Proverbs 15:3; (iii) Jeremiah 23:24;

(iv) Acts 17:27, 38.

2. What comments are made by the New Testament writers about the **Holy Spirit (which is not a separate person)**?

(i) 1 Timothy 4:1; (ii) Acts 16:7; (iii) Ephesians 4:30.

3. How did the Holy Spirit with the virgin Mary bring the son of God into the world?

(i) Matthew 1:20; (ii) 1 Timothy 3:16; (iii) Galatians 4:4.

4. To speak of **my relation to the Spirit**, is to refer to **my relationship to God**. The **Spirit's help in time of need** is to speak of **the help we get from God**, without which we could never overcome our failings. What insights can you gain from the following references?

(i) Romans 8; (ii) Ephesians 3; (iii) 1 John 2

10. I BELIEVE in the holy CHURCH (the FELLOWSHIP of SAINTS). I believe that **the Lord Jesus died** and lives again **so that each sinner who believes and repents may come to God through him**; and I believe that **those who so come are united one with another in one body** by the bonds which link them with **Christ the Head**.

THEREFORE

I must live seeking, not my own, but always the good of other people. I must play my part in building up the body of Jesus Christ, his church, in love. I must remember his instruction that he who loves God must love his brother also.

QUESTIONS

1. What do the following passages reveal about the **fellowship** of Christians on earth, through its symbolic expression, the **Breaking of Bread** Service (the **Emblems** of the Lord's Sacrifice)?

(i) 1 Corinthians 10:17; (ii) 1 Corinthians 12:13;

(iii) Ephesians 2:16; (iv) Romans 12:4.

2. What is the process outlined in Hebrews 6:1-2 for those who follow Jesus Christ?

3. What does Jesus say is the value of believers of the common hope meeting together on a regular basis?

Matt. 18:20

11. I BELIEVE in the BAPTISM of REPENTANCE for the REMISSION of SINS.. I am compelled to join the **company of sinners whom Jesus came to save**, that I might be part of that body which he continues to carry, guide and protect; for not only do I have **remission of my sins at my baptism**, but **the Lord continues to have compassion on me**, knowing my weaknesses, and **patiently helping me to overcome**. I have to be part of his body for this to happen.

THEREFORE

*I look upon **baptism as the figurative burial of the old man in Adam**, and the **subsequent symbolic resurrection of a new person in Christ**. I think of it as the **new birth of a new creature**, admitted **into the family of God**. I have been **transformed by the Word of God** that lives and abides forever.*

QUESTIONS

1. What does the Bible say about **baptism (total immersion)** as an appropriate symbol of **burial** in water?

(i) Acts 8:38-39; (ii) Romans 6:3-6; (iii) Colossians 2:12.

2. What does "**water burial**" mean?

(i) Romans 6:1-10; (ii) Colossians 2:12; (iii) 1 Peter 3:21.

3. How popular was baptism for the **early believers** in the first century?

(i) Acts 2:38, 41; (ii) Acts 8:12, 38-39; (iii) Acts 9:18;

(iv) Acts 10:47-48; (v) Acts 19:45; (vi) Acts 22:16.

4. Why is it called a "baptism of **Repentance**"?

(i) Acts 2:37-42; (ii) Acts 3:19; (iii) Acts 8:32;

(iv) Acts 17:30; (v) 2 Peter 3:9

12. I BELIEVE in the RESURRECTION of the DEAD. Since **Christ** will come back to the earth to judge the living **and the dead**, it is necessary for the **responsible dead to be raised for Judgment**. The **righteous and the unjust of all ages** will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ in that day of his return to the earth.

THEREFORE

*I must prepare myself for **that time**, for I know I shall not be permitted to share eternity with the Lord, unless **I share the present with him, now**. **I need to identify with him by baptism in water, to rise to a new life with him, today**. Then, when he comes, I know **I will be called to meet him**. Should I have died, then I know **I will be raised from the dead**.*

QUESTIONS

1. Will **everyone** be raised from the grave?

(i) Proverbs 21:16; (ii) Isaiah 26:13-14; (iii) Daniel 12:2;

(iv) Romans 2:12.

2. How can I be **sure** of being accepted by God at the return of his son?

(i) Matthew 25:34, 40; (ii) 1 Corinthians 3:10-15;

(iii) 2 Timothy 4:8; (iv) 1 John 4:17.

3. How does the apostle **Paul** think that the **resurrection** will affect me?

(i) Romans 6:4 and 7:4; (ii) 1 Corinthians 6:14;

(iii) 2 Corinthians 13:4.

4. **1 Corinthians 15** contains Paul's most detailed teaching on the **Resurrection**. What is his major point for us in verses 14 to 19?

5. In **Romans 10:9** he says that **the belief that God raised Jesus from the dead is essential for salvation**. Why is it?

13. I BELIEVE in the LIFE EVERLASTING. I believe that **Jesus** came preaching the **good news (gospel) of the Kingdom of God and of the Life Everlasting**; a state of things **on earth** in which **God's will** is as perfectly done as it is in heaven. **God is eternal** and **His Kingdom**, when Christ comes, **will be an everlasting Kingdom** that will never pass away. To enter, through Christ, **I must accept the sovereignty of God**, in full submission, **loving Him and my fellow human beings** with all my heart.

THEREFORE

*I must seek the Kingdom with all my might. It is so **precious** that it must be the object of all my endeavour. I know my own utter helplessness, worthlessness and inadequacy. Therefore I submit my ignorance to His wisdom, my weakness to His power, and my sin to His mercy. I pray that He will **cultivate in me the childlike spirit and forgiving heart** that inherits **eternity**, for I know that it will **only be by His grace** that I might enter His glorious kingdom.*

QUESTIONS

1. What did Jesus command his disciples to preach, as the central focus of his message?

(i) Matthew 4:17; 9:35; 10:5-7; (ii) Mark 1:15; (iii) Luke 4:4; 10:8-9.

2. In **Jesus' parable**, the **rich man wanted his family to join Abraham**. What is the **connection** between **Abraham**, the **Kingdom of God**, and **Everlasting Life**?

(i) Luke 16:29-30; (ii) Genesis 12:2-3; 15:18-21; 17:4-8; 22:15-18;

(iii) Psalm 105:6-11 (iv) Isaiah 41:8-10; 51:2-5; (vi) Micah 7:20.

3. What will be **Christ's Judgment** on the **righteous/unrighteous**?

(i) Matthew 19:29; Luke 18:30; John 3:16,36; (ii) Romans 6:22

4. Why are the **childlike spirit** and the **forgiving heart** such absolute **prerequisites for everlasting life** in the Kingdom of God?

(i) Matthew 18:1,23-35; and 25:31-46.