

The Absolute Basics of the Christian Faith

PART ONE: WHO IS GOD? 09.08.19

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From there, He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy *catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Why do we need to know the “basics?”

1. What we _____ has vital, eternal consequences

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.” Rom. 10:9-10

2. The _____ is our starting point, our base, and our authority on all matters of Christian doctrine

“Scripture is the starting point of doctrine, and Scripture is the judge of doctrine.”

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD – 2 QUESTIONS

1-Who is God?

- God is Holy _____; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name [singular] of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

- God is three _____ in _____ God

*“Nor can it properly be said that **in** the one God there is the*

[All Scripture references from the New Living Translation unless otherwise noted]

*Trinity; rather, the one God **is** Trinity. In the relative names of the persons, the Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both. While they are called three persons in view of their relations, we believe in one nature or substance. Although we profess three persons, we do not profess three substances, but one substance and three persons.” The Council of Toledo, AD 675*

- The Father is the _____ and goal of our salvation
- The Son is the _____
- The Spirit is the _____ to get there

God as Holy Trinity

“God is the uncreated source and end of all things; one; incomparably alive; insurmountable in presence, knowledge, and power; personal, eternal spirit, who in holy love freely creates, sustains, and governs all things.” Thomas C. Oden, The Living God (31)

“The most penetrating Hebraic name for God, ‘I AM’ (Yahweh), suggests that God simply and incomparably is.” Oden, 54

- God is _____ – God is like no other
“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven’s Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!” Isaiah 6:3
- God is _____ – God is eternal
“For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24
- God is _____ – God exists in perfect harmony
“Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.” Ephesians 2:18
- God is _____ – God is perfectly loving
“God is love.” 1 John 4:8
“All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that ‘God is love.’ But, they seem not to notice that the words ‘God is love’ have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love.” C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

12 Classical Texts that Reveal the Trinity in Scripture

1. The Baptismal Formula

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

2. Jesus’ Baptism

“After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.’” Matthew 3:16

3. Paul’s Apostolic Benediction

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

4. The Varieties of Gifts

“I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. Through him, God has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent words and all of your knowledge. This confirms that what I told you about Christ is true.” 1 Corinthians 1:4-6

5. The Ephesian Formula

“Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.” Ephesians 2:18

6. Jude’s Summary Instruction

“But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God’s love.” Jude 20, 21

7. The Johannine Prologue & Farewell Discourse

[Jesus] “But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.” John 14:26

8. The Johannine Letters

“And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another... And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us... This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God...” 1 John 3:23-4:3

9. The Apocalypse Salutation

“This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit before his throne; and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world. All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.” Revelation 1:4-6

10. Kenosis [Jesus’ “self-emptying” in the incarnation] in Philippians

“You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:5-11

11. Introductory Argument of Colossians

“For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. Christ Is Supreme Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.” Colossians 1:13-16

12. Letter to the Hebrews’ Summary of Salvation History

“Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.” Hebrews 1:1-4

[From The Living God, by Thomas C. Oden]