

As Christians, we are, above all, believers. We believe in the Bible, in God, in Christ, in the Spirit, and in God's redemption and salvation.

Concerning the Bible

The first item of our faith is that the Bible is the Word of God. Concerning the Bible, the apostle Paul says, "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16a). The Scriptures were written by godly men under God's inspiration. We also believe that the Bible contains the completed divine revelation. All aspects of our faith are founded on the Bible and controlled by the Bible. We accept what the Bible says in full, from Genesis to Revelation, and we reject any thought of man that goes beyond what the Bible says. The Bible is the true and objective gift from God that offers to us His revelation concerning Himself, His full salvation, and His plan, or *economy*, for man. Because the Bible is the Word of God, we believe in its accuracy and maintain its infallibility.

Concerning God

Of course, the major topic of the Bible is God, and God is the object of our faith. From the revelation of the Scriptures we believe that our God is uniquely one yet triune. Although it is beyond our human comprehension, the Bible clearly shows that God is at the same time uniquely one (1 Tim. 2:5) yet distinctly three (Matt. 28:19). He is eternally the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Three of the Divine Trinity are distinct but not separate. Where the Father is, the Son is also, as the Lord Jesus tells us in John 10:38, "...the Father is in Me and I am in the Father." The same mutual indwelling also

exists between the Son and the Spirit as well as between the Spirit and the Father. Among the Three of the Trinity, the Father, as His name implies, is the source of the Divine Trinity; the Son is the expression of the Father; and the Spirit is the realization of all that the Son is and has. But these fine points of our faith are not mere theological difficulties. Because our God is triune, we have a way to experience and enjoy Him. The apostle Paul clearly relates the Three of the Trinity to the experience of the believers: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). According to the New Testament, all Three—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—are in the believers (Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:27; John 14:17).

Concerning Christ

We believers are called Christians because we are men and women of Christ. Christ is the most wonderful Person in the universe, and we are joyfully called by His name. Christ is eternally God. In eternity past, before creation, He was God; He is God now; and He will be God forever. And yet one day He became a man, our Lord Jesus. Hence, Christ is both the complete God and the perfect man. Without abandoning His divinity, He was conceived in the womb of a human virgin, was born as a baby, lived a human life on earth, and died a vicarious and all-inclusive death on the cross, thereby accomplishing our redemption. But He did not remain in death. After three days He resurrected to become a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). The power of His divinity swallowed up death, and His humanity was resurrected and

glorified. Today He is both our Redeemer and our life. He has ascended to the heavens and is in glory, ever yet fully God but still fully man. As such, Christ is now the Author of our salvation and the Perfecter of our faith (Heb 2:10; 12:2). He is seated in the heavens, carrying out His heavenly ministry and accomplishing God's economy (Acts 5:31; Heb. 8:1-2). We look to His imminent return, when He will come back with the kingdom of God and reign over the earth in the millennium (Rev. 1:7; 11:15; 20:6).

Concerning the Spirit

The Third of the Trinity is the Spirit. As the Father is the source of the Divine Trinity, the Spirit is the consummation of the Divine Trinity. All that the Father has and is, is embodied in the Son; and all that the Son is, is realized as the Spirit. For this reason, He is called the Spirit of reality (John 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 5:6). The reality of what Christ is and even of what the Triune God is, is the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit carried out the incarnation of Christ (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20). Because He bears to us the humanity, human living, and death of Jesus, He is called the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7); and because the divinity and resurrection of Christ are made real to us by Him, He is called the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). He is also called the Spirit of Jesus Christ, indicating that He is the source of the bountiful supply to the believers (Phil. 1:19). The Spirit of Jesus Christ is compounded with His humanity and death and with His divinity and resurrection. This Spirit is the Spirit of life and the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:2, 11). As the Lord Spirit, He transforms us by renewing us (2 Cor. 3:18; Titus 3:5). The all-inclusive Spirit is our holy

anointing (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27), as typified by the compound ointment in Exodus 30:23-31. As such, He becomes a seal and a pledge to us (Eph. 1:13-14). Daily the Spirit comforts us as our Paraclete (John 14:16-17), supplies us in our Christian walk, and intercedes for us (Rom 8:4, 26). Such a Spirit was breathed into us as our life essentially (John 20:22) and was poured out upon us as power economically (Acts 2:1-4, 17). In the age of degradation, this wonderful Spirit is intensified sevenfold as the seven Spirits of God (Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6). Eventually, this intensified Spirit, as the consummation of the Triune God, becomes one with the redeemed, regenerated, renewed, transformed, and glorified church, which is His bride, for the manifestation and expression of the Triune God in eternity (Rev. 22:17).

Concerning God's Redemption and Salvation

The Triune God is indeed wonderful, but man falls far short of what God intended him to be. Man has fallen and is hopelessly lost in sin. Yet because of His great love for man, God in Christ came to redeem man to Himself. Formerly, man belonged to God; but through the fall of our first ancestors, all our race was enslaved to the devil and to sin, and we came under the heavy demands of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory. We were absolutely unable to fulfill the requirements. But Christ fulfilled all the requirements through His death on the cross. This accomplished an eternal redemption for us, and this redemption is the base of God's full salvation. Because of Christ's death, God forgives sinners of their sins (Eph. 1:7), reconciles them, His enemies, to Himself (Rom. 5:10),

and justifies them by making Christ their righteousness (Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30). Based on Christ's redemption, God regenerates the redeemed with His Spirit (John 3:5-6) to consummate His salvation, that they may become His children (John 1:12-13). Now possessing God's life and nature, the believers enjoy a daily salvation in this age (Rom. 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:2; Phil. 2:12) and the eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9) in the coming age and in eternity. This salvation is a salvation in life (Rom. 5:10), not merely a salvation from eternal punishment. The life that we enjoy in this salvation is the Triune God Himself realized in Christ (1 John 5:20) as the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). This is symbolized by the river of water of life, flowing in the New Jerusalem, and by the tree of life, growing in the river (Rev. 22:1-2), both of which are for the eternal life supply of all God's redeemed people. This is God's full, complete, and dynamic salvation. "So great a salvation" (Heb. 2:3)!

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Our Faith

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