

Who is God? What is God like?

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He is involved in the events of our world and that He can save from sin and death all who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

No words can fully express what the creator of the cosmos is like! No person has ever seen God. Yet we believe that God has revealed certain things about himself. Even some of these can be hard to grasp. Like “infinite”: without a beginning and without an end. Or “perfect”: without any faults at all! We believe that God is a person, not an impersonal “force.” It means that we can know God, and be known. But God does not have our shortcomings; he is perfectly wise, perfectly holy (distinct, unique, unequalled), and, perhaps most important to us, perfectly loving. There is no power in the universe—or beyond!—that can overcome God.

I’m doing fine. Why do I need God, Jesus, or the church?

We believe that every person has broken God’s law and deserves to be punished. We also believe that Jesus died in our place to take our punishment so that we could be forgiven through faith in Him alone.

We all agree that nobody is perfect. As the saying goes, we’re only human. Everyone makes mistakes, and everyone does something wrong from time to time, whether it’s an awful crime, a selfish act that hurts others, or just a mean thought. All of these things are offensive to God. They’re all sins. With this kind of “baggage,” we can never meet the standards of a God who is perfectly holy, wise, powerful, and loving. Jesus paid the price for our sins.

Who do you really think Jesus was? What was he like, and what did he do? Why is he important today?

We believe Jesus is God’s only Son; conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. We believe He lived a sinless life and died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. We believe He rose from the dead and lives today, able to save anyone from sin that comes to Him through faith.

Was Jesus an inspiring leader? He changed the course of history! Was he a great moral teacher? None better! Is that why we worship him? No—we worship him because he saves us from sin and gives us eternal life. Jesus was a Jew from Palestine who worked with his hands and needed food and rest like any of us. History confirms that he was a real person. But he was no ordinary man; his birth was miraculous, his life without sin, and his death, by an awful execution, was only temporary! His followers recognized that he was, in fact, God. He’s alive today.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

We believe in the Holy Spirit and His vital work of convicting, indwelling, teaching and empowering [those who follow Jesus Christ].

Earlier generations called this person the Holy Ghost, perhaps because this is an image of God that we can’t picture—there is no one seated on a throne, or appearing in human form on earth. Yet the Holy Spirit

is God, just as Jesus and the Father are also God. The Holy Spirit comes to live within those who follow Jesus. He teaches us to be more like Jesus, guides our thoughts and actions, and gives us the ability to fulfill God's purposes in our lives.

What is church for?

We believe in the universal church; a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and every saved person is a member. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, associated to fulfill the purposes of the church.

Is there anything peculiar about the statement above? It doesn't say anything about a building! No stained glass, no steeples, no seats. If you walk into The Valley on Sunday morning, look at the people around you—you're looking at the church. We recognize the church as the people who follow Jesus Christ, both worldwide and in our own towns. We are privileged to be the eyes, the ears, the hands through which God works to accomplish his purposes. We come together to worship, to teach and encourage each other, and to join together in God's work.

Why is the Bible important to you? What's so special about it?

The Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is our guideline for living.

We accept the Bible as God's written word to us. It was written by many different people over hundreds of years, but we believe that all of them were guided by God to write those things that God wished to reveal to us. Among the most important things the Bible tells us is who God is, why we are here, and how God has worked in history to save us from the consequences of our sins. Because God inspired it, we accept the Bible as truth, without error. We believe that scholarly studies demonstrate that the original words of the Bible have been remarkably well preserved over the centuries, and therefore the translations we use today are very accurate.

What's this about the Trinity? How many Gods do you think there are?

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these three are fully divine and each perform separate functions.

Have you ever heard of a paradox? It's a concept that seems to contradict itself. Some of the truths that God has revealed really stretch our minds. This is one of them. There is one God, but God exists as three persons: Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit. We sometimes illustrate the concept by comparing God to the states of water—whether it appears as ice, liquid water, or water vapor, it's all the same substance. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each have different roles, but they are not separate gods.

Will the world ever end? What happens when I die?

We believe in the personal and visible return of Jesus to earth. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment and the reality of Heaven and Hell.

We believe that the world as we know it will end someday. We do not know when this will happen, but it will be marked by Jesus' return to earth. God will judge our lives by his perfect standards. Those who have given their lives to Jesus will escape the penalty for their sins, because in his death he paid the penalty for all who would follow him. Those who have not given their lives to Jesus will face that penalty alone and will suffer the separation from God that the Bible describes as Hell.