





# WE BELIEVE

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Exploring the core beliefs  
of our Christian Faith  
Part 1



GRACE COMMUNION  
INTERNATIONAL



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# How to use this workbook

This workbook is designed to help you consider the foundations of your Christian faith.

Each question in the workbook is based on the Nicene Creed or explores a concept that emerges from it.

Each question has a set of scriptures that will help you find answers. The answers are often in the scriptures.

Read the question and the scriptures and see if you can put down an answer. Write down your thoughts and ideas in the lines provided. Please try to answer the question and not just write down what you think you know about this subject.

GCI's answer to each question is located in the column along side, on the same page. We have occasionally added comments to assist you in understanding the concept.

Feel free to read other books and articles in order to understand the ideas presented. Studying theology is always very profitable when it's done in community, so it's a great idea to work with a friend or in a study group.

Some of the concepts in the Nicene Creed and therefore those in this booklet are hard to understand because they try to describe a God who is spiritual. Scholars have debated many of these concepts for centuries and not all of them agree. So don't be discouraged if you feel you need to question a concept or need to talk to someone about something you don't understand.

We pray that you will find great joy as you come to know our great God.

# The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy, all-embracing and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.




SECTION 1  
THE TRIUNE GOD

1.1

**Who is the God Christians worship?**

\* Mark 12:29 \* Matt. 28:19 \* Acts 20:28

\* 2 Cor. 13:14 \* Heb. 10:29 \* 1 Pet 1:2

What do these scriptures tell us about God? 

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*Christians believe that these Scriptures tell us the following about God: He is one divine being in three eternal, coinherent, equally divine persons.*

What do these words mean? 

Eternal =

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Coinherent =

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Equally divine =

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Why is this important? 

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*GCI Says:*

*In accordance with the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, the God we worship is one divine Being in three eternal, co-essential, yet distinct Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.*

*GCI Says:  
God is the eternal communion  
of holy love shared by the  
Father, the Son, and the Holy  
Spirit.*

1.2

**What does being triune tell us about  
God's nature?**

\* John 14:9 \* 1 John 4:8 \* Rom. 5:8 \* Titus 2:11  
\* Heb. 1:2-3 \* 1 Pet. 1:2 \* Gal. 3:26

What do these scriptures tell us about  
God? 

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What does the word communion mean  
here? 

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What is the difference between "holy love"  
and human love? 

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1.3

**Does that mean there are three Gods?**


Refer to the scriptures in question 1.1 and especially 1.2

\* 2 Corinthians 13:14 \* 1 Peter 1:2

Yes or No, are there three Gods? 

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Please explain why you chose which answer: 


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1.4

**How can God be both one in Being and three in Persons?**

What words would you use to describe the God's triunity? 

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*GCI Says:*

*The Triune God is one God who exists eternally as three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Triune God is one in Being and three in Persons.*

*GCI Says:*

*Though we cannot know exactly how God's being functions since we are mere creatures, we can say that, unlike human persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are related to each other in such an absolutely unique and profound way that they are one in being. The oneness of God's being is a tri-unity.*

*GCI Says:*

*In the being of God there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who know, love and glorify each other for all eternity. There never was a time when God was not Triune.*

*Comment:*

*Each person in the Godhead has a distinct role. Statements a) and b) are false. The Trinity is not one God with three jobs. The persons cannot be equated with roles or ways.*

*GCI Says:*

*No, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equally eternal and divine and share the same authority and power, and have the same mind, will and purpose in all things.*


1.5

### **Are the three Persons of the Trinity ...**

\* Mark 12:29 \* Matt. 28:19 \* Acts 20:28

\* 2 Cor. 13:14 \* Heb. 10:29 \* 1 Pet. 1:2

- a) three different ways the one God acts towards his creation, or
- b) three roles the one God plays?

Is either statement correct? Explain your answer: 

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1.6

### **Is one of the Persons of the Trinity the origin of the others, and thus superior?**

\* John 1:1-3

How would you describe the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit? 

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1.7

**Does the equality of the three divine Persons mean that they are interchangeable with each other?**

\*1 Peter 1:2

Is it possible for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to change characteristics? 

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1.8

**What are the unique relationships in the Being of the Triune God that are not interchangeable?**

That is, do the relationships within the Trinity change? Can the Father be the Son or the Holy Spirit? 

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*GCI Says:*

*No, the divine Persons are not interchangeable "parts" of God. Each has a unique relationship of holy love to the other two, and each has an eternal name that reveals their real personal distinction.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Father eternally begets the Son, the Son is eternally begotten by the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and through the Son.*

*Comment:*

*The term beget means to "bring forth" or to "produce." Begotten means being "brought forth" or "produced." This can seem as though there was a time when the Son didn't exist, which is why the term "eternally" is used. Same for the Holy Spirit. He proceeds "eternally" from the Father, through the Son. This relationship is constant.*

*GCI Says:*

*No, all the works of the Triune God toward his creation are indivisible since God is one in being and of one mind, will, authority and holy love.*

*Comment:*

*Our understanding of the Trinity is that they operate in complete harmony constantly. Therefore what any member does, is completely in line with the will and action and purpose of the others. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit do not act alone.*

*GCI Says:*

*There is a difference, for though the acts of the divine Persons are undivided, each contributes uniquely to the perfectly united works of the one Triune God.*


*Comment:*

*While they don't act independently, each person of the Trinity is necessary because their unique roles combine to form a perfect work or impact.*

1.9

**Do the three divine Persons act independently of each other towards creation?**

\* John 5:19

Would it be possible for any of the Trinity to act independently of one another? 

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1.10

**Is there a difference in how the three divine Persons relate to creation?**

\* Gal. 4:4-5 \* John 6:37-38 \* John 14:26

Does this make two of the three persons in the Trinity irrelevant? 

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1.11

**How can we speak of the unique contributions of the three divine Persons without separating their works?**

\* 1 Cor. 8:6 \* John 10:30 \* 1 John 5:7-8

\* 1 Cor. 12:4-6

How can the persons of the Trinity be unique without being separate? 

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1.12

**What are the primary acts of the Triune God towards creation?**

\* Rev. 4:11 \* Tit. 2:13-14

What is each person of the Trinity known for? 

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*GCI Says:*

*We could say that one of the Persons initiates, or takes the lead, in one or another of the distinct and gracious acts towards the Triune God's creation, while the others perfectly follow in complete harmony with each other.*

*Comment:*

*It's important to note that when we talk about creation here, we are not just talking about the physical earth but rather everything that God has created, including us. So any of the Trinity can interact or initiate action with any part of the creation and be supported by the other members.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Father is most associated with creation, the Son with redemption, and the Holy Spirit with bringing all things to perfection. However, all three of the divine Persons are involved in all the works of the one Triune God.*

*Comment:*

*When we read the scriptures, the role of Creator is most often given to the Father and redeeming is associated with the Son. The Holy Spirit is said to accomplish in our lives the finished work of Christ.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Triune God is a living, loving and generative God who creates for the sake of communion and holy love with his creation.*

*Comment:*

*God's love and nature is expressed by sharing his life with his creation. Love is expressed in community.*

*GCI Says:*

*From the beginning, God's human creatures, in distrusting God, have alienated themselves and sought to live on their own from their good, faithful and life-giving Creator. But because the Triune God is a faithful and loving God who does not give up on his creatures, God made a way for them to be reconciled to him and thus return to fullness of communion with him as their Lord and Savior.*

*Comment:*

*Because God is far more faithful than we can imagine, he created a way for us to return to him. But he also knows that we can't do this by ourselves. Redemption is initiated by God and completed by God.*

1.13

### **Why did the Triune God create?**

Why the universe and why us? 

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1.14

### **Why did the Triune God redeem creation?**

\* 1 John 4:7 \* 1 Pet. 2:9

What are God's motivations for redemption? 

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1.15

**Why does the Triune God now work to perfect the creation?**

\* Matt. 5:48 \* Ephesians 5:27

Your answer: 

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1.16

**How can we finite creatures know, love and trust the Triune God?**

\* Matt. 11:27 \* 1 John 4:18-19 \* John 3:16

How does the physical relate to the spiritual? 

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*GCI Says:*

*The Triune God is a communion of perfect holy love who created us to share in the Triune God's love and life for all eternity and in that way give glory to God.*

*Comment:*

*Sharing in God's life is an eternal experience involving our past, present and future. God's involvement in our lives is continuous as we are changed and molded and come into line with his purpose. This gives glory to God.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Triune God has the desire, will and ability to make himself known to his human creatures who do not have the desire, the will, or the ability to know God on their own. That revelation, which culminated in the Father's personal self-revelation in Jesus Christ, has, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, been preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures.*

*Comment:*

*God wants a relationship with us and through a combination of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit and the Bible, he has made it possible for us to relate to him in a way that we can understand and cope with. We are able to respond because God came to us in our form. He aligned himself with us so that we could relate to him. God came to us.*


*GCI Says:  
The Bible records Jesus' teaching concerning the eternal names of the divine Persons of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and the relationships in the eternal being of God—most specifically knowing, loving and glorifying one another. Coming from the eternal communion of the Trinity, Jesus is the only one who can tell us surely and authoritatively that God, from eternity, is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Only the Father knows the Son, and only the Son knows the Father and those to whom the Son has chosen to reveal him.*

1.17

### **What do the Holy Scriptures say about the Triune God?**

\* Luke 10:22 \* Matt. 11:27 \* John 1:18

\* John 17:25 \* Matt. 28:19 \* 2 Cor. 13:14

What main ideas in these verses stood out to you? 

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1.18

**What do Christians understand from the Holy Scriptures about the character of the Triune God revealed by Jesus Christ?**

\* John 10:30 \* 14:9 \* John 17:11; 21-22

\* 1 John 2:23

In your own words, what does this say about the character of God as shown by Christ? 

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*GCI Says:*

*We learn that the character, mind, purpose, will and heart of the Triune God is identical to what we see and hear in Jesus Christ, demonstrated by what he accomplished in his earthly ministry. Those who have met and seen the Son have indeed met in him the Father. By knowing the Son, they are united in such a way that they have the same nature, character, heart, mind, will, authority, power and purpose.*

*Comment:*

*In simple terms Jesus was a walking, talking model of the Father. The manner in which he acted on earth reflected the manner and character of how the Father acts. They are so united that knowing the Son means that we know the Father.*

SECTION 2

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GOD THE FATHER

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2.1

**Who is God the Father?**

\* John 1:1, 14; 14:16-17, 26

\* John 15:26

Read the scriptures above to answer this question: 

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2.2

**Why is the first of the three divine Persons of the Trinity called "Father"?**

\* Matt. 6:9 \* John 14:9-10 \* Rom. 1:7

\* Rom. 8:15-17 \* Gal. 4:4-7

Why is the term Father appropriate? 

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*GCI Says:*

*Our Lord Jesus called God his eternal Father and identified himself as his only eternal Son. Thus, the Father is, first of all, the Father of the Son. The Son also taught his disciples to address God as Father in prayer. The apostle Paul teaches that God adopts believers as his children, sending the Spirit of the Son into their hearts so they cry out, "Abba, Father." As adopted children in the Son, we may address the Father as Jesus does.*

*Comment:*

- ▶ *Jesus identifies himself as a Son.*
- ▶ *We are adopted as God's children.*
- ▶ *We have Jesus as a brother.*

*GCI Says:*

*In calling God "Father," we acknowledge that God exists in personal relationship, and that God created us for personal relationship with him. God made humankind according to his image, which is revealed in his eternal Son. We were created to trust in God as our Creator, Sustainer, Protector and Provider, putting our hope in God as his children who, in Jesus Christ, are God's heirs.*

*Comment:*

*Calling God "Father" describes a personal relationship and we can have that because we bear a resemblance to God. In some ways we are like him. God takes on many roles that are related to our welfare and through Jesus we have a life with him.*

*GCI Says:*

*No. Only creatures having bodies can be either male or female. But God has no body, since by nature God is Spirit. The Holy Scriptures reveal God as a living God beyond all sexual distinctions. Scripture uses diverse images for God, female as well as male.*

*Comment:*

*God is not male or female. Some of God's attributes are (in Western society) more commonly associated with men, but others are more commonly associated with women (e.g., Galatians 5:22-23).*

2.3

### **What is meant by calling God "Father"?**

\* Gen. 1:26 \* Matt. 6:25-33


\* Rom. 8:16-17, 29

What does calling God "Father" mean to us? 

2.4

### **Does calling the first Person of the Trinity "Father" mean that God is male?**


\* Is. 49:15; 66:13 \* Matt. 23:37

Which one of these scriptures best clarified this question for you? How so? 

2.5

**Why does the Creed say that God the Father is “Almighty”?**

\* Lam. 3:22 \* Song 8:7 \* 1 John 4:8

What is the overarching theme of these scriptures? How do they relate to God being Almighty? 

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2.6

**How do Christians understand the love and power of God?**

\* John 3:16 \* Heb. 1:3 \* 1 John 4:9

\* Matt. 9:36 \* Ps. 106:8

In what ways did Jesus demonstrate love? 

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*GCI Says:*

*God the Father is “Almighty” as the God who is love—a holy love that is powerful beyond measure. God is omnipotent—he can do anything he wants to do.*

*Comment:*

*God is Almighty but the power is used and tempered by love towards mankind.*

*GCI Says:*

*We understand the love and power of God most clearly through Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ life of compassion, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead, we see how vast God’s love for the world is—a love that is ready to suffer for our sakes, yet so strong that nothing will prevail against it. In the power of his love, God is for us and is eternally against all that is against us and his loving purposes for us.*

*Comment:*

*God’s love is personified in Jesus Christ. He lived out what it meant to love and showed that it could be victorious.*

*GCI Says:*

*This powerful and loving God is the one we may trust in all the circumstances of our lives, and to whom we belong both in life and death.*

*Comment:*

*Even when life gets tough  
and we don't understand the  
circumstances or the way  
through, we can cling on to  
God's love and trust in his  
purpose for us.*

*GCI Says:*

*That God not only preserves his creation, but also continually provides for it, attends to it, ruling and sustaining it with wise and benevolent care. God is concerned for every creature and, in the end, will eradicate all evil and deliver all of creation from it.*


*Comment:*

*In simple terms, providence means that God is in overall control of our lives. He doesn't create and then abandon the creation. Rather, he provides and preserves it.*

2.7

### What comfort do Christians receive from this truth?

\* Ps. 12:6 \* Rom. 8:38-39


In what ways are you comforted by these scriptures? 

2.8

## What do Christians mean by God's "providence"?

\* Ps. 145:15, 17 \* Gen. 50:20 \* Rom. 8:28

\* Eph. 1:9-10 \* 1 Pet. 3:13 \* Rev. 21:1

Look up the meaning of the word  
“providence” and describe what it means  
in relation to God. 

2.9

**What comfort do Christians receive by trusting in God's providence?**

\* Ps. 146:9 \* Is. 58:11 \* 41:10

\* 2 Cor. 1:3-5 \* Ps. 30:5

How would you explain God's providence?



2.10

**What does the Creed mean in saying that God is "Maker of heaven and earth"? (the Nicene Creed is the statement at the beginning of this book)**

\* Rev. 4:11 \* Gen. 1:1 \* Heb. 11:3

How do you experience God as Creator?



*GCI Says:*

*The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ watches over us continuously, blessing, guiding and compassionately correcting us wherever we may be. God strengthens us when we are faithful, comforts us when discouraged or sorrowful, raises us up when we stumble, and brings us at last to the fullness of eternal life. Entrusting ourselves wholly to God's care, we receive the grace to be patient in adversity, thankful in the midst of blessing, courageous against injustice, and confident that no evil afflicts us that God will not turn to our ultimate good.*

*Comment:*

*There are many times during our lives when things often don't make sense and it's important to know that in those times God is still in charge, even if it doesn't feel like it.*

*GCI Says:*

*First, that God called heaven and earth, with all that is in them, into being out of nothing by the power of his Word. Second, that by that same power all things are upheld and governed in perfect goodness, righteousness and wisdom, according to God's eternal purpose.*

*Comment:*

*God both creates and preserves by the power of his word. Making is more than just creating. Making involves long-term sustainability in every area.*

*GCI Says:*

*No. God would still be God, eternally perfect and inexhaustibly rich, even if no creatures had ever been created. Yet, without God, all created beings would fail to exist. Creatures can neither come into existence, nor continue, nor find fulfillment apart from God. God alone is self-existent and self-sufficient.*

*GCI Says:*

*God's decision to create the world was an act of grace. God chose to grant existence to the world simply to bless it. God created the world as a place to make known God's glory, to share the love and freedom at the heart of God's Triune being, and to give us eternal life in communion with God, all demonstrating the goodness and glory of God.*

*Comment:*


*Grace always comes from outside of us. The creation of the world and our lives is something that we can't do for ourselves. Grace is always a free gift, and the Christian life reflects God's giving nature.*

2.11

### **Did God need the world in order to be God?**

\* Acts 17:24-25 \* John 1:16

\* John 5:26 \* Eph. 1:22

Is there a word or phrase from these verses that helped you better understand God's sufficiency? 

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2.12

### **Why then did God create the world?**

\* Ps. 19:1 \* 2 Cor. 3:17 \* Ps. 67:6-7

\* Eph. 1:3-4 \* John 3:36

How would you describe God's motivation for creating the world? 

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SECTION 3  
GOD THE SON

3.1

**Who is God the Son?**

\* John 1:1, 10, 14 \* Col. 1:15-17 \* Heb. 1:3

\* John 3:16

Describe the person of Jesus in your own words: 

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3.2

**What do Christians believe in confessing their faith in Jesus Christ as “God’s only Son”?**

\* Luke 3:21-22; 12:49-50 \* John 8:23

How does Jesus taking human form impact our relationship with God? 

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*GCI Says:*

*The Son of God is the second Person of the Trinity, eternally begotten of the Father. Like the Father, there never was a time when the Son did not exist. The Son is the eternal Word and the express image of the Father. The Father created all things through the Son, and the Son sustains all things by his Word. He was sent by the Father to be God revealed in the flesh for our salvation, Jesus Christ.*

*Comment:*

*Note that the question asks “Who is God the Son?” The Son is just as much God as the Father and the Holy Spirit are. Jesus is not a lesser God or a created being. He is fully God.*

*GCI Says:*

*That without ceasing to be the uncreated Son of God, the eternal Son was sent by God the Father “from above” to do a unique work in the Spirit as a true human being, here “below.” There is only one eternal Son of God by nature. We become the adopted children of God by the grace of the only eternal Son of God, sharing in the gift of his sonship.*

*Comment:*

*While we are sons and daughters of God, we are not eternal like Christ. His sonship and his work as a human paves the way for our adoption as children, but we are not sons and daughters in the same way that Christ is the “Son.” When Jesus became human he didn’t cease to be God.*

*No one else will ever be God incarnate. No one else can reconcile God and humanity in his own Person. No one else can make us true sons and daughters of God except the Son of God. No one else will ever die for the sins of the world, judge all sin, and overcome all evil and the death it brings. Only Jesus Christ is such a Person. Only he could do such a work, and he has done it. Jesus Christ is himself the only true mediator between God and humanity.*

*It's very important that we understand that it is Christ who is unique and not the Church. The Church is not the savior or the way to salvation, Christ is.*


*First, that being born of a woman, Jesus was truly a human being. Second, that our Lord's incarnation was a supernatural, holy event, brought about solely by the free divine grace of the Holy Spirit, surpassing any human possibilities. Third, that from the beginning of his life on earth, Jesus was set apart by his unique origin that joined his divine nature with human nature in the womb of Mary, all for the sake of accomplishing our salvation.*

*Jesus was a union of human and divine. As God he took on our humanity in himself. As God he experienced life as a human being in the way that we do. He fully experienced the temptation all humans experience.*

## How do Christians understand the uniqueness of Jesus Christ?

\* 1 Tim. 2:5

## What does the Creed mean when it says that Jesus was “conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary”?

What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's and Mary's involvement in Jesus' conception?: 

3.5

**What do Christians affirm when they confess their faith in Jesus Christ as their “Lord”?**

\* 1 Cor. 15:3-4 \* Rev. 11:15 \* Eph. 1:20-23  
\* Phil. 2:9-11


What does the word "affirm" mean? 

What does it mean to affirm your faith? 

3.6

**What is the significance of affirming that Jesus Christ is “true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father”?**

\* John 20:28 \* Matt. 11:27 \* 1 John 4:14

Try to explain why the term “one being with the Father” is also important: 

*GCI Says:*

*Having been raised from the dead, Jesus Christ reigns with compassion and justice over all things in heaven and on earth, especially over those who confess him by faith; and that by trusting, loving and serving him above all else, we give glory and honor to God.*

*Comment:*

*The term “Confess your faith” means more than just telling people about Christ. It means being able to tell people in detail what you believe about him and how that affects your values and lifestyle. To “affirm” means to state without doubt. When you affirm, you mean it!*

*GCI Says:*

*Only God deserves worship and only God can reveal to us who God is. Only God can save us from our sins, forgive us, rescue us from all evil and bring about a new heaven and earth. Only God can make us truly and eternally his beloved children. Being truly one in being with the Father, Jesus meets these conditions. As true God, Jesus, the Son incarnate, is the proper object of our worship as the self-revelation of God and the Savior of the world.*

*Comment:*

*Jesus is just as much God as the Father. Jesus was not made or created or born in the sense that there was a time that he didn't exist. Rather, Jesus is eternal, as is the Father.*

*GCI Says:*

*Being truly human, Jesus entered fully into our fallen situation and overcame it from within. By his pure obedience of faith in his Father, he lived in unbroken unity with God, even to the point of accepting a violent death. As sinners at war with grace, this is precisely the kind of life we fail to live. When we accept him and what he has done for us by faith, Jesus by his Holy Spirit removes the alienation our disobedience causes, clothes us with his perfect righteousness, and restores us to the right relationship with God that he worked out in his humanity and earthly life.*

*Comment:*

*Because Jesus was human he was able to live the sort of life that we are not able to. Alienation means isolation or distance or separation but it's a perceived isolation, because in reality God never stops loving us. Sin prevents us from accepting it and makes us feel distanced.*

3.7

### **What is the significance of affirming that Jesus is also “truly human”?**

\* Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15 \* 5:8-9 \* Rom. 5:19

How do these verses emphasize Christ's humanity?: 

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3.8

## How can Jesus be both truly God and truly human?

\* Mark 1:27, 4:41 \* Matt. 28:18

\* Luke 22:44 \* John 1:1-5, 14 \* Job 5:9

Describe Jesus' divine and human experience: 

*GCI Says:*

*The mystery of Jesus Christ's divine-human unity surpasses our understanding; only faith given to us by the Holy Spirit enables us to affirm it. When the Bible depicts Jesus as someone with divine power, status and authority, it presupposes his humanity. When the Bible depicts Jesus as someone with human weakness, neediness and mortality, it presupposes his deity. Though we cannot understand how this could be, we can trust that the God who made heaven and earth and fashioned humanity according to his image revealed in his Son, is free to become God incarnate and thus to be God with us in this wonderful, awe-inspiring way.*

*Comment:*

*In simple terms we can't really explain this concept. It's something that God helps us to accept and believe. To presuppose is to assume that something is already in place. So when we talk of Jesus as a man we do it assuming that he is still God and vice versa.*

*GCI Says:*

*Yes. The covenant, made first with Abraham, was extended to Israel, then expanded, confirmed and fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. By faith in Jesus, Gentiles were welcomed into the covenant with God, thus confirming the promise that through Israel, God's blessing would come to all peoples. Although for the most part Israel has not yet accepted Jesus as the Messiah, the God who has reached out to unbelieving Gentiles will not fail to show mercy to Israel as his people in an everlasting covenant.*


*Comment:*

*The covenant made with Abraham pointed the way to Christ.*

3.9

## Was the covenant that God made with Abraham everlasting?

\* Jer. 31: 3 \* 2 Sam. 23: 5 \* Rom. 11: 29


When we are talking about Jesus, why is it important to talk about covenant? 

## Why does it matter whether the covenant was everlasting or not?

3.10

**How did God use Israel to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus?**

- \* Gen. 17:3-4 \* Ex. 6:4-5 \* Gal. 3:14
- \* Jer. 30:22 \* 1 Pet. 2:9-10 \* Zech. 1:6
- \* Lev. 5:6 \* Ps. 72:1, 4

What do we learn about God's character through his covenant relationship with Israel? 

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*GCI Says:*

*When God extended the covenant to Israel, God said they would be his people and he would be their salvation. He also promised that through them all the peoples of the earth would be blessed. Therefore, no matter how often Israel turned away from God, God still cared for them and acted on their behalf. God sent them prophets to declare God's Word, priests to lead them in worship and to make sacrifice for the people's sins, and kings to rule justly in the fear of God, upholding the poor and needy, and defending the people from their enemies.*

*Comment:*

*God's faithfulness to Israel despite their faithlessness to him created the society into which Jesus was born. God also used Israel to create and preserve the scriptures.*

*GCI Says:*

*"Christ" means "anointed one." Israel's prophets, priests and kings were anointed and their offices culminated in Jesus. By fulfilling the offices of prophet, priest and king, Jesus transformed them. In doing so he fulfilled Israel's election for the sake of the world.*

*Comment:*

*The term "Christ" was applied to Jesus because he embodied all the characteristics of a king, priest and prophet rolled into one. He was the longed for Savior and Redeemer Israel had hoped for.*

*GCI Says:*

*Jesus was God's Word to a dying and sinful world; he embodied the love he proclaimed. His life, death and resurrection became the great "yes" that continues to be spoken despite how often we have said "no" to God. When we receive this Word by faith, Christ enters our hearts that he may dwell in us forever, and we in him.*


*Comment:*

*The job of a prophet was to speak to the people for God and tell them what he wanted. Jesus was a prophet because his life sent a message to Israel telling them of God's love.*

3.11

### **Why was the title "Christ" applied to Jesus?**

\* 2 Cor. 1:20 \* Acts 10:37-38 \* Luke 4:17-19

In the scriptures above how does Jesus represent a Christ figure? 

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3.12

### **How did Jesus Christ fulfill the office of prophet?**

\* Acts 3:20, 22 \* John 1:18 \* Eph. 3:17

What was the role of a prophet? 

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3.13

**How did Jesus Christ fulfill the office of priest?**

\* Heb. 4:14, 2:17 \* John 1:29

\* Eph. 1:7

What was the role of a priest? 

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3.14

**How did Jesus Christ fulfill the office of king?**

\* John 12:32; 9:19 \* Phil. 2:5-8

\* 1 Cor. 1:25

What is the role of a king? 

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*GCI Says:*

*As the lamb of God who took away the sin of the world, Jesus was both our priest and sacrifice. Confronted by our hopelessness in sin and death, he interceded by offering himself in order to reconcile us to God. Jesus now mediates all the things of God to us and our responses back to God. He even mediates and leads in our worship.*

*Comment:*

*The role of a priest is different from a prophet. A priest intercedes for humanity to God i.e. a priest speaks to God on behalf of people. He presents our case.*

*GCI Says:*

*Jesus was the Lord who took the form of a servant, perfecting royal power in temporal weakness. With no sword but the sword of righteousness, and no power but the power of God's holy love, Christ defeated sin, evil and death by reigning from the cross. He continues to reign at God's right hand. He is Lord over all authorities and powers, whether earthly or heavenly, natural or human, private or political.*

*Comment:*

*Christ rules very differently from earthly kings. He is first and foremost a servant. It's important that the Church, the body of Christ reflects this type of leadership.*

*GCI Says:*

*First, that Jesus was rejected and abused by the religious and secular rulers of his day. His lordship was a threat to all evil powers and authorities since his righteousness exposed their injustice. Jesus' death at the hands of these authorities provided a display that exposed the guilt of all humanity in all times and places. Second, and even more importantly, though innocent, Jesus submitted to condemnation by an earthly judge so that through him we, though guilty, might be acquitted before our just heavenly Judge.*

*Comment:*

*Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, at a specific time and place, but the significance of his death extends to all times and places. Scripture describes it in several ways: he died for us, he died for our sins, and we died with him.*

*GCI Says:*

*That Jesus died, just like we do, showing that there is no sorrow he has not known, no grief he has not borne, and no price he was unwilling to pay to reconcile us to God. Jesus' real death (confirmed by his burial) shows that he has taken on the ultimate consequence of sin, which is death. Rather than shrinking back, he endured death in order to overcome it. There is nothing we go through, not even death, that Jesus cannot redeem.*

*Comment:*

*The Creed says he "suffered death and was buried" but the statement is deeper and more profound than many of us imagine.*

3.15

**What does the Creed affirm in saying that Jesus "was crucified under Pontius Pilate"?**

\* Luke 18:32 \* Is. 53:3 \* Ps. 9:9 \* Luke 1:52  
\* 2 Cor. 5:21 \* 2 Tim. 4:8

Take the time to read slowly. Read through the Nicene Creed on page 4.

**What is the significance of the reference to Pontius Pilate?** 

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3.16

**What does the Creed affirm in saying that Jesus "suffered death and was buried"?**

\* Matt. 26:38-39 \* Is. 53:5 \* Gal. 3:13  
\* Heb. 2:9 \* 2 Cor. 5:19

**What is the impact of Jesus' suffering on our experience?** 

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3.17

**Why did Jesus have to suffer as he did?**

\* Ps. 51:4 \* Rom. 8:1, 3-4 \* 1 Cor. 1:18, 5:8

\* Col. 1:20 \* James 2:13 \* Heb. 12:2

Jesus was cruelly murdered! Why do you think this had to happen? 

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*GCI Says:*

*Grace is more abundant, and sin more serious, than we suppose. However cruelly we may treat one another, all sin is primarily against God. God condemns sin, yet never judges apart from grace. In giving Jesus to die for us, God took the burden of our sin into himself, where he judged it and removed it once and for all. The cross in all its severity reveals an abyss of sin endured and swallowed up by the suffering of divine love. Undoing sin and its consequences involves great cost to God—the price Jesus paid to make all things right, a price he willingly paid “for the joy that was set before him.”*

*Comment:*

*Sometimes because we are sheltered or don’t experience certain things we don’t often realize the depravity and cruelty that occurs in the world. But the suffering on the cross lays bare the depth of the pain and agony that Jesus endured to heal.*

*GCI Says:*

*That our Lord could not be held by evil and the power of death. Through his life, death and resurrection, Jesus overcame all evil and its ultimate consequence, renewing and restoring human nature to reach God's intended purposes for all human beings. Jesus rose triumphant from the grave in a new, exalted kind of human life. In showing his followers the scars on his hands, feet and side, the one who was crucified revealed himself to them as the living Lord and Savior of the world.*

*Comment:*

*When the Church Fathers crafted the Creed to say “rose on the third day,” it has a deep level of meaning, much deeper than we initially anticipate. It’s not just about a physical resurrection. Some words and phrases carry weight. For example, the term “marriage.” Its meaning is much more than just a legal ceremony, it encompasses the impact of the union of two people.*

3.18

**What does the Creed affirm in saying about Jesus that “on the third day he rose again”?**

\* Acts 2:24 \* 1 Cor. 15:3-4 \* Luke 24:36-40 \*  
John 20:15-18, 27 \* 1 Cor. 15:5-8

## What are the implications of Jesus' resurrection?:

3.19

**What does the Creed affirm in saying that Christ “ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father” and that he will “come again in glory”?**

\* Acts 1:6-11 \* Col. 3:1 \* 1 Tim. 2:5

\* Heb. 7:25

## How do Jesus' ascension and imminent return affect your current reality?

*GCI Says:*

*Forty days after his bodily resurrection, Jesus was taken up bodily and visibly into heaven to be with the Father. He did not leave his human nature behind, but remains fully human, though now glorified. One with us and with the Father, Jesus is the one mediator between human beings and God. As one of us, he continues his intercessions on our behalf. Though now hidden from us, Jesus is not cut off from us in the remote past, nor is he in a place from which he cannot reach us. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is present to us by grace. From heaven he reigns with the authority of the Father, protecting us, guiding us, and interceding for us until he returns visibly and bodily to earth in glory. We now live between the times of his first and second advents, awaiting his return.*

*Comment:*

*Look at 1 Tim 2:5. You may not have noticed this but the scripture tells us that Jesus is still a man, that is he still retains his humanity even at the right hand of God.*

*GCI Says:*

*Scripture teaches that all humans will stand in the general resurrection before the judgment seat of Christ. The Judge before whom they will stand is the one who submitted to God's judgment for our sake. By him our sin is identified and judged as evil, and in him it is condemned to obliteration so that we can be separated from our sin and be saved in him from evil's ultimate destruction. That is the grace of God's judgment in Jesus Christ.*

*GCI Says:*

*Standing personally before the One who is their Lord and Savior, everyone will give an answer as to whether they will bow to him willingly and enter the kingdom of God prepared for them, or unwillingly bow and refuse to enter and exist under his gracious lordship forever. Thus, there will be a final separation of all those who repent and acknowledge their sin and their need for grace to deliver them from sin and be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and those who refuse to repent and receive God's grace.*

3.20

**What does the Creed mean when it says that Jesus, when he returns in glory, will "judge the living and the dead"?**

\* John 5:22 \* 2 Cor 5:10 \* Rom. 14:10-11

How does God's grace have an impact on our judgment? 

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3.21

**What will be the results of such a judgment?**

\* Phil. 2:10-11

What happens when we surrender to Jesus as our Lord and Savior? 

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3.22

**What will be the spiritual condition of those who refuse to acknowledge their need for forgiveness, refuse to repent and confess their sin, and despise God's grace for them in Jesus Christ?**

\* Matt. 12:32

\* Heb. 2:3; 4:1-2; 6:3-6; 10:36-39

What reasons would someone give for knowingly rejecting the saving grace of Jesus? 

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*GCI Says:*

*All those who refuse will have rejected God's righteous and merciful judgment in Christ, and the separation of themselves from their sin that is available in Christ. They will have come to the place of knowingly and deliberately blaspheming or repudiating the Spirit who draws them and extends to them forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God accomplished for them by Jesus according to the Father's will. Clinging to their sin in pride, they will condemn God and justify themselves against God, charging God with being evil.*

*Comment:*

*This describes a situation where a person knowingly and deliberately rejects Christ. This is not a situation where a person is deceived or confused. This is an informed or consciously chosen decision.*

*GCI Says:*

*Repudiating God's grace to deliver them from evil, bound to their sin, they will experience the ultimate condemnation of evil. They will experience this condemnation, not so much because of their sins, but because of their refusal to repent and the rejection of the grace extended to them through the merciful judgment executed upon sin for them in Jesus Christ.*

*Comment:*

*While God never stops loving people, it looks like there will be some sort of final separation from God. This is not driven by God's desire to punish but the outcome of a final and blanket refusal to acknowledge Christ and the grace that he offers. If someone freely chooses not to be included, God is not going to force him or her to be so.*


3.23

**What will be the ultimate consequences for those who self-righteously repudiate and despise God and all his benefits in Jesus Christ?**

\* 2 Cor. 5:10 \* Eccl. 12:14 \* Acts 17:31

\* Rom. 8:38-39 \* 1 John 4:17

\* 1 Cor. 3:12-15 \* Acts 10:42

What happens when we reject Christ's sacrifice for our sins? 

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SECTION 4  
GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

4.1

**Who is God the Holy Spirit?**

\* Matt. 28:19 \* Acts 2:38

\* John 14:16-17, 26; 5:26

Describe the person of the Holy Spirit in your own words: 

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4.2

**How are Jesus and the Holy Spirit related?**

\* Matt. 1:20, 12:18

\* Luke 1:3; 3:22; 4:18; 10:21; 23:46; 24:49

\* Heb. 9:14

Which verse(s) describes their relationship most clearly to you? 

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*GCI Says:*

*The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, eternally proceeding from the Father through the Son. The Holy Spirit is the comforter promised by Jesus Christ, who unites us with the Father and the Son, and transforms us into the image of Christ.*

*Comment:*

*To eternally proceed means there was never a time when the Holy Spirit didn't exist.*

*GCI Says:*

*Jesus' whole life was lived in intimate communion with the Holy Spirit. He was conceived by the Spirit in the womb of Mary, baptized with the Spirit, and on the cross fulfilled his sacrificial ministry to the Father in the Spirit. Jesus now ministers in the world by sending the Spirit, who ministers in accordance with the finished work of Christ.*

*Comment:*

*The Holy Spirit and Jesus have a ministry that is intricately interwoven.*

*GCI Says:*

*Yes, the Spirit was at work at creation and in the history of the world, with a focus on the people of Israel, the particular people God called to be a blessing to all peoples—blessings given ultimately in and through Jesus. The Spirit's on-going ministry will eventually bring all creation to full maturity, harmony and perfection. He is the Lord and the giver of life.*

*Comment:*

*The Holy Spirit works in multiple areas to bring about the salvation of mankind. He is essential to the salvation process.*

4.3

### **Was the Holy Spirit at work in the world before the incarnation of the Son of God?**

- \* Gen. 1:1-2 \* Joel 2:28 \* Ezek. 11:19
- \* Luke 24:49 \* Acts 2:1-21 \* Rom 1:4
- \* Rom 8:22-24 \* 1 Pet. 1:2

### **How is the Holy Spirit's work demonstrated?**

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4.4

## What do Christians believe in confessing their faith in the Holy Spirit?

\* John 14:24; 26 \* 1 Cor. 12:3 \* Rom. 5:5

\* 1 Cor. 6:17; 19, 3:16

How would you respond to this question in your own words? 

*GCI Says:*

*Apart from the Spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ can neither be known, loved or served. The Holy Spirit is the personal bond by which Jesus Christ unites us to himself. He is the teacher who opens our hearts to Christ, and the comforter who leads us to repentance. He is the liberator who frees our enslaved wills, empowering us to live joyfully and freely in Christ's service. By the working of the Spirit, our love, knowledge and service of Christ are inseparably related.*

*Comment:*

*The term “confession” here doesn’t mean telling people that we have sinned. It implies that we believe in the Holy Spirit. To “confess our faith in the Holy Spirit” means that we can’t know, experience or even understand Jesus without the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the means through which we can have a relationship with the Father and Son.*

*GCI Says:*

*We receive the Spirit by receiving the Word of God. As the midwife of the new creation, the Spirit arrives with the Word, frees us to hear, accept and trust in it as the Word of God, brings us to rebirth and assures us of eternal life. The Spirit nurtures, corrects and strengthens us with the pure spiritual milk of the Word. By the Spirit, we are conformed to the character of Christ, growing in faith, hope and love in personal and responsive relationship with the Father through the Spirit.*

*Comment:*

*When we say "yes" to Jesus' offer of salvation, we receive the Holy Spirit. He is never forced on us. We can choose to accept or reject him. However, accepting the Holy Spirit opens a whole new world. The more we accept and surrender to Jesus, the more we experience his work in our life.*

4.5

### **How do Christians receive the Holy Spirit and what is the result?**

\* Eph. 6:17 \* Luke 11:13 \* 1 Thess. 1:5

\* John 16:8; 14:16-17; 3:5-6

\* Rom. 8:15-16 \* 1 Pet. 2:2

Describe how we experience the Holy Spirit in our lives: 

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4.6

**Why do we not, by the Spirit, experience here and now all that Christ has done for us?**

\* Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30 \* Col. 1:12 \* 1 Pet. 1:4

\* Gal. 1:4 \* 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5 \* Rom. 8:23

Are there circumstances in your life where you are experiencing the tension of living in the time between times? 

*GCI Says:*

*We live in the time between Christ's resurrection and return, which the Bible calls "the present evil age." During this "time between the times," we do not experience all that Christ has for us, though we are assured that we will when he returns. In the meantime, we are given the Spirit as a "down payment"—the "first fruits" and "sealing" of the fullness yet to come.*

*Comment:*

*The fullness of what God has to offer is intimately tied to the return of Christ. Only when he reigns over the earth will we really live into the reality of all that God offers. In essence it seems that there are limits to what mankind can achieve in terms of our transformation by the Holy Spirit here and now. So far human beings are not beyond temptation, suffering and disease. Nor are we perfectly conformed to Christ. Our capacity to live in the fullness of what God offers is not continuous or consistent. However, we live optimistically knowing that the ministry of the Holy Spirit will be completed at the return of Christ.*

GCI Says:

*Sent by Jesus, the Holy Spirit ministers to all people on the basis of Christ's finished work. The Spirit then ministers to believers in a particular way, helping them share in all that Jesus has accomplished on their behalf (John 7:39; 16:7; Gal. 3:13-14). The Holy Spirit's particular ministry to believers includes many things:*

- **Renewing believers** by sharing with them Christ's resurrected, glorified human nature. (Rom. 8:2, 10-11; Titus 3:4-6)
- **Opening their hearts and minds** to Jesus and his teachings. (Acts 26:8; John 14:26; 15:26)
- **Granting them repentance** by which they see their need for forgiveness and confess their sin. (John 16:8-11; 1 Thess. 4:1-6)
- **Granting them faith** by which they affirm from the heart that Jesus is Lord. (1 Cor. 12:3)
- **Indwelling them**, thus uniting them to Christ in a spiritual union. (John 14:17; 17:23; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:11)
- **Granting them freedom and comfort**, enabling them to pray when they are at a loss for words. (2 Cor. 3:17; Acts 9:31; John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Rom. 8:26-27)
- **Joining them to other believers** as brothers and sisters within the one body of Jesus Christ, the Church, where they experience a unity and harmony that embraces the diversity of the Church's many members. (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:22; 4:4; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27)
- **Granting them the fruit of the Holy Spirit**, which is Christ's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)
- **Granting them gifts for ministry** in and through the Church, by which they participate with Christ in his ministry to fulfill the Father's mission to the world. (1 Cor. 12:4, 11; Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 13:4; 15:28; 16:6; 21:4)
- **Leading them to use these gifts** in ways that express the fruit of the Spirit, thus avoiding the self-centeredness that leads to division within the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:31-13:13)

4.7

## **What is the Holy Spirit's ministry to believers?**

How has the Holy Spirit faithfully ministered to you?



4.8

## What is the Holy Spirit's ministry to unbelievers?

The Spirit is at work in the world, continuing the earthly ministry of Jesus, reaching out with God's compassion and wisdom to all people, because Christ died for all. The Holy Spirit is present in many ways to the world, including ministering to unbelievers, often in ways unseen to us, though often involving the Spirit-led ministry of the Church.

\* John 3:8; 12:32 \* Acts 8:26-39

\* Heb. 7:25

Create your own list below: 

*GCI Says:*

*The ministry of the Holy Spirit  
in the lives of unbelievers  
includes many things:*

- **Renewing believers** by sharing with them Christ's resurrected, glorified human nature. (Rom. 8:2, 10-11; Titus 3:4-6)
- **Seeking to bring all to repentance and faith.** (2 Pet. 3:9; 2 Tim. 2:25)
- **Preparing and freeing unbelievers to receive God's forgiveness**, to accept God's freely-given grace, to die to pride and any hope of justifying oneself, and to experience the benefits of what Christ has already done for them, including sending the Holy Spirit to draw them to Christ. (John 16:8-11; 1 Thess. 4:1-6, Acts 10:43)
- **Resisting the resistance** of those who seek to avoid or reject the grace of God. (Acts 26:8; John 14:26; 15:26)

*Comment:*

*Often we can get very impatient with the progress of unbelievers towards repentance, yet the Spirit works in ways that are unseen. So while we may not notice progress, God the Holy Spirit is at work.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Spirit does not indwell people who, in resisting him, do not receive Christ through repentance and faith. Because the Spirit does not unite unbelievers to Christ in a spiritual union, they are not incorporated into the body of Christ (the Church) in the way believers are. People who continually refuse to repent, die to self and receive God's grace are not able to enjoy the benefits of the completed work of Christ done on their behalf. The Bible gives strict warnings concerning the consequences of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, thus rejecting his ministry on their behalf.*

*Comment:*

*No one will be forced or strong-armed into salvation. Those who knowingly reject God's invitation will not be part of the future that God has planned for us. Not because God doesn't want them, but because they don't wish to be there.*

4.9

## What happens to unbelievers who resist the Holy Spirit's ministry?

\* John 14:17 \* Acts 2:38 \* 1 Cor. 2:14

\* 1 John 4:6 \* Heb. 4:2 \* Mark 3:29

\* Acts 26:18

What is the main idea of GCI's answer?







SECTION 5  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD

5.1

**What is the kingdom of God?**

- \* Luke 17:20-21 \* Rom. 8:12-17
- \* 1 Cor. 15:24-28 \* Gal. 4:7 \* Col. 1:13
- \* Rev. 1:6; 11:15; 21:3, 22-27; 22:1-5

Write your own definition for the kingdom of God: 

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*GCI Says:*

*In the broadest sense, the kingdom of God is God's supreme sovereignty—his reign over all the world through the operation of the Holy Spirit based on the completed work of Jesus Christ. That reign is now partially and provisionally manifest in the Church and in the life of each believer as they submit to God's Word and will. The kingdom of God will be fully manifest over the whole world after the return of Jesus Christ when he delivers all things to the Father and all are either willingly or unwillingly in submission to his rule and reign.*

*Comment:*

*The kingdom is seen at all sorts of levels. God rules everything in the world, but we can also see the kingdom in the Church and in individual Christians. It all comes together at the return of Christ, when the rule will be seen to be working in every area.*

*GCI Says:*

*We are praying to God to bring about his ultimate purpose so that the whole creation may enjoy full restoration to its rightful Lord, that all things be put right, and that God's full glory shines forth to all.*

*Comment:*

*The restoration of the kingdom is not merely about justice and peace for humans. It involves the entire creation: animals, sea creatures, plants, trees, land. It's all included.*


*GCI Says:*

*God's rule and reign on earth, which was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, founded in Christ's incarnation, established with his ascension, and is ever more widely proclaimed with the fulfilling of the Great Commission by the Church, will come to fullness when Christ delivers the kingdom to God the Father following the final judgment at his return.*

## 5.2

### **When Christians pray for God's kingdom to come, what are they desiring?**

\* Rom. 8:22-25 \* Phil. 2:9-11

Is there something you most look forward to in God's kingdom? 

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## 5.3

### **How does God's kingdom come?**

\* 2 Chron. 7:1-4 \* Matt. 10:5-8; 28:18-20  
\* Luke 24:1-12 \* Acts 1:6-11 \* 1 Cor. 15:19-28

What does the concept of the fullness of the kingdom mean to you? 


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Does God's kingdom come only after the return of Christ? What about now? 

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5.4

## How do Christians live now in God's kingdom?

\* Rom. 14:17 \* Eph. 4:1-6 \* Col. 1:13-14

\* Col. 3:4 \* 1 Thess. 4:11

In what ways are we in the kingdom now? 

*GCI Says:*

*As Christians, our kingdom life now consists of living with faith, joy, hope and peace as children of God, citizens of heaven and faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. We become glad worshipers of God and witnesses to the coming kingdom by embodying in our lives now temporary, partial and provisional signs or parables of the kingdom that is coming in its fullness when Christ returns.*

*Comment:*

*There is a sense around the kingdom of God, of past, present and future. We are in the present age of the kingdom not yet at the fullness but definitely able to experience the benefits of a relationship with God. It's important that our lives reflect that fact. Christianity should not be hidden.*



— SECTION 6 —  
**HUMANITY**

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6.1

**What is God's purpose for humanity?**

\* 2 Cor. 13:14

What can you say about God's purpose for humanity? 

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6.2

**How do Christians live by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ?**

\* Col. 1:2; 3:17 \* Eph. 5:20

How has receiving God's grace made an impact on your life? 

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*GCI Says:*

*That through a never-ending life of worship we will share in the eternal love and life of the Triune God: by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the love of God, in the communion of the Holy Spirit.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Lord Jesus Christ loved us so much that he sacrificed himself so that we might have eternal life. In response to that grace, we entrust ourselves completely to his care, giving thanks each day for his wonderful goodness. We reject all idolatry, most especially any hope or desire to justify ourselves before God or apart from God's grace. Rather, we receive our identity, meaning, significance, security and destiny from him alone, which he freely gives us out of his abundant goodness and generosity. We live in total gratitude for God's justifying, sanctifying and glorifying grace.*

*Comment:*

*Note the term "receive" here. Grace is not something we have naturally or are born with, it is something we are given. It comes from outside of us.*

*GCI Says:*

*God, who is love, gave us life in and for love. The Father loved us so much that he gave his one and only Son to deliver us from the sin that destroys life and negates love. Sharing in God's love for all people, we reach out to love those in need, knowing that God loves them no less than he loves us.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Holy Spirit unites us with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are baptized into the body of Christ, the Church. As members of this community of faith and under the Lord's headship over us, we trust in God's Word, share in the Lord's Supper, and turn to God in prayer. As we grow in grace and knowledge, we are led by the Spirit to participate with God in the good works God intends for our lives. Those works are the fruit of our daily fellowship with God by the Holy Spirit, according to his living Word, Jesus Christ, and his written word, the Holy Scriptures.*


*Comment:*

*Our participation in the work of the Holy Spirit is a function of how close we are to God. Closeness drives growth and growth translates into reflecting God in our lives. So living in communion produces fruit.*

6.3

### **How do Christians live for the love of God?**

\* John 3:16 \* 1 John 4:19 \* 2 Cor. 5:14

What are some ways you are inspired to share God's love with others? 

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6.4

### **How do Christians live in the communion of the Holy Spirit?**

Describe what happens to us when we are in the communion of the Holy Spirit: 

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6.5

**What does it mean that human beings were “created in God’s image”?**

- \* Gen. 1:26-27 \* Col. 1:15; 3:10 \* 2 Cor. 3:18
- \* 1 Cor. 15:49 \* Rom. 8:29 \* Luke 3:21-22
- \* John 1:18; 5:19; 17:21-22

What is it about humans that mirrors the image of God? 

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*GCI Says:*

*Jesus Christ is the image of God and we were created to be his representatives, bearing his image. We were created to be images of Jesus, who is the perfect Image of God. Jesus, as one of us, lived in total dependence on the Father by the Spirit—a relationship of faithful, free and holy love. In accordance with God’s purpose for us to be the image of Jesus, we live in total dependence upon God and in a relationship of love and freedom with one another. Toward those ends, God has given us the human capacities of reason, imagination and volition.*

*Comment:*

*What are the characteristics of humans that reflect God’s image? Among scholars there is a wide school of thought as to what these characteristics are and what this term means.*

*GCI Says:*

*Out of his love, God created us for eternal fellowship and communion with himself. When we live wholeheartedly for God, we honor our Creator as the source of all good things. We also honor God by loving others as God loves them. We were created to live like Jesus, who obeys the two Great Commandments: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love others in a way that reflects how God loves us.*

*Comment:*

*The answer to this question will depend on what qualities in humans you relate to the image of God. It says that God was prepared to share a great deal of his nature with us. While we don't have God's powers, we still have many of his abilities and his capacity to love and share.*

6.6

## What does our creation in God's image reflect about God's love for us?

\* Ps. 9:1 \* 1 John 4:7, 11

\* Matt. 5:14-16

How do you see God reflected in humanity? 

6.7

**Was God's image lost when humankind turned from God by falling into sin?**

\* John 8:34 \* Rom. 1:21; 3:10, 23

\* Is. 59:1-3

How would you express the answer? 

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*GCI Says:*

*Yes and no. Because of sin, our relations with God and his creation became distorted and confused. Although we did not cease to be with God, our fellow human beings, and other creatures, we did cease to be for them. Although we did not lose our distinctive human capacities completely, we did lose our ability to use them rightly, especially in relation to God. Having ruined our connection with God by distrusting and then disobeying God's will, we are persons with hearts curved in upon ourselves. Having become enslaved to sin, we are unable to free ourselves. Though some freedom remains for us as sinners, our freedom is exercised only within the bounds of sin and is always exposed to the power of sin, which looks to take advantage of the weakness of human nature.*

*Comment:*

*While we didn't lose the image of God, sin damaged our capacity to reflect it. We are severely limited by our sinful nature, which is why we tend to be inconsistent in our faithfulness and loyalty to God.*

*GCI Says:*

*Though humankind turned from God by falling into sin, God did not turn from us. Instead, he sent Jesus to restore our broken humanity. In living completely for God, Jesus gave himself completely for us, even to the point of dying on our behalf. In doing so, he perfectly fulfilled the two Great Commandments on our behalf: loving God with all he is and all he has; and loving all people in a way that reflects how the Father loves him. By living so completely for others in the name of the Father, Jesus manifested what he was—the perfect image of God. In union with Christ by the Spirit, we, by grace, become conformed to Christ through faith. In communion with Christ, we share by the Holy Spirit in his regenerated human nature. In fellowship with our risen Lord, our humanity is renewed in such a way that the image of God that was lost in Adam is restored in us.*


*Comment:*

*We can't restore ourselves because we are too broken. But Christ on our behalf lives the way that we should and he allows us to share in that.*

6.8

### **How does Jesus restore to us the image of God?**

\* Is. 65:2 \* Phil. 2:8 \* Col. 1:15 \* Rom. 8:29

Describe our restoration in your own words: 

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SECTION 7  
THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

7.1

## **What are the Holy Scriptures?**

How do the Holy Scriptures affect your life ? 

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*GCI Says:*

*By God's grace, the Holy Scriptures are sanctified to serve as God's inspired Word and faithful witness to Jesus Christ and the gospel. They are the fully reliable record of God's revelation to humanity, culminating in his self-revelation in the incarnate Son. The Bible is therefore foundational to the Church and is viewed as infallible in all matters of faith and practice.*

*Comment:*

*The Holy Scriptures are a continuous story of God's relationship to humanity and means used to reveal Jesus to us. However, the Bible is not a manual that has specific answers for every situation that we may face. We see God's constant character and faithfulness. We also see our stories overlapping with the multiple stories recorded in Scripture.*

*GCI Says:*

*The Bible is made up of 66 books—39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the record of God's creation of all things, the revelation of God's design and provision for humanity, humankind's original disobedience, God's covenant with Abraham, God's calling of Israel to be his people, God's law, God's wisdom, God's saving deeds, and the teaching of God's prophets who present God's promises. The Old Testament points to Jesus, revealing God's intention to redeem and reconcile the world through Christ in fulfillment of God's promises. The New Testament contains the record of Jesus' birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension, the Church's early ministry, the teaching of the apostles, and the revelation of Christ's return and the fullness of his eternal kingdom. The New Testament shows us God's ultimate purposes and their consummation.*

*Comment:*

*Although there are 66 books in the Bible, it is considered one story, God's love story for all of humanity. The Bible shares this message through many types of literature. In it we see poetry, history, prophecy, prose, stories and letters written by different authors, in different languages over a huge span of time. As we read, we need to take this into account.*

## 7.2

## What is in the Holy Scriptures?

\* 2 Pet. 1:20 \* 1 Thess. 2:13 \* 1 Cor. 2:13

- \* Gal. 1:12

How would you express the main idea of the Holy Scriptures? 

7.3

## How are the Old Testament and New Testament related?

\* Heb. 1:1-2 \* Gal. 3:24-25

## What do the Old and New testaments have in common?

*GCI Says:*

*The Old Testament shows us God's covenant promises revealed first to Abraham, then to Israel. The New Testament reveals to the renewed people of God (the Church), the ultimate fulfillment of those covenant promises. The Old Testament prepared the people of God to recognize and receive the fulfillment of God's Word in Jesus Christ. It also shows how the people of God were to live by faith in the promises of God as Israel, a particular chosen people. The New Testament shows the church how to live by faith after the fulfillment of those promises by Jesus Christ and in hope of their ultimate consummation upon Christ's bodily return.*

*Comment:*

*The New Testament can't be understood without the background of the Old Testament. Unless we understand the history of Israel, the New Testament doesn't make sense. All the New Testament authors assume that the reader is familiar with the Old Testament.*

*GCI Says:*

*It means that the Bible is "God-breathed." The Holy Scriptures were given by the Holy Spirit through prophets and apostles and were preserved by the Spirit as the revelation of God and his acts in human history. They are not simply a collection of human opinion. Jesus gave his apostles authority to speak and teach for him, and a unique gifting from the Spirit to do so.*

*Comment:*

*We also need to understand that inspired doesn't mean God obliterated the personality and style of the authors. Paul is very different from Peter who is different again from James. Inspired doesn't mean that the authors wrote in a type of trance. God used individuals to write the Bible.*

7.4

## What does it mean that the Holy Scriptures are “inspired”?

\* Luke 9:2; 22:35 \* Mark 3:14; 16:20

\* Acts 16:10 \* Rom. 1:1 \* 2 Tim. 3:16

\* 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10 \* 1 Thess. 4:2

## In what ways did God guide the writers of Scripture?

7.5

**What does it mean that the Holy Scriptures are “the written Word of God”?**

How is God involved in the content of the Holy Scriptures? 

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7.6

**Why is Jesus Christ called “the living Word of God”?**

\* John 1:1, 14

What is the connection between Jesus and the Bible? 

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*GCI Says:*

*Because the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, it is rightly called the written word of God. Though God is revealed to us in his mighty works (including the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word of God), God’s works and will are made known to us through the inspired words of Scripture, the written word. The written word of God is to be understood and interpreted as the Word that belongs to Jesus Christ, who personally appointed authoritative representatives to preach and preserve in writing an authorized witness to him, empowered by the Holy Spirit.*

*GCI Says:*

*The fullness of God’s revelation is found in Jesus Christ, who not only fulfills the Holy Scriptures (the written word of God) but is himself the living Word of God. Ignorance of the written word is thus ignorance of Jesus, the living Word. We worship and pray to him, not to the Bible, for Jesus alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life. But he has given us his written word through his appointed apostles, and so we cannot truly know him apart from the Holy Scriptures.*

*Comment:*

*Because Jesus is the “Word,” there is complete harmony between the Scriptures and what Jesus wants. Jesus will never ask us to do something that is not in line with Scripture.*

*By the Holy Spirit, the Holy Scriptures put us in touch with Jesus Christ, the living Word of God. By the Spirit, the living Word of God can speak personally to his people in and through the Bible. Through the authoritative and infallible written word of God, we come to know surely and definitively who Jesus Christ is in relationship to the Father and the Holy Spirit. While the written word can be distinguished from the living Word, they can never be separated—they must always be treated together, for their ministries are inseparable in the Holy Spirit.*

*The Bible is a book that is designed to teach us about Jesus and who he is. It connects us with him and is a way in which he communicates with us. In that sense, the Bible is authoritative and infallible. However, that doesn't mean that we have to regard it as an accurate science, history or anthropology book. Many Christians understand that there are parts of the Bible that are stories as opposed to history. So not every section has to be read literally.*

## What is the relationship between the Holy Scriptures and the living Word of God?

\* John 5:39


## Is it possible to choose not to believe the Bible but still believe in Jesus?

7.8

## How should Christians interpret and teach the Holy Scriptures?

\* John 10:25 \* Luke 24:27 \* Acts 8:26-40

\* 2 Peter 1:20-21 \* Eph. 3:3 \* Gal. 1:12

Are we as individuals encouraged to  
decide for ourselves what the Bible  
means? 

*GCI Says:*

*Just as the Holy Scriptures were not originally given through private understanding of the things they address, so they must not be understood (and translated, read, interpreted, preached, taught and obeyed) privately. Instead, the Bible is to be understood, conveyed and lived out in the community of the body of Christ, the Church. It is to be interpreted in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the Church's historic and consensual reading of it. We do so taking seriously the providentially appointed form of human languages, times and circumstances in which the Bible was written. The Holy Scriptures are to be interpreted with Jesus Christ as their center, for he alone is the Living Word of God, the Son of the Father.*

*Comment:*

*It is important that we understand that the Bible needs to be interpreted within the Church community and in the light of existing scholarship both modern and historical. We also need to understand that it was written 2000 or more years ago in a different time in a different context in a different language. As we interpret, we need to take all these factors into account. The common thread through the ages is Jesus Christ. He is the center.*

*GCI Says:*

*Yes. Preaching and other forms of Christian witness are also God's word when faithful to the living Word of God (Jesus Christ) and the witness of the written word of God (the Holy Scriptures). By the power of the Spirit, preaching gives to us what it proclaims—the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith comes by hearing God's word in the form of faithful proclamation.*

*Comment: As long as preaching is in line with Scripture and with the example set by Christ, it can be considered as proclaiming the Word of God. But it's only if these conditions are fulfilled that we can say this. Preaching that is not in agreement with Scripture or Christ's example cannot be regarded as a true proclamation of the will of God.*

7.9

## Isn't preaching also the word of God?

\* Mark 16:15 \* 2 Cor. 4:5

\* Rom. 1:15-16; 10:17

## How can preaching build our faith?

7.10

## How do Christians relate to the Holy Scriptures?

\* Matt. 4:4 \* 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 10:17

\* Col. 3:16 \* Luke 4:4

## How does God desire for us to approach the Bible?

*GCI Says:*

*We expect God to use them uniquely to teach, rebuke, correct and train us to live in communion with God. The written word of God is God's gift to grow in us faith, hope and love for God and to teach us how to live out that relationship in all we think, do and say. Therefore, on a regular basis, even daily, we seek to hear, read, study, learn and inwardly digest the Bible. By becoming intimately familiar with the whole of Scripture, seeing its parts in terms of the whole and its living Center, Jesus Christ, we will understand that the biblical story is our story as well. This encourages us to live in ways that conform to that story rather than to worldly influences.*

*Comment:*

*We need to be both familiar  
and responsive to Scripture.  
As Christians we need to  
be willing to change in  
accordance with direction from  
Scripture.*

*GCI Says:*

*Since the Holy Spirit is not given to the Church apart from the Bible, true messages from the Spirit depend on the written word of God. Since that word cannot be grasped without the Spirit, true interpretation of Scripture depends on prayer. However, just as the wind blows where it will, the Spirit may speak or otherwise work in people's lives in unexpected or indirect ways, yet always according to the Holy Scriptures, never contradicting, diluting or dismissing them. However, such direction of the Spirit can never become normative for the Church in the way Holy Scripture is and always will be.*

*Comment:*

*What we mean by normative is that the accepted and common way that God talks to Christians is through the Bible. While we don't limit the Holy Spirit, we do not expect his method of teaching us to change significantly. The Holy Scriptures, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are the method by which God talks to us.*

7.11

## Does the Holy Spirit ever speak apart from the Holy Scriptures?

\* John 3:8 \* Acts 8:29-31 \* Eph. 6:18


\* 2 Pet. 1:20-21 \* Num. 22:28

## How do you identify the Spirit's work in your life?

7.12

**Aren't some people, apart from the Bible, sometimes wiser than some people who know the Holy Scriptures?**

\* Titus 1:9

How do we grow in knowledge and wisdom? 

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*GCI Says:*

*The only normative or definitive source of the knowledge of God is God's self-revelation in Jesus and in Scripture, the written word of God. No other sources can be trusted or used as the norm or final standard for Christian worship, faith, hope, love understanding and practice (that is, about anything that Jesus himself reveals, and Scripture speaks to, addresses, intends to make known).*

*This does not mean that those who don't believe have no wisdom about other things, such as physics, chemistry, engineering, etc. It does not mean that everything any other religion or philosophy teaches is false. There may be some overlap of ideas, even if the overall scheme, picture or world-view is different in those religions or philosophies. But it does mean that none of these sources can serve as norms or standards that displace or substitute for what Jesus and Scripture reveals, makes known, and so what we fundamentally believe, trust in. The Bible does not speak to the knowledge of everything that can be known. Those matters it does not speak to and which are compatible with it can be filled out from other sources. These would be secondary things compared to what biblical revelation tells us, including the ultimate purpose and end of all things, including all secondary things.*

*Once we rely on the norm of biblical revelation with Jesus Christ at the center (the interpretive key), we are in a better place to discern where there might be overlapping ideas or wisdom, and where there is not.*

*GCI Says:*

*No. The methods of modern biblical scholarship are a good servant but a bad master. They are neither to be accepted nor rejected uncritically. Properly used, they help us rightly and richly interpret the Bible. Improperly used, they can usurp the place of faith or establish an alternative faith. Though these methods provide a useful tool, the Holy Scriptures remain, for the Church, reliable and irreplaceable in all essential matters of faith and practice. Such methods are to be used to help us clearly hear and properly understand the written word of God as it bears witness to the living Word of God. Methods and approaches that obscure, contradict or relativize the normative and authoritative witness of the Holy Scriptures are to be dismissed. No valid method will place the Word of God under its judgment.*

*Comment:*

*Scholarship is often a great help with studying the Bible. Some of it opens new vistas of knowledge but we need to understand that not all of it is helpful. So be aware that it can be like tackling a good fish dinner. Be prepared to eat the meat and spit out the bones!!!*

7.13

**Doesn't modern critical scholarship undermine the Christian belief that the Holy Scriptures are a form of God's Word?**

\* Prov. 1:5-6; 10:14 \* 1 Cor. 1:20, 25

## How would you defend the divine nature of the Holy Scriptures?






— SECTION 8 —  
**THE SACRAMENTS**

8.1

**What is a “sacrament”?**

- \* Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-25
- \* John 6:53 \* 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25
- \* 2 Cor. 1:22

How are sacraments important to our faith? 

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*GCI Says:*

*It is a special act of Christian worship, instituted by Christ, which uses a visible sign to proclaim and receive the promise of the gospel for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. A sacrament is received in faith, trusting in God to minister to us by the Holy Spirit through it. By God's grace, the sacrament seals God's promise to believers and is a special means to convey to us what is promised by the sign. In baptism, the sign is that of water; in the Lord's Supper, the sign is that of bread and wine.*

*Comment:*

*A sacrament proclaims, it teaches, and it is an opportunity for us to receive the teaching.*

*GCI Says:*

*We baptize because Jesus Christ was baptized for us and commanded us to baptize. We share in his baptism by being baptized in his name. Our baptism bears witness to Jesus' baptism for us, and expresses our faith in his baptism for us. Our partaking of the Lord's Supper bears witness to the communion he has set out for us at his Table and expresses our faith that his self-offering has restored our communion with him and with the Father in the Spirit. In the Lord's Supper we receive from him what he has to give us, namely himself. We receive from him his body broken for us, and his life-blood poured out for us. Through the two sacraments, we bear witness not so much to our faith, but to who Jesus Christ is and what he has done for us through his baptism and self-sacrifice.*

*Comment:*

*Our part in the sacraments confirms our belief in who Christ is and what he has done.*

## 8.2

### Why do we participate in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper?

What is the significance of baptism and Lord's Supper? 

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8.3

**What is the relationship between the word of promise and the sacramental sign?**

\* Luke 24:30-31 \* 1 Cor. 10:16 \* Matt. 28:20

\* Col. 1:27

What do the symbols of water, bread, and wine represent? 

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*GCI Says:*

*Take away the word of promise, and the water of baptism is merely water, and the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are merely bread and wine.*

*The elements have no natural power in themselves to convey the blessings of God. But consecrated by the Spirit and Word of promise, the elements become visible words of God that we receive in action. In this way the elements, by grace, convey to receptive faith what they promise—the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sacraments are thus visible words that uniquely assure and confirm that no matter how greatly we may have sinned, Christ died for us and comes to live in us and with us, by his Spirit. They are specially appointed means that God has provided for us to receive the transforming, healing, reconciling grace of God.*

*Comment:*

*Imagine that the sacraments are a real-life drama in which we take part. The drama allows us to receive God's grace again and again as we re-enact the story through the symbols.*

*GCI Says:*

*While baptism is received only once, the Lord's Supper is received again and again. Being unrepeatable, baptism indicates not only that Christ died for our sins once and for all, but that by grace we are also united with him once and for all through faith. Being repeatable, the Lord's Supper indicates that as we turn unfilled to him again and again, our Lord continually meets us in the power of the Holy Spirit to fill us—to renew and deepen our faith.*

*Comment:*

*We are baptized only once because we are brought into the Body of Christ only once.*

*GCI Says:*


*Baptism is a sign and seal through which we are joined in union with Christ. It proclaims that we are saved by Christ alone and not through our own repentance and faith. It is a participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in which our old nature has been crucified and renounced in Christ and we have been freed from the shackles of the past and given a renewed nature through his resurrection. Baptism proclaims the good news that it is only in Christ that we receive the new life of repentance and faith. Grace Communion International typically baptizes adults by immersion and infants by sprinkling.*

8.4

### **What is the main difference between baptism and the Lord's Supper?**

\* Acts 2:41 \* John 6:33, 51, 56

\* 1 Cor. 11:26

How would you describe the difference in between baptism and the Lord's Supper? 

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8.5

### **What is the meaning of baptism?**

\* Rom. 4:11; 6:3-6 \* Gal. 3:26-27

\* Col. 2:12 \* Acts 2:38

What is the significance of baptism? 

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8.6

**Is it appropriate to baptize infants?**

\* Acts 2:39

Is there a Biblical foundation for infant baptism? explain: 

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*GCI Says:*

*At what age should a person be baptized? For infants and children, it is a parent's choice and some prefer to ask for a blessing to be prayed for the infant and leave the choice of baptism to the child as he or she mature to an older age. Is it appropriate to baptize infants? Yes. Baptism is a sign of God's promise that an infant is embraced in the covenant community of the body of Christ, the Church. Those who in repentance and faith present infants to be baptized vow to raise them in the knowledge and fear of the Lord, with the expectation that the child will, one day, profess Christian faith as their own. That personal faith is then normally demonstrated at a service of Confirmation when, as discerned by the elders of the congregation, the child reaches a personal awareness, in which a testimony of their faith in Christ is shared. (Acts 2:39)*

*Comment:*

*Baptism represents what Christ has done for us as opposed to what we do. Therefore it is not incorrect to baptize children because salvation is not earned by what they do or understand. While infant baptism was the practice of the early church, and is still a practice of many denominations, in Grace Communion International, we give parents the space to decide if they would like to baptize their infant.*

*GCI Says:*

*They hope and pray that the Spirit who indwells them will help them become active members of a Christian community; participate in worship; come to love studying the Bible; continually repent and so return to God; serve their neighbors; strive for justice and peace; mature in the faith, love and hope that are theirs in Christ; and purposefully share in Christ's mission to the world through the Church and their vocations.*

*GCI Says:*

*In the Lord's Supper (also called Communion and the Eucharist), we partake of bread and wine in remembrance of our Savior, proclaiming his death until he comes again. The Lord's Supper is a participation in the death and resurrection of our Lord. Just as the bread and wine become part of our physical bodies, so we are made by grace to partake spiritually of Jesus Christ in his body and blood. Thus, the Lord's Supper declares to believers that in every aspect of their Christian life they rely not on any obedience or righteousness of their own, but solely upon the grace of God in Christ.*

8.7

**What signs of the Holy Spirit's work do Christians hope and pray to see as a result of their baptism?**

\* Heb. 10:25; 12:14 \* 1 Pet. 3:15

\* 1 John 1:9; 2:1 \* Acts 1:8

How would you describe the spiritual benefits of baptism? 

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8.8

**What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper?**

\* Matt. 26:26-28

\* 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16-17; 10:16; 11:23-26

\* 2 Tim. 1:9

What does Communion symbolize? 

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8.9

**What is required of people when they come to receive the Lord's Supper?**

\* 1 Cor. 11:27-32

From what perspective do you participate in receiving the Lord's Supper? 

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*GCI Says:*

*That in response to the proclamation of the Word of God, they come to receive the grace of God made available to all through Jesus Christ. They are to come to the Table with open hearts ready to be identified with Christ, ready to depend upon him, ready to follow him, ready to give up whatever stands in the way of living out of trust in him and in his Word to them. Coming to his Table, they will have repented of their sins and be ready to leave behind any sin that might be revealed even at the Table. They will come intending to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit to depend on Christ and his faithfulness. Above all, they will receive Christ anew, rejoicing in the gift of communion they can have with him and through him with the Father and the Spirit. They will do so looking forward to Jesus' return and the coming of the fullness of the kingdom of God.*

*GCI Says:*

*All may receive it who receive Christ in faith, rejoicing in so great a gift, who confess their sins, and who, in faith, intend to lead the new life that Christ shares with them. This includes children who have expressed a desire to participate and have been instructed in the meaning of the sacrament in a way they can understand. Receiving the Lord's Supper will normally have taken place after the person has been instructed and baptized, but for adults the Lord's Supper can be received upon their first hearing the Word of God proclaimed and, in response, desire to receive Christ by partaking of it. Instruction and baptism would then normally follow.*

*Comment:*

*A good rule of thumb is that if a person wishes to partake of the Lord's Supper after they have heard the gospel preached, it is appropriate for them to do so. GCI does not make prior baptism a requirement for receiving Communion.*

8.10

## Who may receive the Lord's Supper?

\* Luke 13:29 \* 1 Cor. 11:2 \* Phil. 4:4

## Can children take the Lord's Supper?



8.11

**What is expected of people after they have shared in the Lord's Supper?**

With what call to action are we sent out from the Communion table? 

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*Having been renewed in their union with Christ and his people through sharing in the Lord's Supper, it is expected that they will continue by the Spirit and under the written Word of God to live in holiness, avoiding sin, showing love and forgiveness to all, and serving others freely in gratitude and in the hope of Christ's return in power and glory.*