

## God

### **We believe in God.**

God is eternal. God is the beginning of all that is. "In the beginning God . . ." (Genesis 1:1 KJV).

"God is spirit; and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24 NIV). God is not a physical being. He does not possess human features. The Bible speaks of God in human terms (i.e., God's arm, or ear, or eye) to provide a simpler, more comprehensible understanding. It does not give an exhaustive description of God.

### **We believe God is three persons but one God.**

God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We often think of the Father as Creator; Jesus, the Son, as Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit as Comforter (John 14:26 KJV) or Counselor (NIV). Yet all these are the acts of the one God, for the Three are One. This is the doctrine of the Trinity.

That Jesus is one with the Father is clearly stated in several places in the New Testament (Titus 2:13 ; 2 Thessalonians 1:12 ). Thomas, confronted with the risen Jesus, declared: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28 KJV). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2) and the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9; Philippians 1:19 ) present with us. Peter used the terms Holy Spirit and God interchangeably in Acts when he said to Ananias, ". . . why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? . . . You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3, 4 RSV).

There is only one God. Paul reminds us, "that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Corinthians 8:4b-6 NIV). God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Father is God. Jesus is God. The Holy Spirit is God. (Ephesians 4:3-6).

### **We believe God is both unknowable and knowable.**

God is hidden and revealed, far (transcendent) and near (immanent). God is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. God is greater than our minds can comprehend. We are to honor, respect, and praise God. God is love (1 John 1:1-3). As Heavenly Father, he cares in a personal way about each person. This concept of God is known as Theism. It is a specific concept in contrast to Deism, which holds that God is transcendent but not immanent.

### **We believe God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.**

God is omniscient (all-knowing). God has infinite knowledge. God is the source of all truth. "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5 KJV; also Isaiah 40:26; Hebrews 4:13 ).

God is omnipotent (all powerful). "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26 KJV; also Psalm 107; Isaiah 26:4; Revelation 19:6).

God is omnipresent (all present). God's presence is infinite—everywhere, always. As the Psalmist declares: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not darkness to thee, the night is bright as the day; for darkness is as light with thee" (Psalm 139:7-12 RSV).

### **We believe in the holiness of God.**

To be holy means to be separated from and opposed to evil. "For I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44 RSV). Moreover, to be holy means to be committed to purity and wholeness. "But just as he who calls you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written, 'Be holy, because I am holy' " (1 Peter 1:15-16 NIV; also James 1:13).

It is God's holiness that provides for our deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. In this act of deliverance, God's holiness—separation from and opposition to evil—is expressed in love. Through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ in atonement for our sin, wholeness is possible for all. God is holy, therefore committed to wholeness.

### **We believe the work of God is primarily creation, grace, justice, mercy.**

God's work is creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ..." (Genesis 1:1 NIV). The full godhead was involved. "In the beginning was the Word [Jesus Christ] ... all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1, 3 RSV; also Hebrews 1:2; Colossians 1:16). The Holy Spirit was involved. "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2 KJV).

All things were created by God. God is the source and sustainer of all life. The original work of creation has been finished, but God continues to supplement that creation throughout history. This includes the re-creating of human beings fallen into sin. "... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17 RSV). Therefore salvation is a part of the creative work of God.

God's work is grace. Grace is defined as unmerited, undeserved favor, given simply because of God's generosity and goodwill toward us. Grace is the reflection of God's mercy, extended to all who will receive it. An individual's response influences the giving of grace but does not determine it.

God's work is justice. Justice sets things straight and lines them up with God's will. It includes fair judgment and the enforcement of judgment's verdict. "The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed" (Psalm 103:6 NIV).

God's work is mercy. Mercy is the satisfaction of justice through the forgiveness of sin when guilty sinners acknowledge their sin, are sorry for it, and turn from it. "Mercy triumphs over judgment!"(James 2:13 NIV).

**We believe God wants us to know him and has revealed himself in various ways.**

God is revealed through creation. God is more than creation, but the orderliness and majesty of creation reveal God's greatness.

God is revealed through history, especially Israel 's history. The giving of the Law, the calling of leaders and prophets, the deliverance of Israel from various captivities, all reveal God's persistent involvement in human history and intention to be in relationship.

God is revealed most clearly through Jesus Christ. "In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end. He reflects the brightness of God's glory and is the exact likeness of God's own being, sustaining the universe with his powerful word. After achieving forgiveness for the sins of mankind, he sat down in heaven at the right side of God, the Supreme Power "(Hebrews 1:1-3 TEV). Jesus told Philip , "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9 NIV). Jesus came to acquaint us more fully with God. To know God we must know Jesus Christ-his life, teachings, ministry, death, and resurrection. From Jesus we have learned that God is a fair but compassionate Father.

God is revealed through the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who verifies the manifestation of God presented by Jesus (John 16:13 -15).

God is revealed through the Church. The Church reflects and focuses on God's self-revelation. God's character is demonstrated most clearly through the Church when its members are holy and loving.

God is revealed through the Bible. Paul writes to Timothy, "... from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"(2 Timothy 3:15 -16 KJV).