

■ DIGGING IN...

## CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE: TAKE THE TEST!

**C**hristian doctrine is very important. It is the basis of truth. Everyone has doctrine, either good or bad. What do you believe? How close are you to the truth? If you are interested, you can take a little theological test. Following are twenty basic Christian Doctrine questions. All you need to do is write down your answers to the questions, and when you are done, check with the correct answers at the bottom of this page. Of course, there are a lot more questions that could be asked, but these will serve as a sample.

Some of the questions deal with essential doctrines. In other words, if you deny them, then you are not really a Christian! Do you know which ones are essentials?

1. **How many Gods are there in the universe?** A. One B. Two C. Three D. Many
2. **The Trinity is...** A. Three separate Gods B. One God who took 3 consecutive forms C. One God in three persons D. A completely false doctrine
3. **Jesus is...** A. God in flesh B. An angel who became a man C. A good man D. A great prophet
4. **How many natures does Jesus have?** A. One B. Two C. Three D. More
5. **The Holy Spirit is...** A. An invisible force like radar B. A divine spark in all of us C. Third person in the Trinity D. A god
6. **Sin is...** A. There is no sin B. A misinterpretation of reality C. A state of mind D. Breaking God's Law
7. **Human nature is basically...** A. Good B. Sinful C. Neutral D. Divine
8. **In what manner did Jesus rise from the dead?** A. As a spirit B. In the same body he died in C. He did not rise from the dead D. The disciples made up the resurrection story
9. **Hell is...** A. Right here on earth B. A state of mind C. A place of eternal fire and torment D. There is no hell
10. **Heaven is...** A. Right here on earth B. A state of mind C. A place of eternal joy and peace with God D. There is no heaven
11. **Salvation is...** A. A condition of mental awareness B. Within our own essence C. Universal resurrection D. Deliverance from the eternal consequence of sin: damnation
12. **Salvation is attained by...** A. Grace through faith after all you can do B. Grace through faith C. A state of your mind D. Obeying all of God's laws
13. **The Devil is...** A. An equal and opposing force to God B. Not real C. A figment of people's minds D. An angel who rebelled against God
14. **The Bible is...** A. The inspired word of God B. A nice history book C. Full of contradictions and errors D. A story book of metaphors
15. **The Rapture is...** A. A serious head rush B. A New Age meditation philosophy C. The catching up of God's people into the sky at Jesus' return. D. An Old Testament Jewish feast
16. **Adam and Eve...** A. Were the first man and woman created by God B. Were evolutionary representatives of homo sapiens C. Are mythological figures D. Never existed
17. **How many ways are there to God?** A. Just one. Through Jesus B. Many ways C. As many ways as there are people D. It depends on the religion
18. **When you die...** A. You go to purgatory B. You go to heaven or hell C. You don't exist anymore D. You are reincarnated
19. **Evolution...** A. Is how we got here B. Is not a viable option for Christians C. God used evolution to bring man into existence D. Proves there is no God
20. **Why did God create us?...** A. As an experiment B. He was bored C. To save us, love us, and have us love Him D. For pawns in his cosmic game

- Questions from article by M. Slick ([www.carm.org](http://www.carm.org))

## FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH: LESSON #7 – Answers to Questions about God

**W**here did God come from? What is the Trinity? Is Jesus really God? – These are just a few of the many perplexing questions that people ask about God and about Christianity. Perhaps you have wondered about these things yourself, or maybe in the past someone has asked you for the answer to one of these difficult questions. The purpose of this final Bible study is to deal with eight of the most frequently asked questions about God, the Bible, faith in Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is that you will complete the Foundations of Faith study course with a stronger Biblical foundation for your faith than when you began. May the Lord continue to guide you into all truth.

### 1. WHAT IS THE TRINITY?

The Bible teaches that there is one God who exists as three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is known as the Trinity and is unfortunately one of the most misunderstood truths in God's Word. The scriptures *do not* teach that there are three Gods; neither do they teach that God wears three different masks. What the Bible teaches is stated in the doctrine of the Trinity: There is one God who has revealed Himself in three persons: the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, and these three persons are the one true God.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4 & 1 Timothy 2:5. How many God's are there? \_\_\_\_\_

Although God is one in His nature and being, He is also three persons: Read Genesis 1:26 & 3:22. God is speaking in these two verses and uses the terms "US" & "OUR". If God were only one person, he would have used the words "me" and "my," however He uses the words "us" and "our."

When Jesus commanded His disciples to go out into all the world, preaching the gospel and making disciples of all nations, He told them to baptize new believers in the name of the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt 28:19). Whenever we talk about the Trinity, we refer to this eternal union between God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is also known as the tri-unity of God: One God, yet three distinct Persons. *Note that:*

- In the Bible, the Father is called God, Jesus is called God, and the Holy Spirit is called God. (For examples see Ex 20:2; John 1:1 and 20:28; Acts 5:3,4).
- In the Bible, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all described as having all the qualities of God: Eternal, Holy, True, All Knowing, Omnipresent, All Powerful, Creator, Sanctifier, and the Source of Eternal Life. (E.g. Rom 16:26; Rev 22:13; Heb 9:14).
- As Christians, our belief in the Trinity is based on the following verses: Mat 3:16,17; 28:19; Rom 8:9; 1Cor 12:3-6; 2Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1Pet 1:2; Jud 1:20,21; Rev 1:4,5. Turn to each scripture and mark the reference in your Bible.

### 2. IS JESUS REALLY GOD?

John 1:1 tells us that Jesus existed in the beginning with God, and that He also is God. We refer to this as the deity of Christ. Unfortunately many cults and religious groups deny this all-important truth and instead teach that Jesus was a god or the angel Michael (the Jehovah's Witnesses), or that he was only a wise prophet (the Muslims). However, if Jesus was not God in the Flesh, He would have been physically unable to die for our sins on the cross, and furthermore He would have been unable to raise Himself from the dead after three days (John 2:19).

Read John 1:1-14. According to these verses, who is the "Word"? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 1:23. What was one of Jesus names? \_\_\_\_\_ What does it mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Read John 20:28. What did Thomas say when he saw Jesus alive from the dead? \_\_\_\_\_

What conclusions can be drawn from these verses? \_\_\_\_\_

The Old Testament also teaches that Jesus is God. Turn to Isaiah 9:6-7. Who is the Child spoken of? \_\_\_\_\_

What are His names? \_\_\_\_\_

According to these verses, Jesus is the Child, Jesus is the Son, Jesus is the Mighty God, and Jesus is the Everlasting Father.

How would you respond to a Jehovah's Witness, a Mormon, or a Muslim who tries to argue that Jesus is not truly God? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. WHERE DID GOD COME FROM?

Everything that man knows has a beginning and an end – life, man, trees, animals, and earth. Our minds have a very limited capacity, especially when time is discussed. "How long is time?" "When was the beginning of time?" "What does forever really mean?" "How long is eternity?" These are age old questions which cannot be answered this side of heaven, and yet, these questions foster other questions such as, "Where did God come from?" "Did God have parents?" "How did God get to be God?"

The Bible sheds a little light on these questions concerning God. Read Psalm 90:2,4. Nobody created God. He is by nature the eternal God. He was not created at all. He always was, is, and always will be. He did not work Himself up into the position to be God, neither did He inherit the position from His parents, for He had no parents - no mother, no father. He has no beginning and will have no end. God is Eternal.

#### 4. WHY DID GOD CREATE MAN?

Oftentimes we hear people say that God created man because He needed someone to love. Does God need our love? NO! God does not need anything to exist. His existence does not depend upon you or me or angels, for He is complete in Himself.

**Read Acts 17:24-25.** According to these verses, who made the world and everything in it? \_\_\_\_\_

What do these verses say about God needing anything? \_\_\_\_\_

Why then did God create man? Look at verses 26-28 of Acts 17. According to these verses, we see that man was put on the earth with a choice to trust God or to disobey Him. We have the opportunity to choose God and enjoy Him for all eternity. This is why we were created. It was not for God's benefit; it was for ours. If we seek after and follow God, we will fulfill the purpose for which we have been created – to worship and glorify God.

#### 5. WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL TO EXIST?

Someone may say, "If God is a good God, then why is there evil?" Is it because God is not good, or is it because God is not powerful enough to do anything about evil? Neither is the case. The fact that God is powerful enough to deal with evil is not really the issue. He has demonstrated time and again that He has the capability to end evil. The issue is that God will do something about evil one day, but it will be in His perfect timing.

**Read Revelation 21:4.** What will there be no more of when God ends evil? \_\_\_\_\_

Why hasn't God already put an end to all evil? **Read 2Peter 3:9.** Are you not happy that God did not choose to end evil and sin twenty, thirty, or forty years ago, before you had a chance to repent?

#### 6. IS THE BIBLE GOD'S WORD?

The Bible is a unique book. There is no other book in world quite like it. It contains 66 books, written by 40 authors over a 2,000-year period. Christians refer to it as the Word of God. We do this for two reasons: 1. Because it is what God has spoken. 2. Because it is what God has caused men to speak or write in His name. Read 2Sam 23:2; Matt 10:19-20; Ex 4:12; 2Tim 3:16-17; 2Pet 1:21.

Although the Bible was written by men like you and I, the last two scriptures (2Tim 3:16-17 and 2Peter 1:21) tell us that these godly men were writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This means that God was leading them in their writing word for word; the Holy Spirit dictating the message. (For Old Testament examples, read Exodus 34:27, Jeremiah 30:2 and 36:2).

The Bible is God's way of communicating with mankind. It tells us about Jesus. Jesus claimed to be the unique Son of God, God in human flesh. He backed up His claims with the most remarkable event in history, the Resurrection. He came back from the dead, just as He said he would. We can reasonably accept the resurrection as a historical fact not only because of the combined testimonies of the early Christians (which we have in the New Testament), but because no one has ever successfully disproved it.

As believers, we can place our full confidence in the Bible, knowing that it is the inspired, authoritative, infallible Word of God. Even though we may not fully understand everything in it, and unbelievers may mock its precious words, we know that the Bible is a direct message to us from God, and that it contains many sure marks of authenticity. These include over 600 fulfilled prophecies, the testimony of thousands of archaeological discoveries, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, and a multitude of scientific insights that were centuries ahead of their time. When Christopher Columbus sailed for the Americas in the 1700's it was assumed and believed by many that the earth was flat, yet the Bible clearly speaks of its circular shape in Isaiah 40:22 – written more than two thousand years earlier!

#### 7. DO I HAVE TO BE BORN-AGAIN EVERY TIME I SIN?

When we come to Christ believing that He truly is God and that He died on the cross to cleanse us of our sins, the Bible tells us that we are born-again, and that we have passed from death to life. In John 5:24 Jesus says "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." – However many Christians struggle to believe this fact and think that they have lost their salvation every time they sin.

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.** According to this verse: What happens to someone when they accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

What passes away? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think are old things? \_\_\_\_\_

When we come to Christ, all our sins are forgiven us – past, present, and future. We are wholly saved based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. As a Christian, you are 100% saved and nothing you can do can make you more saved than you already are! Jesus has wiped away all your sins with His blood.

Does this mean that we never sin as Christians? Of course not! The Bible says that if we think that we are sinless we are only deceiving ourselves (1Jn 1:8). However, as believers, God tells us what we are to do with our sins: **Read 1 John 1:9**

What are we called to do with our sins? \_\_\_\_\_

What does God say He will do for us when we confess our sin? \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus wants to forgive you of your sins, not hold them over your head. Confess your sins to Him and allow Him to cleanse you with His forgiveness and love. He loves you deeply.

## **8. WHAT IS THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

Many Christians rely on their own strength and natural abilities to live the Christian life without realizing that there is a sure source of spiritual sustenance available to all who will ask. God has promised to give us this power through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Sadly, there is a great amount of ignorance and confusion in the church today regarding this important topic.

**In the Bible there are three key prepositions that describe the work of the Spirit in the lives of Christians. These words are: WITH, IN, and UPON.**

In John 14, Jesus said: *“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”* John 14:16-17.

In these verses we see the appearance of the first two prepositions: *“With”* and *“In”*. When a man, woman, boy or girl places their faith in Jesus and trusts in Him as their Lord and Saviour, that person is born-again, and the Holy Spirit indwells them. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that those who believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit from that moment.

In Acts 1:8, we discover the third preposition, the word *upon*: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* The word *Upon* (*Epi* in Greek) indicates that the Holy Spirit desires to be continually overflowing us. In Luke 3:21-22, Jesus came to John at the Jordan River to be baptized by him. When He came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended *upon* (*epi*) Him like a dove. From that time, Jesus went forth in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The filling with the Holy Spirit, or the baptism of the Spirit, happens when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. He enables the believer for service. The apostles received power to be bold witnesses for Christ when previously they had been timid and fearful. Jesus received power and He immediately began to preach the gospel, delivering those who were oppressed by demons, and healing all who were sick. When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, God begins to work through us, touching the lives of those around us.

**How can I receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?** Read Luke 11:13. According to Luke 11:13, how can we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

You could pray a prayer like this: *“Lord Jesus, I recognize you as my Saviour and Lord and the One who desires to give this power to me in order that I can be your witness. I ask in faith that you will pour out Your Spirit upon me now and baptize me with Your Spirit. I thank You and receive all that you have for me. In Jesus name, Amen.”*

***“For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” - Luke 11:1***