

Foundations of Faith (A Catechism for Today)

Sunday 4 – January 22

Question 8: Since there is only one God, why do we speak of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?

We believe in one, true, eternal God, as witnessed to in scripture and in the earliest Christian confessions. This one God is revealed as eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit, creating, rescuing and guiding us. God is eternal Trinity, three in one, one in three, equal in power and majesty.

Deut 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.

Mt 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

2 Cor 13:13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Jn 1:1-18 No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

Rom 1:1-7 This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name. And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ. I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

1 Jn 4:13-16, 5:6-12 And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. So we have these three witnesses—the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son. And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

Question 9: Each of the three parts of the creed begins with the words, “I believe.” What does it mean to believe?

Belief or faith is a wholehearted trust in God, created in us by the Holy Spirit through hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. It involves confessing Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, repenting of our sin, and resolving by the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life. Faith is nurtured and renewed by worship, hearing the proclaimed Word, celebration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, prayer and the reading of scripture.

Ps 56:4 In God I trust; I am not afraid, what can flesh do to me?

Isa 26:4 Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock.

1 Cor 12:3 No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

Rom 10:17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Ps 25:2, 31:14 I trust in you, my God! Do not let me be disgraced, or let my enemies rejoice in my defeat. But I am trusting you, O LORD, saying, “You are my God!”

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

Jer 17:7-8 “But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.

Jn 6:44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thess 1:2-10 We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people. For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true. And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you. So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia. And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don’t need to tell them about it, for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God’s Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

Question 10: Does faith exclude all doubt?

Faith is often assailed by doubts and anxieties. Like the man who came to Jesus and sought healing for his son, we also say, “Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.” The strength of our faith may vary but we are assured by Jesus that if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, it will grow and increase through communion with him, on whom faith depends from start to finish.

Mt 28:17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

Mk 9:24 “I believe; help my unbelief!”

Lk 17:5 The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.’”

Heb 12:3 Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.