

**A Simplified Statement of Faith
For North Valley Baptist Church
Designed for Children and New Christians**

1. The Bible

The Bible is God's Word and was given to us by God without mistakes so that we would know what is true and how to live. The Bible contains 66 books divided into two parts, the Old Testament (given before Jesus was born) and the New Testament (written after Jesus was raised from the dead). The Bible is complete and tells us all we need to know about God and how we should live to please him. God is not giving any more information like this to us today. See 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

2. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit

There is only one God who created everything. God has always existed and is holy. This one God exists as three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. Each of the three persons is just as much God as the others. Christians call this the Trinity. See Genesis 1; Deuteronomy 6:4; and 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Jesus has always existed. He was born as a human baby to a woman named Mary. He did this so that he could be our Savior from sin. After he died in our place, he went back to heaven. Someday in the future he is going to come back to earth again to take us home to heaven. See Matthew 1:18-25; John 20; Acts 1:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15; and Revelation 19-21.

3. People and Sin

God created human beings to be like him. The first man, Adam, disobeyed God and became a sinner, so he had to die. Everybody since then is born a sinner like his parents. Because we are sinners, we all sin and are guilty of disobeying God. Sin affects every part of our lives: the way we think, how we feel, what we do, and the decisions we make. Because we are sinners, we must die. See Genesis 1 and Genesis 3.

4. Salvation

Because we were sinners and couldn't get to heaven on our own, God provided a way for us to be

forgiven and go to heaven. (God doesn't let sinners who haven't been forgiven into his heaven.) Jesus died to take our place—he took the punishment that we should have gotten for our sin. If we quit trying to be good enough to go to heaven and believe that Jesus died for us, God will forgive our sin. This means that we are “saved”—that is, saved from being punished for our sin and saved from going to hell. When people get saved, they become Christians. Nobody is born saved. We all have to make our own decision to become a Christian by trusting Jesus. Once we are saved, Jesus protects us and makes sure that we will stay saved. He promises that everybody who gets saved and becomes a Christian will really go to heaven someday. See John 3:16; Romans 4; and John 10.

5. The Church

The word “church” can mean two different things. Sometimes when the Bible talks about the church it refers to the big group of people who have become Christians all over the world. But other times the Bible uses the word “church” to describe a smaller group of Christians who live near each other and who meet together every week

to study the Bible, to worship God, and encourage one another. This smaller group is called a local church because it is made up of people in the same local area.

There are two special things that the local church does from time to time (not usually every Sunday). People who have been saved are baptized as a way of publicly telling everybody that they are now a Christian. (They only do this one time.) The other special celebration is the Lord's Table (communion). This is a special meal that the church eats together frequently. It is a picture of Jesus' death on the cross and the new relationship that he enables us to have with God.

Local churches have two kinds of leaders: pastors and deacons. These men are responsible to teach the Bible and to help the church work together and take care of each other. Everybody in the church has some way to help others. It is important that we all do what we can to encourage other Christians, to teach the Bible, to give (some of our money or time), or to help in some way.

See Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 6:1–6; Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 11:23–28; and 1 Timothy 3:1–13.

6. Satan and Demons

Satan (or the devil) is a real, personal, spirit. God created him as a good angel. He used to live in heaven with God, but he disobeyed God and sinned. He was thrown out of heaven and now tries to make trouble for God and get his own way. Demons are other angels who sinned and are now Satan's helpers. They can make people sick and try to get them to disobey God. Sometimes they confuse people by teaching them wrong things and do other things to help Satan. God never lets them control a Christian and make them do things they don't want to do. We can never say, "The devil made me do it" because God helps us do what is right. See Job 1-2; Mark 5:1-20; Ephesians 6:10-18; and Revelation 12.

7. Government

Everyone should obey the government as long as he doesn't have to sin to do that. In the United States, this means that we obey the laws that our president and the Congress make, and the local policemen who enforce those laws and protect us. The Bible says that we should pray for these people. See Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; and Titus 3:1-2.

8. The Future

Everyone will live forever. Our spirit never dies even though our body may wear out or be damaged so that it doesn't work any more. If a Christian dies before Jesus comes back to take us to heaven (what we call the Rapture), his body is usually buried in the ground, but his spirit goes to be with Jesus. When Jesus returns he will bring the Christian's dead body back to life and make it even better than it was before so he can live in it forever.

When people die who are not Christians and haven't had their sins forgiven, they don't go to heaven. Instead they go to hell—an awful place that God made for the devil and his demons. No one has to go there, but people who refuse to believe in Jesus will go there when they die.

After Jesus comes back to earth (what we call the Second Coming), he will start his own kingdom and will rule as king over the entire world for 1,000 years. After that, God will create a new heaven and earth and his kingdom will go on forever.

See Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 31; Daniel 9:25-27; Mark 9:42-48; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:24-30; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; and Revelation 20:1-6.

9. The Nation of Israel

Long before Jesus was born God selected a group of people to have special privileges. We call them Jews, or the nation of Israel. They were the ones whom God told what he expected people to do and then they were to tell the rest of the world. They are the ones who wrote down what God told them, and that's how the Old Testament part of our Bible was written. The Jews are also special because

Jesus was Jewish. But most of the Jews didn't believe that Jesus was God and that he came to be their Savior, so God took away their special privileges for a long time, but not forever. God promised that one day he would give them back their privileges and give them their own country once again. So when Jesus comes back to take Christians to heaven, he will also begin doing special things for the Jews. The church doesn't take away the promises that God made to the Jews; they just have to wait a long time before they get them.

See Genesis 12:1-3; Jeremiah 31:35-37; and Romans 11:1-32.