



LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS for the Week of July 13, 2025

WE BELIEVE *He Rose Again and Ascended into Heaven*

*“On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.”*
(The Nicene Creed)

1. Were you raised in a church where either *the Apostles Creed* or *the Nicene Creed* (or both!) were regularly recited during a Sunday Worship Service? If so, what was your initial response to this tradition?

Even if you were not raised in such a church, how do you feel about reciting such creeds today? Why should a modern-day 21st century church take the time to recite an ancient creed that was written some 1700 years ago? Do you think this is a meaningful and worthwhile part of a regular Sunday morning worship liturgy? *Why* or *why not*?

2. The *resurrection* and the *ascension* of Jesus are two of the most central and indispensable doctrines of the Nicene Creed. In fact, Christian author, Michael Ramsey says this about the four Gospel writers of the New Testament: “For them the Gospel without the Resurrection was not merely a Gospel without its final chapter: it was not a Gospel at all.” Why do you think he would say this? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.** The Nicene Creed is clearly dependent upon this specific scripture passage in the section we are studying today. Paul tells the Corinthians: “For what I *received* I passed on to you *as of first importance*” (15:3). Why do you think Paul emphasizes the fact that he “*received*” this revelation about Christ that he passed on to them? What is so significant about this (cf. Gal 1:11-12; 2 Pet 1:16; 1 Jn. 1:1-4)?

Why do you think Paul says the revelation about Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection is of “*first importance*”?

What if someone else came along and disagreed with Paul's assessment? What if they said: "No. What is of 'first importance' is Christ's Sermon on the Mount" ... or "the ten commandments" ... or "the two Great Commandments," etc. How would you respond to them in light of what Paul says here in 1st Corinthians?

4. The late Episcopal Bishop, John Shelby Spong, made it his mission to "demythologize" the Bible, insisting that it is time for mature modern-day Christians to give up our childish need for ancient "fairy tales" and superstitious "legends" about actual bodies rising from the dead. He once wrote: "*If the resurrection of Jesus cannot be believed except by assenting to the fantastic descriptions included in the Gospels, then Christianity is doomed.*" How would you personally respond to this? What difference does it make whether the Resurrection of Christ is a literal, historical event, or simply a symbolic, poetic expression of new life and new hope being victorious over suffering and despair – like the deadness of winter giving way to the flowers of spring?
5. The Nicene Creed declares: "On the third day he rose again *in accordance with the Scriptures*" (cf. **Luke 24:25-27, 44**). Can you think of some specific passages in the Old Testament that "foreshadow," or give prophetic "hints" about the Resurrection of Christ?
6. How often have you heard sermons that specifically focused on the Ascension of Christ? Why do you think so many pastors rarely preach on this essential subject?
7. The Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ are profoundly connected, but they are not describing the same thing. What would you say is the one of the most important truths about the resurrection of Jesus?

What would you say is one of the most important truths about the ascension of Jesus?

8. Question #48 of the Heidelberg Catechism (1562) reads like this: **What benefit do we receive from Christ's ascension into heaven?** And the answer is: "First, that he is our Advocate in the presence of his Father in heaven. Second, that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he, as the Head, will also take us, his members, up to himself. Third, that he sends us his Spirit as a counterpledge by whose power we seek what is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, and not things that are on earth." Which one of these "benefits" inspire you, surprise you, or encourage you the most? Why?