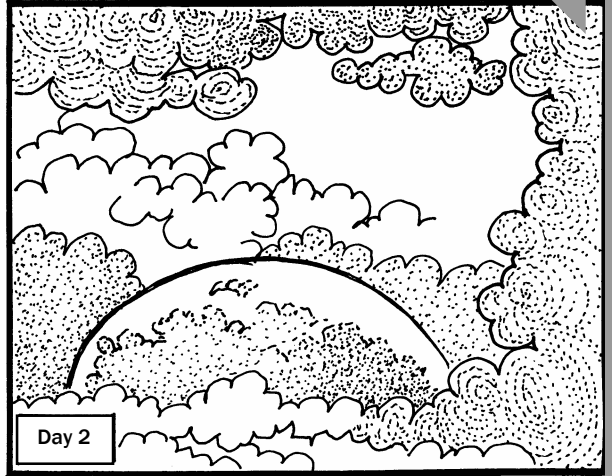
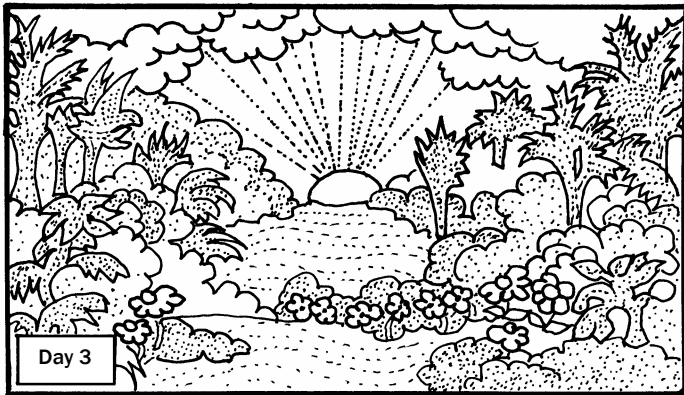


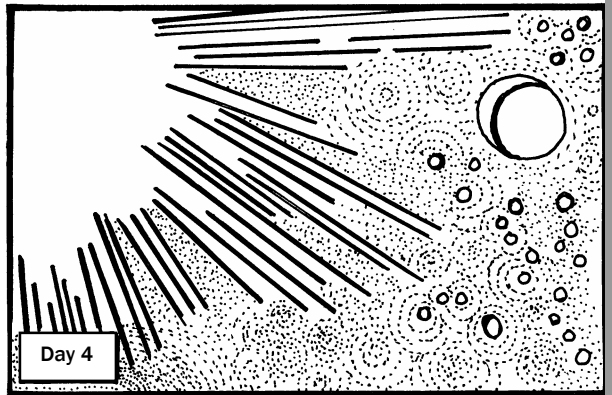
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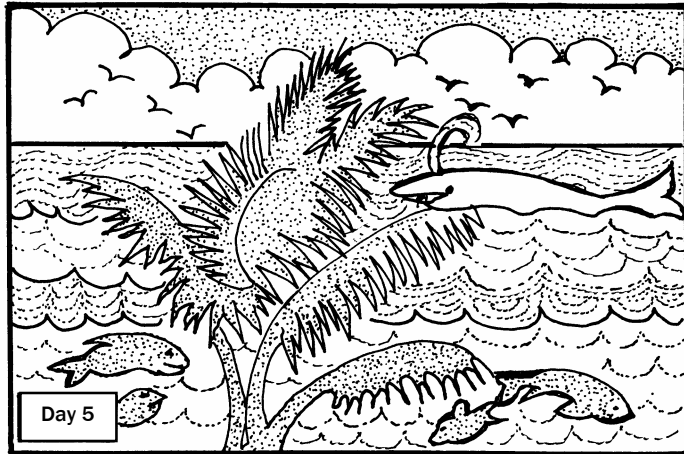
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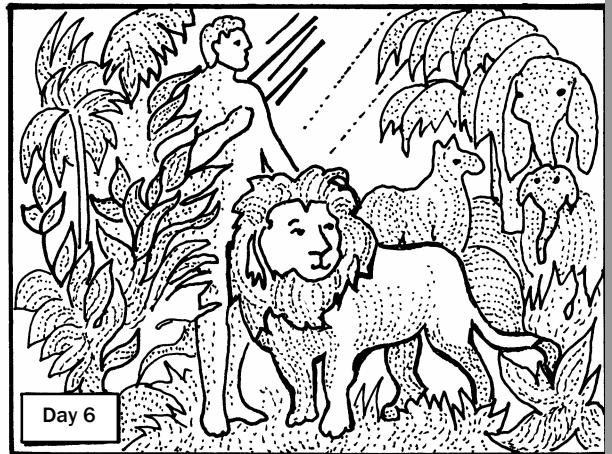
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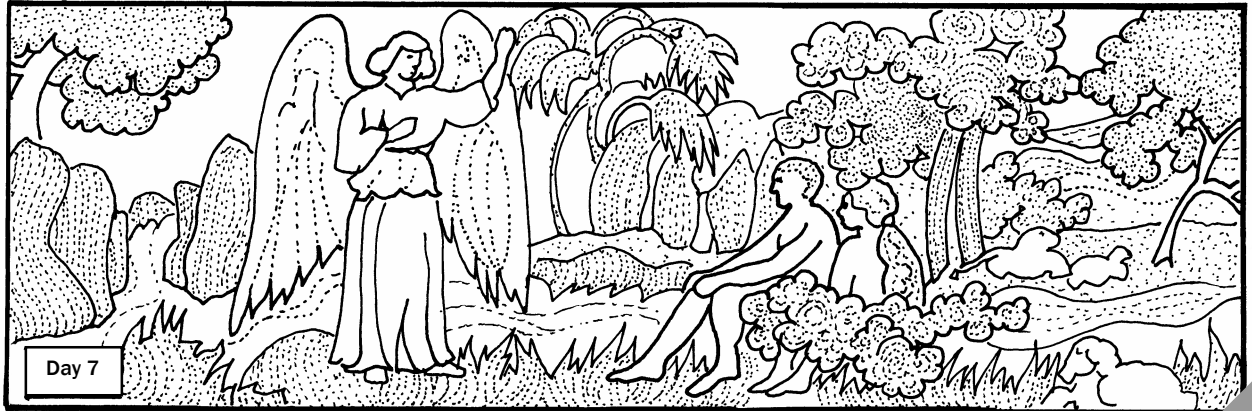
Day 4



Day 5



Day 6



Day 7

## **Galatians 4:4-5**

New International Version of the Holy Bible

### **I BELIEVE IN GOD**

**“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.” Galatians 4:4-5**

**“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty’. . .” Genesis 17:1**

When a movie actress was asked what she believed she replied: *“I almost believe a little bit of everything.”* That was her problem. Shortly thereafter she committed suicide. To almost believe a little bit of everything leads to total confusion of heart and mind. To believe what is false and untrue is even worse, for a person’s life and happiness is based on what one believes.

What do you as a Christian believe? What is truly basic is well summarized in that magnificent statement of faith which we confess in our church service almost every Sunday morning, **THE APOSTLES CREED.**

This morning we begin a series of sermons on the Apostle’s Creed with the prayer that God might thereby deepen our convictions and grant us a life which is filled with ever greater joy, happiness, comfort, and service to him whom we confess in the Creed.

The Apostles’ Creed, one of the ancient creeds of Christendom, is divided into three articles. The first speaks of God the Father, the second of God the Son, the third of God the Holy Spirit. The First Article reads: **I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.**

## I. I BELIEVE

One of the most important words in the English language is the 7 letter word BELIEVE. The Bible says: **“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.” Acts 16:31** and again: **“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” Mark 16:16** Every person’s happiness and salvation depends on understanding the meaning of that word.

The following story might illustrate what it means to believe. A two-story house caught fire. A little girl in the house was seen in front of the second story window. Firemen spread a net underneath and pleaded with the girl to jump. But she wouldn’t jump. The father heard about the fire and drove home as quickly as possible. He jumped out of the car and while running to the window called for the child to jump. Immediately the child jumped into the arms of her father. Why? She jumped because she knew and trusted her father.

To believe in God means to throw yourself into the arms of God because you know and trust him. It means trusting him all the way and with all that you are, confident that he will take care of you, body and soul.

You who are Christians know the meaning of the word from experience. What joy there is in believing! In the worship service this morning you confessed again: I BELIEVE.

Note that we say: *“I believe,”* and not *“We believe”* for the Scripture says: **“. . . the righteous will live by his faith . . .” Habakkuk 2:4** We live not by the faith of our father, mother, sister or brother – every person believes and speaks for themselves. But how wonderful when in the worship service children, young people, parents, adults, and the pastor all unite in common confession: *“I believe.”*

## **II. I BELIEVE IN GOD**

There is of course only one God. He says: **“You shall have no other gods before me.” Exodus 20:3** Yet ever since sin came into the world, people have made for themselves other gods. The children of Israel worshipped the golden calf. When St. Paul came to Athens he found a shrine dedicated to a different god on almost every street and finally even an altar to the *“unknown god”* because the people wanted to make sure they didn’t miss any. In India today cities and roads are crowded with temples and shrines dedicated to so many different gods that someone has said that there are more gods in India than people – some six hundred and fifty million. In the United States our gods are more subtle in nature. They consist of such things as houses, automobiles, land, sexual pleasure, power, education, recreation and a multitude of other things. There are far too many gods in our land that get first place in the hearts and minds of the people.

In the midst of this multitude of false gods, by the grace of God, you raise your voices not only to reject all of them *“as silver and gold, the work of men’s hands”* but to confess boldly: **I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, THE GOD WHO WAS AND IS AND EVER SHALL BE.** Oh that people everywhere would know and trust him because he is a wonderful God.

## **III. I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER**

In our creed we call God our Father not only because he is our Lord Jesus Christ but especially because he is **OUR** Father.

It wasn’t easy for him to become our Father. Sin had separated us from God. Fear, suspicion, the lust of the flesh wouldn’t allow us to trust him. We would rather give obedience to the devil than to God, and the devil was most happy to be our father. The result was slavery, death and damnation. This was our choice, not God’s. God always wanted to be the

Father of everyone whom he created. Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, God promised to send a Savior. Our text says:

**“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full right of sons.” Galatians 4:4**

What amazing love! God not only promised a Savior. He sent him, the only Son he had – sent him from heaven to earth to be born of a woman. This Son was to live under the law as our substitute and to pay the price it took to redeem (*buy us back*) us. The ransom price was unbelievably high: Christ’s agony and sweat in the Garden; the physical abuse of scourging, spitting, thorns and mockery before Pontius Pilate, and finally the tortures of crucifixion on Mt. Calvary. As degrading and painful as they were, they were only the beginning of that far greater agony which our blessed Savior endured when our iniquities were laid upon him and his soul was made an offering for sin. Christ was cursed so that we might be delivered from the curse of the Law. Christ was rejected that we might be accepted. Christ was cast out of the Father’s house so that we might come in and live again as God’s adopted sons and daughters. That’s why we can call him Father.

God is our Father. He cares for us. Will a loving Father give his child a stone when he asks for bread? Or a serpent when he asks for a fish? - Of course not. If we who are human know how to give good things to our children, how much more, asserts the Bible, will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to us who ask him. **“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”**  
**Luke 11:13**

God is our Father. We can go to him as dear children go to their own father. We can talk to him and pour out our hearts' desire knowing that he will listen and will help us.

God is our Father. We are his heirs – joint heirs with his own Son, Jesus Christ. We have a part in an inheritance which consists not of land, houses, and money (*which decay and rust*) but instead of forgiveness, inner peace, confidence, a new life, and finally mansions in heaven. Blessed are we who confess: I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER.

#### **IV. I BELIEVE IN THE ALMIGHTY MAKER OF HEAVEN & EARTH**

Our text says: **“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the lord appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty’ . . .” Genesis 17:1**

When an angel appeared to Mary in Nazareth and told her that she would have a baby who would be the Savior of the world she asked: **“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” Luke 1:34**  
**The angel replied: “For nothing is impossible with God.” Luke 1:37**  
Our God is the almighty God. He can do whatsoever he pleases.

Creation is proof and a demonstration of God's almighty power. Once I asked the children in my confirmation class to bring me something they had made out of nothing for the next class session. It didn't take long at all and they realized this was an impossible assignment. One asked: *“Who can make something out of nothing?”* Only God can. He made heaven and earth out of nothing. He is the almighty God.

During the past 25 years we have spent billions of dollars to send a number of people to the moon. I do not want to debate whether this was wise or unwise. A number of times, however, the people working on this project have stated that one purpose of these missions was to learn more about the origin of the moon. They further stated that in finding the origin

of the moon, we could learn more about the origin of planet earth. To find out how the moon got there need not cost us a penny. All we need to do is drop our pride and read the Bible: **And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. Genesis 1: 14-16**

Yes, God made the stars. He also made the angels and people and fish and everything else whether it is visible or invisible. God is exactly what we confess in the Creed, the almighty Maker of heaven and earth.

## **CONCLUSION**

Blessed are we who believe. This is our God – the Father the almighty! What this means to us in our lives Jesus demonstrates repeatedly as he met the needs of those who trusted in him.

God controls the weather. Jesus and his disciples were on the Sea of Galilee in a ship. As Jesus fell asleep, the winds began to blow and the waves beat over the ship. Finally, wet and frightened, the disciples pleaded: **The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” Matthew 8:25** Jesus then spoke three words: **“Quiet! Be still!” Mark 4:39** *“Quiet! Be still”* and the wind stopped and the waves stopped. God our Father is the Almighty God. If you want a change in weather, ask him. If it’s for your good and the good of others, he’ll change it.

God controls the food. North of the Sea of Galilee, even today, anyone who goes there can see the round topped mountain where our Savior once preached to five thousand people. The Bible informs us that when Jesus had finished speaking, he turned to his disciples and asked them to feed

the multitude. In amazement they asked: **"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" John 6:9** Jesus asked all of the people to be seated in groups of fifty. He blessed the little food the boy had and with his blessing, five thousand ate and were satisfied. God our Father is the almighty God. If you have had food, clothing, housing for the past week, then praise the Lord for he is the one who supplied it.

God controls our enemies. When Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas came with the scribes, chief priests and soldiers. When these people began to lay hands on his disciples, Christ lifted his voice and said: **"No more of this!" Luke 22:51** Everyone who was there had to do just as he asked. God our Father is the almighty God. Germs, thieves, robbers, drunken or reckless drivers – even the devils – cannot molest or hurt us without our heavenly Father's permission.

God is in control of life and death. Over the hill from Jerusalem in a little town named Bethany lived Mary, Martha and Lazarus. When Lazarus became sick his sisters sent for Jesus. However, by the time Jesus arrived Lazarus had been dead for four days. Yet, when Christ was led to Lazarus's tomb, he demanded that the stone in front of the tomb be removed and he shouted: **"Lazarus, come out!" John 11:43** Lazarus then came back to life. It wasn't empty boasting when Christ said to Martha: **"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."** John 11:25 God our almighty Father has power over life and death.

In the official record book of the church that is kept by most ministers, there is a column under funerals which asks for the cause of death. In one of these books the pastor had written behind the various names: malaria, heart attack, pneumonia, and so on. However, after six years there was a



sudden change. Behind every name the pastor wrote simply: *“God Called him.”* Pneumonia or a heart attack is only an outward symptom. We, who are Christians, live here until God calls us home. He does not call us to die, but rather to live forever with him in heaven.

No wonder our hearts are warm every time we confess together: *“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.”* Oh, what blessed people we are! With the psalmist we declare in deep gratitude:

**“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” Psalm 100:3-5**