

What Lutherans Believe

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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The Creeds – LEADER's GUIDE

- What is a "creed"?

- From the Latin "credo", "I believe". Per Merriam-Webster:

Definition of *creed*

**"Ecumenical" –
Representing different
churches, expressing
unity between churches**

1. **a brief authoritative formula of religious belief**, e.g. *the Nicene Creed*
2. a set of fundamental beliefs; *also*: a guiding principle, e.g. "*Never settle for mediocrity is his creed.* — Jill Lieber"

- **What is the function of creeds? Do we need them?**
- **Why do you think they have survived so long?**
- **Why do we use the creeds in our worship services here at Gloria Dei?**
- **What statements do our pastors make regarding the creeds when we recite them together in worship?**

**Discussion
questions**

- The so-called "Ecumenical" Creeds are the three most recognized and used by the Christian church: The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, and The Athanasian Creed.
 - All three are explicitly Trinitarian in that they express biblically-based statements about God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - No creeds are *universally* accepted by all groups claiming to be Christian. Some denominations consider the creeds to be heretical replacements for scripture. Some believe they are too connective to the Roman Catholic church and its history. (Typically the same groups that question whether Roman Catholics are Christians.)

Sects such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and Jehovah's Witnesses explicitly reject the creeds, because those groups adhere to non-Trinitarian theologies, and therefore they reject not only the creeds, but most any "orthodox" expression of Christology.

By definition, EVERY church has a creed.

The Apostle's Creed

- We don't know exactly when this creed was formulated, or when it first came into wide-spread use. The earliest reference to the Apostles' Creed appears to be in a letter written by Ambrose to Pope Siricius ca. 390 AD: "Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled". Clearly it had already been in use for some time.
- Most popular in the western Church
- Gloria Dei typically confesses this creed on non-communion Sundays

Text (from the Lutheran Service Book):

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian* Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

* '*Christian*: the ancient text reads "catholic," meaning the whole Church as it confesses the wholeness of Christian doctrine.'

The Nicene Creed

- Early in the fourth century, a new teaching appeared which claimed that Jesus was not true God. Arius, a north African priest and a member of the clergy of Alexandria, objected to Alexander's (the bishop of the time) "blurring" of the distinction between Father and Son by his emphasis on the Son's "eternal generation". Alexander accused Arius of denying the divinity of the Son and also of being too "Jewish" and "Greek" in his thought, which started quite a verbal war between the two.

Remember, Christianity had only come out of the shadows legally ca. 312 AD under Emperor Constantine! Arius was a persuasive orator, and soon the controversy was so widespread that a church council was called to settle the matter. Out of that meeting -- the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea -- in 325 AD came the Nicene Creed, which clearly confesses Jesus to be true God. It was expanded in 381 AD at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople to express/defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and that version is the one widely used today as a confession of the triune faith. The 381 AD version is a truly "ecumenical" statement of the Christian faith, accepted by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, and most of the major Protestant denominations.

- Gloria Dei typically confesses this creed corporately on communion Sundays

Text (breaks for emphasis/analysis):

I believe in one God,

The Father Almighty,

- maker of heaven and earth
- and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

- the only-begotten Son of God,
- begotten of His Father before all worlds,
- God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
- begotten, not made,
- being of one substance with the Father;

- by whom all things were made; **NOTE: About Jesus, not the Father!**
- who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man;
- and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
- He suffered and was buried. **I.e., "in accordance with the Scriptures"**
- And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And
- He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,

- the Lord and giver of life,
- who proceeds from the Father and the Son, **See next page re: Filioque**
- who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
- who spoke by the prophets.
- And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church
- I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
- and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Bible References for the Nicene Creed

I believe (*John 14:1; Romans 10: 8-10; 1 John 4: 15*)
in one God, (*Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; Ephesians 4: 6*) **Hebrew: The Great Shemah**
the Father (*Isaiah 63:16; Matthew 6:9; 2 Peter 1:17*)
Almighty, (*Genesis 17:1; Exodus 6: 3; Psalm 91:1; Revelation 4:8*)
maker of heaven and earth (*Genesis 1:1,8; Job 4:17; Jeremiah 51:15*)
and of all things visible and invisible. (*Genesis 1:31; Colossians 1: 15-16*)
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, (*Ephesians 4:5; Acts 11: 17*)
the only-begotten Son of God, (*John 1: 18; 3: 16; Matthew 14: 33; 16:16*)
begotten of His Father before all worlds, (*John 1: 1-2; Hebrew 1:5*)
God of God, (*John 17: 1-5*)
Light of Light, (*Psalm 27: 1; John 8: 12; Matthew 17: 2,5*)
very God of very God, begotten, not made, (*John 1: 18; 3: 16*)
being of one substance with the Father; (*John 10:30, 14:9*)
by whom all things were made; (*John 1:1-2; Hebrews 1: 1-2; I Corinthians 8:6; Colossian 1:16*)
who for us men and for our salvation (*I Timothy 2: 4-5*)
came down from heaven (*John 6: 33,35*)
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary (*Luke 1: 35*)
and was made man; (*John 1: 14*)
and was crucified also for us (*Mark 15: 25; I Corinthians 15: 3*)
under Pontius Pilate. (*Matthew 27:2,26; John 1: 14; 1 Timothy 6:13*)
He suffered (*Mark 8: 31; 1 Peter 2:21; Hebrew 2:10*)
and was buried. (*Luke 23: 53; I Corinthians 15: 4*)
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures (*Luke 24: 1; 1 Corinthians 15: 4; 2 Timothy 2:8*)
and ascended into heaven (*Luke 24: 51; Acts 1: 10*)
and sits at the right hand of the Father. (*Mark 16: 19; Acts 7: 55*)
And He will come again with glory (*Matthew 24: 27*)
to judge both the living and the dead; (*Acts 10: 42; 2 I Timothy 4: 1*)
whose kingdom will have no end. (*2 Peter 1: 11*)
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, (*Matthew 28:19; John 14: 26; Acts 13:2*)
the Lord and giver of life, (*Acts 5: 3-4; Genesis 1: 2; Romans 7:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6*)
who proceeds from the Father and the Son, (*John 15: 26*)
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
(*Matthew 3: 16-17*)
who spoke by the prophets. (*I Samuel 19: 20; Ezekiel 11: 5, 13*)

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church; *(Matthew 16: 18;
I Peter 2: 5, 9; Mark 16: 15; Acts 2: 42; Ephesians 2: 19-22)*

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, *(Ephesians 4: 5)*
and I look for the resurrection of the dead *(John 11: 24; I Corinthians 15: 12-49)*
and the life of the world to come. *(Mark 10:29-30)*

Amen.

The Athanasian Creed

- Despite the clarity of the Nicene Creed, the controversy continued for some time. Toward the end of the fifth century, another creed was written that marveled at the mystery of the Trinity in a way that no creed had ever done. Though attributed to Athanasius, a fourth-century opponent of Arius, this anonymous creed clearly came at a later stage in the debate.

The Athanasian Creed proclaims that its teachings concerning the Holy Trinity and our Lord's incarnation are the catholic faith. In other words, this is what the true church of all times and all places has confessed. More than 15 centuries later, the church continues to confess this truth, confident that the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has given Himself for our salvation.

- In some Lutheran (and other) congregations, this Creed is recited on Trinity Sunday.

Text:

Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith.

Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.

And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.

For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another.

But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit: the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal.

And yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal, just as there are not three Uncreated or three Infinites, but one Uncreated and one Infinite.

In the same way, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet there are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God;

And yet there are not three Gods, but one God.

So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so also are we prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.

The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone.

The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone.

The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.

Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal, so that in all things, as has been stated above, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.

Therefore, whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.

But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.

He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity.

Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ: One, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.

And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

The *Filioque* Controversy

In the late 6th century, some Latin-speaking churches added the words "and from the Son" (*Filioque*) to the description of the procession of the Holy Spirit, in what many Eastern Orthodox Christians have argued is wrong, since the words were not included in the text by either the Councils of Nicaea or of Constantinople.

Such a minor thing, right? Not so minor! "*Filioque*" eventually became one of the main causes for the East-West schism in 1054, and seemed to always be front and center in the failures of the repeated attempts to unite Rome and Constantinople.

As recently as 1995, the Vatican commented on this yet again, stating that the word *Filioque* is not heretical when associated with the Latin verb *procedo* and the related word *processio*.

For the record, Lutherans have no issue with its inclusion, regardless of the fact that it was not included in the A.D. 381 rendition of the creed. One might think the matter should be settled by John 15:26, "But when the Helper comes, **whom I will send to you** from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who **proceeds** from the Father, He will bear witness about me."

A Deeper Dive on “The Third Day”

Read: Isaiah 53, Psalm 22

Jesus had to teach the disciples about this; there is no one specific "proof text". One finds “the third day” as a repeated pattern in God's plan for His Messiah through studying the whole counsel of God’s Word, i.e., for the disciples and Paul (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), the entire Old Testament.

“Then Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day’”

The disciples: Matthew 12:40, 16:21ff, 17:22-23, Luke 24:46

Others, too: Matthew 27:63

The “Yom Shlishi” - יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי

The “Third Day” pattern found in the Old Testament:

- On the third day — "the earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit." (Genesis 1:12)
- On the third day — "Abraham looked up and saw the place [Mount Moriah] from afar." There he intends to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering to God. Yet he assures his companions, "We will worship and return." (Genesis 22:4-5)
- On the third day — Pharaoh releases his chief cupbearer from death-row. (Genesis 40:20-21)
- On the third day — Joseph releases his brothers from prison in Egypt. (Genesis 42:17-18)
- On the third day — The Israelites request Pharaoh's permission to make a three-day journey to offer sacrifice in the desert to God. (Exodus 3:18)
- On the third day — Plague Nine, the Plague of Darkness, in Egypt ends, "though the Israelites enjoyed light in their dwellings." (Exodus 10:22)
- On the third day — God descends to Mount Sinai in fire with the sound of a shofar. He then reveals The Ten Words, Israel's constitution of new life as a nation after their resurrection from the death of slavery in Egypt. (Exodus 19:16-19)
- On the third day — Israelites are to purify themselves with water after being in contact with the dead. (Numbers 19:12)
- On the third day — After coming to the river and preparing themselves, the Israelites cross the Jordan "to enter and possess the land that the LORD [their] God is giving to [them] as a possession." (Joshua 1:11; 3:2)

- On the third day — Joshua's spies emerge from hiding from the Jerichoites, then return to their commander. (Joshua 2:16, 22)
- On the third day — after asking God for release, King Hezekiah is healed of his fatal disease and offers thanks in the temple. (2 Kings 20:5)
- On the third day — Jonah is expelled from the fish belly. (Jonah 1:17 - 2:10) (Matt 12:40; cf. Matt 16:21; 17:23)
- On the third day — After fasting, Esther puts on royal apparel and enters the palace of the Persian king in order to thwart a death-plot against her people, the Jews. (Esther 4:16; 5:1)

Note also in “the third year”

Years sometimes parallel days (e.g. 40 years in the wilderness= 40 days of temptation):

- In the third year — a famine during David's reign ends. (2 Samuel 21:1).
- In the third year — a famine called for by Elijah the prophet ends. (1 Kings 18:1)

A Deeper Dive on “The Only-Begotten Son of God”

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only begotten* Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16 (KJV)

“...begotten of His Father before all worlds...”

(John 1: 1-2; Hebrew 1:5)

Just as Ephesians 1 reveals to us that we were chosen by God “before the foundations of the world, Revelation 13:8 calls Jesus “...the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world.*”

How can this be?

And how can Jesus be “begotten” in a way that is somehow not about His... well, physical “*begetting*”???

Consider a lesson from the Old Testament that is referred to in the New Testament. Hebrews 11:17 says “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten [*monogenes*] son. . . .”

Yet we know that Isaac was not Abraham’s only begotten son. Isaac was the second son. Ishmael was Abraham’s first-born son. So if we take *monogenes* as a literal procreative kind of “begetting”, then God got His facts wrong!

However, if we understand *monogenes* as a unique, truly one-of-a-kind relationship, then God can accurately describe Isaac as Abraham’s “only” or “only begotten” son, because Isaac was the only son of the covenant.

We can apply this same kind of understanding to Jesus as God’s unique, one-of-a-kind Son, the very manifestation and fulfillment of the covenant that was God’s intention and will *before the foundations of the world*.

So when we see Jesus called the “only begotten” Son, we should remember that this word is not about procreation, or even about chronology. “Only-begotten” describes a singularity in objective reality; the unique relationship between the Father and the Son, as correctly expressed in the Nicene Creed!

A Deeper Dive on “He Descended into Hell”

1 Peter 3:18-22:

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered[b] once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ **in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,** ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Ephesians 4:8-9

⁸ Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”

⁹ (In saying, “He ascended,” **what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?** ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Romans 10:6-8

⁶ But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ “or **‘Who will descend into the abyss?’**” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Colossians 2:13-15

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. **This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.** ¹⁵ **He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.**

IX. Christ's Descent into Hell

¹ And since even in the ancient Christian teachers of the Church, as well as in some among our teachers, dissimilar explanations of the article concerning the descent of Christ to hell are found, we abide in like manner by the simplicity of our Christian faith [comprised in the Creed], to which Dr. Luther in his sermon, which was delivered in the castle at Torgau in the year 1533, concerning the descent of Christ to hell, has pointed us, where we confess: I believe in the Lord Christ, God's Son, our Lord, dead, buried, and descended into hell. For in this [Confession] the burial and descent of Christ to hell are distinguished as different articles; ² and **we simply believe that the entire person, God and man, after the burial descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his might.** ³ We should not, however, trouble ourselves with high and acute thoughts as to how this occurred; for with our reason and our five senses this article can be comprehended as little as the preceding one, how Christ is placed at the right hand of the almighty power and majesty of God; but we are simply to believe it and adhere to the Word [in such mysteries of faith]. Thus we retain the substance [sound doctrine] and [true] consolation that neither hell nor the devil can take captive or injure us and all who believe in Christ.

Summary: This is why "Holy Saturday" is also known as "the Harrowing of Hell" in the historic liturgy of the church. While it's hard to pin down a minute-by-minute timeline of the events, we know that Jesus' death on the cross was such a unique event across all of space-time (a singularity!) that it literally shook the cosmos. The veil of the temple was torn in two, the Earth quaked, and ***graves were opened***. Victory over death was proclaimed for all of eternity. How interesting that Peter connects this to our baptism, when he asserts that it saves us. Jesus' proclamation to the spirits in prison is also His proclamation to us, as He essentially announces, ***"ALL of these beloved ones – the small, the now-living, the long-dead, ALL whom I chose before the foundations of the world -- live with me in eternity because I died for them, took upon Myself their punishment for sin, buried their deaths in mine, and will now rise from the grave forever!"***

When we confess this part of the Apostles Creed, we are grasping the enormity of this victory cry, this proclamation to the souls in prison, as we are witnesses - by faith - to this universe-changing event!

Leader's Guide Bonus Content

The Ecumenical Creeds

Creeds called ecumenical: Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian. Ecumenical means worldwide, gen., or universal. Though not all these creeds are used by all chs., they are used by chs. throughout the world.

The Apostles' Creed is characteristically Western. The Nicene Creed in its original form (without *filioque* [see Filioque Controversy]) is the chief confession in the E Ch. The Athanasian Creed has been in the Russ. liturgy since the 17th c. and was used for a time in the Gk. liturgy beginning 1780.

The Luth. (see Book of Concord), Angl. (see Anglican Confessions, 1), and RC Chs. (see Roman Catholic Confessions) have included the 3 creeds in their Confessions. But the Prot. Episc. Ch. in the US refused to include the Athanasian Creed in its liturgy 1785, 1786, 1789 (see also Protestant Episcopal Church, 5). The Ref. bodies, though gen. endorsing the Christological doctrines of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, adhered chiefly to the Apostles' Creed and inc. it in their catechisms, e.g., the Heidelberg Catechism (see Reformed Confessions, D 2).

A. Apostles' Creed.

1. This creed was not formulated by councils of theologians but grew spontaneously out of the needs of the living ch.

2. The tradition that the Creed was composed on Pent. or shortly thereafter by the 12 apostles, each contributing an article, is stated, e.g., by T. Rufinus* ca. 403 in Commentarius in symbolum apostolorum and in the Explanatio symboli ad initiandos, usually ascribed to Ambrose.* This view was embodied in the Catechismus Romanus (see Roman Catholic Confessions, A 3). Some Luths. defended the tradition. The theory was attacked by L. Valla* and D. Erasmus* and ultimately proved false on basis of intrinsic improbability, silence of the Scriptures, silence of ante-Nicene fathers, and various forms extant in the early ch.

3. The Creed grew from NT beginnings (e.g., Mt 10:32-33; Jn 1:49; 6:69; 11:27; 20:28; Acts 8:37; 14:15; 2 Co 13:14; 1 Ptr 1:2). The confession of Peter (Mt 16:16) and the baptismal formula (Mt 28:19) influenced the development of the Creed esp. More developed creedal statements are found in such ch. fathers as Ignatius of Antioch (see Apostolic Fathers, 2) and Justin* Martyr. For a long time the Creed was usually memorized but not written (disciplina* arcani). It was explained to the catechumens in the last stages of their preparation. The ante-Nicene fathers called the early forms of the Creed the "rule* of faith," "rule of truth." "apostolic tradition." and "symbol." Such "rules of faith" are mentioned by Irenaeus,* Tertullian,* Novatian,* Cyprian* of Carthage, and Origen.*

4. That the Creed developed indep. in different regions is shown by the differences existing among early creeds. The Old Roman creed read: "I believe in God the Father Almighty; and in Christ Jesus, His only (begotten) Son, our Lord; and in the Holy Spirit, the holy church, the forgiveness of sins, (and) the resurrection of the flesh." A longer form finally became standard in the West. T. Rufinus* gives a Lat. version; Marcellus* of Ancyra gives it in Gk. Later additions were made ("descended to hell" in a 4th c. creed; "catholic" from Eastern usage; "communion of saints" [see Communio sanctorum] in a commentary on the creed by Niceta[s]* of Remesia) until the present form triumphed in the W (6th–8th c.) as a result of RC efforts.

5. Though secondary in the E Ch., the Apostles' Creed is a strong bond of union bet. all ages and sections of Christianity. It was highly regarded e.g. by Augustine* of Hippo, M. Luther,* and J. Calvin.* Attacking this creed is tantamount to attacking Scripture.

B. Nicene Creed (*Symbolum Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum*).

1. Represents the E development of the baptismal formula and shows directly the results of the Arian Controversy (see Arianism). Three forms may be distinguished:

a. The Nicene Creed of 325 grew out of the immediate necessity of safeguarding the apostolic teaching concerning the deity of Christ against the Arian heresy. It closed with the words "and in the Holy Ghost" but added an anathema against Arians.

b. The Constantinopolitan Creed is so called because, when presented to the Council of Chalcedon* 451, it was ascribed to the 381 Council of Constantinople.* It differs slightly from the Nicene Creed of 325 and has a long 3d article asserting the true deity of the Holy Spirit.

c. The 3d form differs from the others by including the word *filioque*. The E Orthodox Ch. held to the *monarchia* ("sole rule") of the Father and the single procession of the Spirit; it differentiated the latter from the temporal mission of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. The addition of *filioque* emphasized the procession from the Father and the Son. In the 11th c. the RC Ch. added the word to the Creed; this led to the great schism* bet. E and W (see also Filioque Controversy).

2. The Nicene Creed, more than the Apostles' Creed, echoes sharp distinctions (e.g., "begotten, not made") drawn by the orthodox against heresies.

C. Athanasian Creed (*Symbolum Quicunque*).

1. The 3d and last of the creeds called ecumenical. Its origin is obscure. Since the 9th c. it has been ascribed to Athanasius*; this view has been contested since the 17th c. and is today rejected (early councils do not mention this creed; it was written in Lat., whereas Athanasius wrote in Gk.; it presupposes later heresies:

Nestorianism,* Eutychianism*). It seems to have originated in Gaul or N Afr. as a summary of the doctrinal decisions of the 1st 4 ecumenical councils. It also seeks to state the doctrine of the Trinity* in Augustinian terms.

2. By the 9th c. this creed was in the liturgy in Ger. and was used at prime (see Hours, Canonical). Luther regarded it as possibly the grandest production of the ch. since the time of the apostles. EL

Filioque Controversy

A major dispute in the ch.; became a chief point of difference bet. the E and the W Ch. The Nicene Creed had as the Third Article: "And in the Holy Spirit"; to this the Constantinopolitan Creed added: "The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father." The belief that the Spirit proceeds *also from the Son* (Lat. filioque) is found in the 4th c. (e.g., in Ambrose*), was taught by Augustine* of Hippo, and probably first appeared in creeds in Sp. in the 5th c. The term filioque was adopted at Toledo* 589, probably against Arianism.* Thereafter it was gen. accepted in the W and was adopted at Rome soon after 1000. The E Ch., which made the Father alone the fountainhead of deity, rejected the filioque, but gen. found no difficulty in saying that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *through* the Son. See also Eastern Orthodox Churches, 3; Ecumenical Creeds, B 1; Father, God the; Fatherhood of God; Florence, Council of, 2; God; Lyons, Councils of; Procession of the Holy Spirit; Schism, 4, 6; Trinity.

Arianism

Heresy that engulfed many areas of the ch. esp. 320–380.

1. Origin. Arius (d. 336), a priest in a suburb of Alexandria, tried to combine the adoptionism of Paul* of Samosata with the Neoplatonic (see Neoplatonism) idea of divine transcendence and utter inaccessibility of God. God was described as an abstract monad,* alone unbegotten, without equal, unchangeable, ineffable. Since God could not create the world directly because of His very nature, He created out of nothing, "before all times and eons," an intermediate being, exalted above other creatures, through whom He created the world. This intermediate being is the Logos,* called "Son," who is not true God and not eternal. Some went so far as to teach that the Logos was dissimilar (anomoios) from the Father in essence (see Anomoeans). In time this being took human flesh, not inherently sinless, but capable of moral progress, choosing the good and continuing therein.

2. Controversy. Alexander,* bp. of Alexandria, called a council ca. 321, which excommunicated Arius, who continued to defend himself and found powerful supporters in Eusebius* of Nicomedia and Eusebius* of Caesarea. Constantine* I advised all involved to overlook trivia and agree on fundamentals. When this advice failed, perhaps on the advice of Hosius,* Constantine summoned the 1st ecumenical council to meet at Nicaea.* There the formula proposed by the Arians was laughed out of session. But the vast majority could not agree on a positive statement. One group, following Eusebius of Caesarea, did not agree with Arius, but

did insist that the godhead was of 3 hypostases. When the W bps. would not agree to this formula, fearing it would lead to Arianism, and insisted on the statement that God is One in essence (homoousios*), a long standing suspicion between Gk. and Lat. teachers came to the surface. Those who insisted on the 3 hypostases believed that a simple statement of homoousios would lead to modalism. Therefore they used the term homoiousios* ("of like essence") to preserve the identity of each. These were later designated "Eusebians." They signed the Creed of Nicaea but only upon assurances from Constantine that it did not involve modalism.

3. *Issue.* After Nicaea there was constant quarreling between these 2 positions. The quarrel allowed the Arians to retain their positions. As long as Constantine lived, a balance was retained, but with his death and a redivision of the empire bet. his sons, one of whom supported the W and the other the E position, the teachers of the ch. fell into bitter provocation and acrimony. Athanasius even called the Gks. Semi-Arians. Constantius, who ultimately was dominant, had no interest in theology and was interested only in settlement. He deposed any bp. who stood for a strong position, especially the homoousians. Only with Constantius' death were the various parties to this dispute able to get together and settle the matter. This settlement, worked out by Hilary* of Poitiers and Ambrose* of Milan in the W with Basil of Caesarea and Athanasius in the E, was formalized by the Council of Constantinople, 381. The godhead was designated homoousios made up of 3 distinct hypostases, 1 substance in 3 persons. This council is also said to have drawn up what we call the Nicene Creed.

Athanasius

(ca. 293–373). Known in E tradition as "The Father of Orthodoxy." His life shows great heroism, fortitude, and faith. In 325 accompanied his bp., Alexander, to Council of Nicea as deacon; 3 yrs. later became bp. Alexandria. Known for defense of Nicene formula, which stressed that Jesus Christ is homoousios* with the Father. Made little use of this term in early apologies of Christian faith, *Against the Gentiles* and *On the Incarnation*; but by 325 felt that it was the only one that would preserve the teaching of the ch. from the ravages of Arianism.* Though homoousios is not a Biblical term, he felt that it captured the witness of the Scriptures to the deity of Christ better than any of the specifically Biblical formulations that might have been substituted. His many works against the Arians include *The Decrees of the Council of Nicea*; *History of the Arians*; *Orations Against the Arians*.

Perhaps his most important contribution was made ca. the middle of the 4th c. when he brought together the Gk. theologians of the E, who emphasized that the Godhead is made up of 3 Persons, with the theologians of the W, who insisted that God is One. Athanasius' efforts, with those of such men as Basil and Hilary, led to settlement at Constantinople (381), where it was agreed that there is 1 true God, in whom there are 3 Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. WWO