

# THE APOSTLES' CREED

“Credo...”

PASSAGES CLASS

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# Creed



# Creed



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# Creeds in Our *Book of Confessions*\*

- 1) The Nicene Creed
- 2) The Apostles' Creed
- 3) The Scots Confession
- 4) The Heidelberg Catechism
- 5) The Second Helvetic Confession

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\* aka Part I of The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), so a big deal.

# *Book of Confessions*

- 6) The Westminster Standards:
  - 1) The Westminster Confession of Faith
  - 2) The Shorter Catechism
  - 3) The Larger Catechism
- 7) The Theological Declaration of Barmen
- 8) The Confession of 1967
- 9) The Confession of Belhar
- 10) A Brief Statement of Faith – PC (U.S.A.)

# So, what is the difference between a Creed and a Confession?

- A creed is a statement, usually made in public, about in whom we believe.
- A confession is a statement in what we believe.
- Examples:
  - Creed: “I believe in God the Father Almighty.”
  - Confession: “ I believe there is one God.”
- Also, the Creeds are much shorter!

# Creeds/Confessions/Catechisms/ Statements

- The dates are relevant. The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds are ancient.
- The Scots Confession (1567), Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and Second Helvetic Confession (1566) -- the height of the Reformation Era.
- ***Westminster Standards (1647) – English Puritan but adopted by the Presbyterian Scots and American Presbyterians – it is comprehensive.***
- Barmen Declaration (1934) – Anti-Nazi.
- Confession of 1967 – Northern Church added other Confessions to Westminster Standards



# Creeds/Confessions/Catechisms/ Statements

- The Confession of Belhar (1986) – anti-apartheid and by extension anti-racism. Added to our Book of Confessions in 2016.
- Brief Statement of Faith Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) (1983) – In acknowledgment of the unification (finally) of the Northern and Southern Presbyterian churches to create the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

# The Nicene Creed: When? Who Wrote it? Why Written?

- When: Council of Nicaea convened in 325.
- Who Wrote It: The Anti-Arians.
- Why Written: To address the question of the nature of Jesus Christ. Is Jesus the same substance as God? Or similar to?
- The Nicene Creed established that Jesus is the same substance as, i.e., Jesus is God.
- Not every Christian was on board with this however.

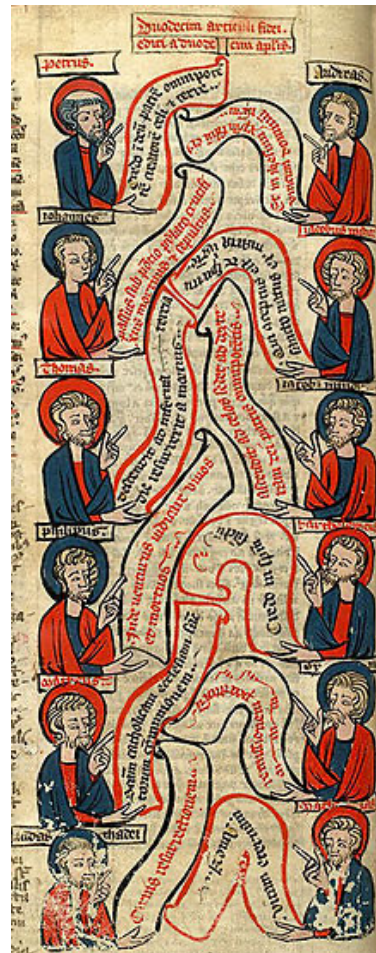
# The Nicene Creed

- The Council of Constantinople confirmed the Nicene Creed in 381 and added the Holy Spirit “who proceeds from the Father and Son”.
- Any problems with this? - not recommended.
- The Nicene Creed is “first and only creed used ecumenically by the vast majority of Christians throughout the world.”
- When recited? Communion usually.

# Apostles Creed v. Nicene Creed

- Both creeds are ancient.
- Both creeds structured Trinitarian.
- The Nicene more “Christological”.
- But, just how old in the Apostles’ Creed? Does it pre-date the Nicene Creed? Who wrote it?
- Why do we have it?

# Who Wrote the Apostles' Creed?



# The Apostles! – According to Legend, Each By Turn at Pentecost

- Peter: “I believe in God the Father Almighty Maker of Heaven and earth.”
- Andrew: “And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;”
- John: “who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,”
- James: “suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.” Etc.

# Or...Much More Likely

- Antecedents date to the mid-second century based on baptismal liturgy – Matthew 28:18-20 “in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Trinitarian.
- Adult baptism was the norm – “I believe in God the Father” (immersion). “I believe in...”
- By mid-eighth century the Apostles’ Creed as we know it shared by churches in Western Europe. Charlemagne (814) made it uniform.

# And Now

- Standard creed used in the Roman Catholic Church and most Protestant churches but not adopted by the Eastern Orthodox Churches.
- Often recited at baptisms.
- Not all churches comfortable with the “descended into hell” phrase.



# Apostles' Creed

- 2.1 I believe in God the Father Almighty;  
Maker of heaven and earth.

# Apostles' Creed

2.2      And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;

# Apostles' Creed

who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary.

# Apostles' Creed

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.

# Apostles' Creed

he descended into hell; the third day he  
rose again from the dead;

# Apostles' Creed

he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on  
the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

# Apostles' Creed

from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

# Apostles' Creed

2.3 I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic Church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.



# Final Thought - From Anna

“Credo (I believe) can mean I trust. Post-enlightenment westerners like us hear “believe” and think it has something to do with intellectual assent to a certain set of propositions. But I think the creed is really asking a question about faith, which is not a purely intellectual exercise. Stopping to consider and proclaim in whom we place our trust is closer to the faith practice intended. I doubt ancient Christians were grilled on their doctrine at their baptisms as much as they were invited to say. ‘Yes, this is the God I trust and therefore give my life to as I join the church.’”

Keep the Faith!