

The Apostles' Creed

I. Historical Background

A. Tradition

1. From the Twelve Apostles (Acts 2)
2. Apostolic nature disproved in Renaissance & 18th cent.

B. Historical Development

1. Theories
 - a. Idea that it grew from Peter's great confession (Matt. 16:16)
 - b. Theory that it developed from "Jesus is Lord" (cf. Phil. 2:11)
2. Originally called the "rule of faith"
 - a. Guide to essential Christian teaching
 - b. Earliest form 2nd cent.; final form by late 5th or 6th cent.

C. Use

1. Baptismal confession
2. Statement of *basic* truths ("fundamentals")
3. Focus on *gospel-centered* truths
4. Shows how we adhere to *historic* Christianity
5. A *creed* intended for oral use

II. Preface: "I believe" = Faith

- A. Faith as trust
- B. Faith as knowledge
- C. Faith as confession

III. God the Father and Creation

- A. "God the Father Almighty"
 1. A foundational truth
 2. Refutes polytheism
 3. Father to those in Christ
 4. Almighty *and* Father: Caring Provider
- B. "Maker of heaven and earth"
 1. Refutes Gnosticism & Marcion
 2. God distinct from creation
 3. Implies constant upholding → providence

IV. God the Son and Salvation

- A. "Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord"
 1. "Jesus" = Savior
 2. "Christ" = Anointed, Messiah → Prophet, High Priest, King
 3. "Only begotten son" = Trinitarian
 4. "Lord" = God
- B. Conception & birth
 1. Suggests dual nature
 - a. Conceived of the Holy Spirit = deity
 - b. Born of Mary = humanity
 2. Refutes Docetism, Marcion, & dynamic Monarchianism (adoptionism)
 3. Tied to His incarnation, humanity, and mediation (1 Tim. 2:5)
- C. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" (passion)
 1. Gospel is rooted in history

2. Refutes Docetism, dynamic Monarchianism
3. Suffered = Vicarious suffering and atonement
4. Implies innocence, sinlessness
- D. “Crucified, dead and buried”
 1. “Crucified” = blood atonement
 2. “Dead” = complete satisfaction
 3. “Buried” = proof of death
- E. “He descended into hell” (controversial)
 1. Some take as a visit to Hades (likely to rescue OT saints)
 2. Most common: “the grave”
 3. Reformation interpretation: Suffering vicariously
- F. Resurrection
 1. Victory over death & sin
 2. We are raised through union w/ Him
- G. Ascension
 1. Refutes modalistic Monarchianism
 2. Exaltation
 3. Position as Advocate & High Priest
 4. Sends the Holy Spirit
 5. “Right hand” = Christ’s glory & rule (sharing providence & preservation)
- H. Return
 1. Certainty of Second Coming
 2. Certainty of Judgment
 - a. “Quick” = “living”
 - b. Timing may vary according to millennial view
- V. God the Holy Spirit and Sanctification
 - A. “I believe in the Holy Ghost”
 1. Trinitarian—equality w/ the Father & the Son
 2. Given as a seal, a pledge, and Comforter
 - a. Seal = Sign of God’s ownership by His presence
 - b. Pledge = Certifies God’s promise
 - c. Comforter = Advocate, Helper, One who intercedes for us
 - B. The Church
 1. “Holy catholic church”
 - a. “Catholic” = “universal” or “Christian”
 - b. Not limited to visible church
 2. “Communion of saints”
 - a. Union of all believers living & dead in Christ
 - b. Invisible church
 - c. Implies church unity and fellowship
 - C. Forgiveness of sins
 1. Meaning = free from penalty, power, & ultimately presence of sin
 2. Based on Christ’s satisfaction & applied by the Spirit
 - D. Eschatology (Last Things)
 1. Second Coming (covered earlier)
 2. “Resurrection of the body”
 - a. Soul & body are redeemed and will be joined

- b. Refutes Gnosticism
- 3. “The life everlasting” = eternal life w/ eternal blessing & joy

Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

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.