

Nicene Constantinople Creed

Holy Trinity Church – Craig Anderson

- Creeds (and confessions), what are they and why do we have them?
 - Creed comes from the Latin “Credo” and means “I believe”. They are statements or declarations of belief made by individuals or groups.
 - We see early formulations of creeds and confessions in the Bible. For example in Deuteronomy 6:4-7 - ⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And in the New Testament, Rom. 10:9-10 – “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. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”
 - They were further developed to protect against heresy. 1 Jn. 4:2-3
 - Baptismal formulas – the early church had developed a variety of baptismal confessions that were used in various churches, but nothing universal used by everyone.
- The Nicene Creed was developed to respond to a problem...
 - Problem: The major question centered around whether Jesus had a point of origin or not. Is Jesus God or is He a created being?
- Key ideas from the Council of Nicea
 - Begotten – Can mean One of a kind; OR only child, only one fathered by. In a relational context it means to be born from or fathered by. Did this mean point of origin?
 - First, the Creed states he is “Before all time” - John 1:1-2

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
 - Second, He is “God of God” and “very God of very God” - Just as the Father is God, Jesus is God - John 1:1-18; Heb. 1:1-14; Rom. 9:5, Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1
 - Hebrews 1:8 - ⁸ But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.
 - John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only (begotten) God, who is at the Father’s side (in the bosom of the Father), he has made him known

- Third, He is “Light of light” – Heb. 1:3
 - Rev. 21:23 - And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk.
 - John 1: 4-9 - The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.
- Fourth, He is “Begotten not made” - excludes the possibility that Jesus was created. John 1:14, 18
- Fifth, “Being of one substance with the Father” - Because Jesus is begotten and not made, he therefore is the same “kind” as the Father. He is not a creation that bears similarities, he is exactly the same kind. Because He is the same kind/substance (of being), and because it is God’s nature to be eternal, the Son is therefore also eternal.

- Key terms from 381 (Constantinople)
 - They expanded the article about the Holy Spirit
 - He is The Lord and giver of life. 2 Cor. 3:17, John 6:63. Proceeds from the Father - John 15:26
 - With the Father and Son is worshiped and glorified (because He is One with them and is God) 2 Cor. 13:14, Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 3:14-17; 4:4-6; 5:18-20; Rom. 8:9
 - The Church is: one (one world-wide church with many churches, movements, denominations and congregations), holy (1 Pet. 2:9), catholic (universal, diverse, all encompassing – all languages, ethnicities, skin colors, ages, etc.), apostolic (built on the foundation laid by the apostles and connected by the Holy Spirit, the Bible, sacraments and the same faith)
 - One Baptism (Eph. 4:5) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). This baptism is into Christ Himself (Gal 3:27). It is the baptism into Christ or being “in Christ” and receiving the Holy Spirit that produces salvation and forgiveness of sins. This is a spiritual work. Water baptism is a valuable and important external manifestation of an inward reality. But it is the spiritual component that produces salvation. That being said, water baptism was commonly used in ancient times (and still is in many churches) as the “faith act” associated with salvation. 1 Cor. 1:13; 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:21-22

- Conclusion: Why is the Nicene Creed important?
 - Because this confession has been universally accepted by churches from east and west and defines the core of The Faith that we all hold together. It is therefore a significant confession that ties us together as Christians and members of God's family.
 - Because the statements are all biblical and in most cases are direct quotes from the Bible.
 - It is the Gospel - It is that core set of beliefs that define what Christians believe.
 - Because the Gospel is not just a message we hear once about how to get saved. The Gospel itself is a life-giving story and a life-giving set of truths that we should reflect on regularly. It continues to teach us and help us grow, needs to be remembered during tough times when we are tempted to give up, and prepares us to share with others about what we believe when the opportunity arises.

Practical Steps

- Use the Creed for Personal Devotions and Prayer
- Reflect on how comfortable you are with the various members of the Trinity. Talk to the Lord about this and ask Him to help you grow.

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

A.D. 325 – 381

We 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 the Father before all time,

God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
by Him all things were made,

who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried, 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 shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.

And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church.
We confess one baptism for the remission of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.