

The Creeds in the Divine Service

The Creed

Matthew 10:32 “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 16:13-18 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” 14So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15He said to them, “**But who do you say that I am?**” 16Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18“**And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.** (Also Mark 8:27-33)

John 12:42-43 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees **they did not confess Him**, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Romans 10:9-10 that **if you confess with your mouth** the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Profession before Baptism

Acts 8:35-38 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” 37Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**” 38So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Profession after Baptism (Catechesis)

1 Timothy 6:12-16 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed **the good confession** in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, ¹⁵which He will manifest in His own time, **He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.**

Content of the preaching

Philippians 2:5-11 ⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in **Christ Jesus**, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross. ⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every

name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and *that* every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:3-7 For **I delivered to you** first of all that which I also received:

that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

⁴and that He was buried,

and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Romans 1:1-4 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ²which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³**concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**

Truth and Heresy

1 John 2:22 Who is a liar but he who denies that **Jesus is the Christ**? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:1-2 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits**, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

Salvation in Historical Setting

Deuteronomy 26:5-9 “And you shall answer and say before the Lord your God: ‘My father was a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. ⁷Then we cried out to the Lord God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. ⁸So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, “a land flowing with milk and honey”;

Deuteronomy 6:21-25 “then you shall say to your son: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; ²²and the Lord showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. ²³Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. ²⁴And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. ²⁵Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.’

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

1 Kings 18:39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!”

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

**Scripture is *norma normans* (“the rule that rules”),
The creeds are *norma normata* (“a rule that is ruled”).**

- Liturgical: Profession of catholic faith (i.e. universal, the faith of the Christian church), Standard to the World
- Ministers: A guide for preaching/instruction, Principle of Interpretation, Meaning of Scripture. It tells what is most important or the guiding principles.
- Discipline: State the truth in response to heresy. Serves as signposts to Heresy – shutting out the heretic, and setting boundaries for authentic Christian theology and life.
- Baptism: Teaching for conversion to the Christian faith (into which one is baptized)
- Holy Communion: Catechetical teaching for the baptized, Catechism

The Three Ecumenical Creeds.

1. Apostles' Creed
 - Roots in the second century, shortly after the Apostles.
 - First occurs in a letter sent by the synod of Milan (390)
 - Tyrannius Rufinus (404)
 - De Symbolo (not really Augustine) elaborated
 - In 1438, the Greek church had not heard of this creed.

2. Nicene Creed
 - “The Niceno-Constantinopolitan” approved at the council of Nicea in 325 A.D.
 - Council of Constantinople of 381 A.D. revised the creed.
 - The Council of Chalcedon of 451 speak approvingly of it.
 - Third Council of Toledo of 589 A.D. “And from the Son” *filioque*
 - confessing the full divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit against the Arians (and others)
 - 858 A.D. Benedict VIII used the filioque in Mass
 - 1054 East objected.

3. Athanasian Creed
 - Quicumque
 - Could have been, but most likely not by Athanasius (late 4th century)
 - Already in use in the 6th century
 - Some say 7th to 8th century.
 - Detailed explanation of Trinity and the Person of Christ

The **first seven ecumenical councils:**

the [First Council of Nicaea](#) in 325 --Arian Heresy

the [First Council of Constantinople](#) in 381 --rejected Apollinarianism; confirmed Divinity of the Trinity; re-affirmed Nicene Creed

the [Council of Ephesus](#) in 431 --rejected Nestorianism & Pelagianism; re-affirmed Nicene Creed

the [Council of Chalcedon](#) in 451 -Affirms Christ is fully God and fully human; Rome and Constantinople Patriarchs are equal

the [Second Council of Constantinople](#) in 553

the [Third Council of Constantinople](#) from 680–681

the [Second Council of Nicaea](#) in 787

18. The Ecumenical Councils of the Early Church

LOCATION	DATE	EMPEROR	KEY PARTICIPANTS	MAJOR OUTCOMES
NICEA	325	Constantine	Arius Alexander Eusebius of Nicomedia Eusebius of Caesarea Hosius Athanasius	Declared Son <i>homoousios</i> (coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal) with Father. Condemned Arius. Drafted original form of Nicene Creed.
CONSTANTINOPLE	381	Theodosius	Meletius Gregory of Nazianzus Gregory of Nyssa	Confirmed results of Council of Nicaea. Produced revised Nicene Creed. Ended Trinitarian Controversy. Affirmed deity of the Holy Spirit. Condemned Apollinarianism.
EPHESUS	431	Theodosius II	Cyril Nestorius	Declared Nestorianism heretical. Accepted by implication Alexandrian Christology. Condemned Pelagius.
CHALCEDON	451	Marcian	Leo I Dioscurus Eutyches	Declared Christ's two natures unmixed, unchanged, undivided, inseparable. Condemned Eutychianism.
CONSTANTINOPLE	553	Justinian	Eutychius	Condemned "Three Chapters" to gain support of Monophysites. Affirmed Cyrillian interpretation of Chalcedon.
CONSTANTINOPLE	680–681	Constantine IV		Rejected Monothelitism. Condemned Pope Honorius (d. 638) as heretical.
NICEA	787	Constantine VI		Declared veneration of icons and statues legitimate.

NOTHING NEW

PREFACE TO THE BOOK OF CONCORD

³ Subsequently many churches and schools committed themselves to this confession as the contemporary symbol of their faith in the chief articles in controversy over against both the papacy and all sorts of factions. They referred and appealed to it without either controversy or doubt in a Christian and unanimous interpretation thereof. They have held fast and loyally to the doctrine that is contained in it, that is based solidly on the divine Scriptures, and that is also briefly summarized in the approved ancient symbols, **recognizing the doctrine as the ancient consensus which the universal and orthodox church of Christ has believed, fought for against many heresies and errors, and repeatedly affirmed.**

⁸ ...This we did that we might testify and declare to our most gracious lord, His Roman Imperial Majesty, and to everyone else that **it was in no way our disposition and intention to adopt, to defend, or to spread a different or a new doctrine.** Rather, with divine assistance, it was our intention to remain and abide loyally by the truth once recognized and confessed at Augsburg in the year 1530, in the confidence and hope that thereby the adversaries of pure evangelical doctrine would be constrained to desist from their fabricated slanders and defamation of us and that other good-hearted people would have been reminded and stimulated by this our reiterated and repeated confession the more seriously to investigate the truth of the divine Word that alone gives salvation, to commit themselves to it, and for the salvation of their souls and their eternal welfare to abide by it and persist in it in a Christian way without any further disputation and dissension.

ARIUS AND THE COUNCILS

I. [GOD]

¹ We unanimously hold and teach, in accordance with the decree of the **Council of Nicaea**,² that there is one divine essence, which is called and which is truly God, and that there are three persons in this one divine essence, equal in power and alike eternal: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. ³ All three are one divine essence, eternal, without division, without end, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, one creator and preserver of all things visible and invisible. ⁴ The word “person” is to be understood as the Fathers employed the term in this connection, not as a part or a property of another but as that which exists of itself⁴

⁵ Therefore **all the heresies** which are contrary to this article are rejected. Among these are the heresy of the Manichaeans,⁵ who assert that there are two gods, one good and one evil; also that of the Valentinians,⁶ **Arians**,⁷ Eunomians,⁸ Mohammedans,⁹ and others like them; ⁶ also that of the Samosatenes,¹ old and new, who hold that there is only one person and sophistically assert that the other two, the Word and the Holy Spirit, are not necessarily distinct persons but that the Word signifies a physical word or voice and that the Holy Spirit is a movement induced in creatures.

FC,EP VIII, ²² **3.** That Christ is not true, natural, and eternal God, **as Arius held.**

APOLOGY, [ARTICLE III. CHRIST]

¹ The opponents approve⁷ our third article, in which we confess that there are two natures in Christ, namely, that the Word assumed the human nature into the unity of his person; that this same Christ suffered and died to reconcile the Father to us; and that he was raised to rule, justify, and sanctify the believers, etc., according to **the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.**

FC SD XII. ERRONEOUS ARTICLES OF THE NEW ANTI-TRINITARIANS

³⁷ **1.** Some Anti-Trinitarians reject and condemn the old, approved symbols, **the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds**, both as to content and terminology, and instead teach that there is not one eternal, divine essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but that, as there are three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so also each person has a distinct essence separate from the other two. Some teach that all three persons in the Trinity, like any three distinct and essentially separate human persons, have the same power, wisdom, majesty, and glory, while others teach that the three persons in the Trinity are unequal in their essence and properties.

³⁸ **2.** That only the Father is genuinely and truly God.

*NOTE in TAPPERT: A greater variety of creedal formulations appeared in the East than in the West. When the **Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) rejected the teaching of Arius**, it expressed its position by adopting one of the current Eastern symbols and inserting into it some anti-Arian phrases. At the Council of Constantinople (381) some minor changes were made in this Nicene Creed, as we still call it, and it was reaffirmed at the Council of Chalcedon (451). In the ninth century the filioque (“and the Son,” in the third article) was first inserted in the West, and it became a bone of contention between East and West especially in the eleventh century.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE THREE CHIEF SYMBOLS FROM TAPPERT

One or more of the three ancient Creeds (styled “the three catholic or ecumenical symbols” in the Latin text of the Book of Concord) is quoted or mentioned in each of the Lutheran Confessions. Often they are cited to claim the identity of Lutheran teaching with the teaching of the ancient church and thus **to counter the charge of doctrinal innovation**. It was only natural therefore that when the Book of Concord was published in 1580, these symbols of the ancient church should be incorporated at the very beginning. It was also natural that they should be reproduced in the form in which they were currently used in the West.

The text of **the Apostles’ Creed** as we now have it dates from the eighth century. However, it is a revision of the so-called Old Roman Creed, which had currency in the West by the third century. Behind the Old Roman Creed, in turn, were various creedal formulations which betray their relationship to root forms encountered in the New Testament itself. While the Apostles’ Creed as we now have it does not come from the apostles, its roots are apostolic.

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The Athanasian Creed is of uncertain origin. What is quite certain is that it was not written by Athanasius, the great theologian of the fourth century. It is supposed by some that it was prepared in his time, although it seems more likely that it dates from the fifth or sixth centuries and is of Western provenance.¹

¹Tappert, T. G. (2000, c1959). *The book of concord : The confessions of the evangelical Lutheran church (The Three Universal or Ecumenical Creeds):*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Lutheran Cyclopedia: [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.

4. Prominent anti-Arians include the [Cappadocian* Theologians](#).

See also [Jerusalem, Synods of; Subordinationism](#).

C. J. Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, [tr.](#) and [ed.](#) W. R. Clark, [Vols.](#) I, II (Edinburgh, 1894, 1896); H. M. Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, 2d [ed.](#) (Cambridge, 1900) and “Arianism,” *Cambridge Medieval History*, [Vol.](#) 1: *The Christian Roman Empire*, [ed.](#) H. M. Gwatkin and J. P. Whitney (New York, 1924), [pp.](#) 118–142; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 2d [ed.](#) (New York, 1960); H. Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, [tr.](#) B. L. Woolf, [vols.](#) III, IV (Cleveland, 1961). WWO