

creed

### **APOSTLES CREED**

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 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.

Apostolicum:

Official statement of faith of the Roman Catholic and many Protestant Churches. Tradition holds it was developed by the 12 Apostles but most likely it is a composite of creeds used to interrogate those seeking Christian baptism from 200-600 A.D.

## THE NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed is the most widely accepted and used brief statements of the Christian Faith. In liturgical churches, it is said every Sunday as part of the Liturgy. It is Common Ground to East Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists, and many other Christian groups. Many groups that do not have a tradition of using it in their services nevertheless are committed to the doctrines it teaches.

(Someone may ask, "What about the Apostles' Creed?" Traditionally, in the West, the Apostles' Creed is used at Baptisms, and the Nicene Creed at the Eucharist (aka the Mass, the Liturgy, the Lord's Supper, or the Holy Communion). The East uses only the Nicene Creed.)

I here present the Nicene Creed in two English translations, The first is the traditional one, in use with minor variations since 1549, The second is a modern version, that of (I think) The Interdenominational Committee on Liturgical Texts. Notes and comment by me follow.

### TRADITIONAL WORDING

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;  
who for us men and for our salvation  
came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost  
of the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man;  
and 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 sitteth on the right hand of the Father;  
and he shall come again, with glory,  
to judge both the quick and the dead;  
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost the Lord, and Giver of Life,  
who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son];  
who with the Father and the Son together  
is worshipped and glorified;  
who spake by the Prophets.  
And I believe one holy Catholic 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.

#### MODERN WORDING

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].  
With the Father and the Son  
he is worshipped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

## NOTES AND COMMENT

When the Apostles' Creed was drawn up, the chief enemy was Gnosticism, which denied that Jesus was truly Man; and the emphases of the Apostles' Creed reflect a concern with repudiating this error.

When the Nicene Creed was drawn up, the chief enemy was Arianism, which denied that Jesus was fully God. Arius was a presbyter (=priest = elder) in Alexandria in Egypt, in the early 300's. He taught that the Father, in the beginning, created (or begot) the Son, and that the Son, in conjunction with the Father, then proceeded to create the world. The result of this was to make the Son a created being, and hence not God in any meaningful sense. It was also suspiciously like the theories of those Gnostics and pagans who held that God was too perfect to create something like a material world, and so introduced one or more intermediate beings between God and the world. God created A, who created B, who created C... who created Z, who created the world. Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, sent for Arius and questioned him. Arius stuck to his position, and was finally excommunicated by a council of Egyptian bishops. He went to Nicomedia in Asia, where he wrote letters defending his position to various bishops. Finally, the Emperor Constantine summoned a council of Bishops in Nicea (across the straits from modern Istanbul), and there in 325 the Bishops of the Church, by a decided majority, repudiated Arius and produced the first draft of what is now called the Nicene Creed. A chief spokesman for the full deity of Christ was Athanasius, deacon of Alexandria, assistant (and later successor) to the aging Alexander. The Arian position has been revived in our own day by the Watchtower Society (the JW's), who explicitly hail Arius as a great witness to the truth.