




The First Article of the Apostle's Creed

THE BIBLE AND THE CREEDS

The basic reason that we have creeds and use them in our services is to proclaim with gratitude the truth of God's word. The word "creed" comes from the Latin word *credo* which means "I believe." Originally this word carried the connotation of "I have confidence in; I rely on" which parallels nicely the idea of faith.



A creed is a statement of faith or belief. It means that we have confidence in something.

These creeds, or confessions of faith, summarize the basic core of the Christian faith. They do not form our faith, the Bible does that. Rather they present our faith in a simple yet systematic way. The three ecumenical (Christian) creeds are:



The Apostles' Creed - this creed was not written by the apostles, but named in honor of their teachings. Developed as a confirmand's confession of faith within the first two centuries.

The Nicene Creed - written about 325 A.D. as an answer to a growing false teaching that Jesus Christ was not God. Later additions to the creed in 381 A.D. expanded the article on the Holy Spirit.

Athanasian Creed - This is the most difficult of the creeds for it deals with the Bible's teachings on the Trinity. Perhaps written in the 5th century. This creed was also written to state the Bible's teachings about the Trinity in the face of a heresy which was growing at that time.

These creeds are separated into sections called

articles, one article for each of the three persons of God.

The Apostles' Creed begins "I believe..." What does it mean to believe? (Look it up in the glossary of your catechism and study the Bible passages under Question 151 on pp 135-136 of your catechism.

Believe—Trust—Hold to could all be synonyms. We are basically talking about faith. Read the following passages. What is the difference between faith and knowledge:

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

2 Corinthians 4:16 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

The difference between faith and knowledge is ...

WHAT IS "FAITH"?

James 2:19 – You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder.

Matthew 8:28 - When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted.

Who also knows that Jesus is the Son of God?



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Since the demons know that Jesus is the Son of God. Therefore faith is more than just simple head-knowledge about whom Jesus is.

Romans 10:10 – For it is with *your heart* that you believe...

Hebrews 10:22 - Let us draw near to God with a sincere *heart* in full assurance of faith, having our *hearts* sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Psalms 78:22 - They did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance.

John 14:1 - Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

6. Faith affects more than the head. It also affects the...? (Look at the italicized portions of those passages.)

7. What is another word you could use to describe this "heart-knowledge"? (Look at the underlined portions of those verses.)

8. According to Hebrews 11:1, what does faith enable people to trust in?

Romans 8:38,39 - For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, *nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Isaiah 12:2 - Surely *God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid.* The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

Galatians 2:20 - The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the *Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Romans 3:22 - This righteousness from God comes through faith *in Jesus Christ* to all who believe.

Ephesians 2:8 - It is by grace you have been saved, through faith...

9. According to the italicized portions of these passages, what exactly is the object of our faith? What do we put our trust in?

10. What does our faith trust that God did? (Look at the underlined portions of these passages,

What is faith? It is made up of three things—*knowledge, belief, and trust.*



Knowledge comes first. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? I want to be informed of a fact before I can possibly believe it..."

The mind goes on to **believe** that these things are true. The soul believes that God is, and that He hears the cries of sincere hearts; that the gospel is from God; that justification by faith is the grand truth which God hath revealed in these last days by His Spirit more clearly than before. Then the heart believes that Jesus is verily and in truth our God and Savior, the Redeemer of men, the Prophet, Priest, and King of His people. All this is accepted as sure truth, not to be called in question...

One more ingredient is needed to complete it, which is **trust**. When you trust in something you rely on



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it, you use it.

Look up Proverbs 3:5. When we trust God what don't we trust?

HOW DOES SOMEONE COME TO FAITH? Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

Ephesians 2:8 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and *this not from yourselves*, it is the gift of God.

Romans 12:3 - For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance

with the measure of *faith God has given you*.

John 15:16 – [Jesus said], “*You did not chose me, but I chose you.*”

1 Corinthians 12:3 - No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

14. Is faith something we accomplished on our own? Did we choose to have faith? (Look at the italicized portions of those passages.)

15. If we didn't chose to have faith, how did we get it? (Look at the underlined portions of those passages.)

Faith comes from the Holy Spirit working in our hearts through God's word.

Romans 10:17 - Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through *the word of Christ*.

2 Timothy 3:15 – From infancy you have known the *holy Scriptures*, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 2:13,14 - But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our *gospel*, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

16. According to the italicized portions of those verses, what does God use in order to create saving faith?

Romans 2:8 - But for those who are self-seeking and who *reject the truth* and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

Ephesians 3:16,17 - I pray that out of his glorious riches he *may strengthen you with power* through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

17. That's why God's Word is important in our lives. According to Ephesians 3:16,17, what does the Holy Spirit do for our faith through God's Word?

For Next Time:

Review Question 151 on pp 135-136 of your catechism.

Memorize the First Article of the Apostles' Creed pg. 135

And the first paragraph of "What Does This Mean?" (I believe....my abilities)