

# Back to the Basics

## The Apostles' Creed

For centuries, it was believed that the Apostles' Creed was composed by the apostles. One legend says that each apostle wrote a line of it. The first evidence of it being written was AD 150. While it is comprised of the teachings of the apostles, what is known now is that these teachings were being passed down in the individual churches. Each church developed its own Baptismal statement of faith. This was a summary of the teachings of the church. As churches came together, they saw that their statements were remarkably similar, and the Apostles' Creed grew from that. This is another witness to the working and guidance of the Holy Spirit in His church.

"Creed" comes from the Latin *credo*, which means "I believe." This is a summary of what the church has believed, taught, and confessed for 2,000 years. Basically, a creed is something you live by. To say "I believe" instead of "we believe" shows that faith is an individual matter, something that God gives to each person. When we confess it together, we are confessing that we hold our individual faith in common. We are a community of believers.

There are three Creeds the church confesses: Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, and Athanasian Creed. As mentioned above, the Apostles' Creed is a Baptismal statement of faith. The Nicene Creed (AD 325) was written by the Council of Nicaea and expands upon the person of Christ, emphasizing that He is fully God and fully human. The Athanasian Creed (5<sup>th</sup> C.) was written to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, so it emphasizes that. It was named for Athanasius, a church father who vehemently defended this doctrine. Today, it is primarily used in churches on Trinity Sunday.

One thing to notice about the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds is that they consist of three articles: on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the Catechism, Luther labels these Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification. Today, we examine the First Article—Creation.

## The First Article

### **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

What does this mean? *I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.*

*He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land and animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.*

*He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.*

*All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.*

*This is most certainly true.*

We call God “Father” because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and, by faith, He is our Father also. *[Jesus said,] “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (John 20:17)*. He is also Father of all because He created all people. There is only one human race, descended from Adam and Eve: *From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands (Acts 17:26)*.

When we say that God is the Maker of heaven and earth, we’re saying that He made all things, visible and invisible. Before Creation, nothing existed except God. Even all the angels and the whole spiritual realm were created by God as well as the universe.

God created everything by the Word of His mouth (See **Genesis 1**), but He formed man out of the dust of the ground and woman from one of the man’s ribs (**Genesis 2:7, 21-22**). We also see here God’s design for the family and how we are to reproduce: *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh (Genesis 2:24)*.

Adam and Eve were made “in the image of God.” The image of God means that *they truly knew God as He wishes to be known and were perfectly happy in Him*. Of course, we no longer have that image. We lost it when Adam and Eve first sinned (See **Genesis 3:8-10**). Paul says we cannot understand God or His ways: *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14)*.

The fact that God created everything may raise the question of why evil and suffering are part of life. They’re here because of sin. Sin has affected the whole universe (See **Romans 8:18-25**). The Bible says that the result of sin is death: *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23)*. But God loves us and helps those who love Him to overcome: *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8:37)*.

We have done nothing to deserve His goodness: *I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant (Genesis 32:10)*. For this, we owe Him praise: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever (Psalm 118:1)* and take care of the creation He has given into our care: *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Genesis 2:15)*.

We close the explanation with the words “This is most certainly true” because what we confess in this article is plainly in Scripture, so we believe it to be so.

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*The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.  
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.*

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