



# THE APOSTLES' CREED

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## *A Thoroughly Scriptural Summary of the Faith*

*“The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius’s Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.*”

—39 ARTICLES OF RELIGION, ARTICLE VIII: OF THE THREE CREEDS

*“We did not create or invent [the Apostles’ Creed]—nor did the church fathers. Instead, just as a bee makes honey by gathering together many lovely, delightful, dear flowers, so this creed is gathered from the books of the dear Prophets and Apostles. That is, it is finely and succinctly distilled from the entirety of Holy Scripture for children and simple Christians.”*

—MARTIN LUTHER, SERMON ON TRINITY SUNDAY 1535

*“These words which you have heard [in the Creed] are in the Divine Scriptures scattered up and down: but thence gathered and reduced into one, that the memory of slow persons might not be distressed; that every person may be able to say, able to hold, what he believes.”*

—AUGUSTINE, A SERMON TO CATECHUMENS ON THE CREED

THE APOSTLES' CREED	WORDS OF SCRIPTURE	REFERENCES
<b>I believe in God the Father</b>	“For us there is one God, the Father”	1 Cor. 8:6; cf. 2 Cor. 1:3; Mt. 28:19; John 14:1
<b>Almighty</b>	“Almighty”	Gen. 17:1; cf. Jer. 32:17
<b>Maker of heaven and earth</b>	“God created the heavens and the earth”	Gen. 1:1; cf. Heb. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:5
<b>And in Jesus Christ</b>	“and one Lord, Jesus Christ”	1 Cor. 8:6; cf. Mt. 16:16; Jn. 14:1; Acts 2:38
<b>His only Son</b>	“his only Son”	Jn. 3:16; cf. Mt. 28:19; Mt. 16:16
<b>Our Lord</b>	“our Lord”	Rom. 1:4; cf. Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Cor. 1:2
<b>Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit</b>	“conceived in her ... from the Holy Spirit”	Mt. 1:20; cf. Lk. 1:35
<b>Born of the Virgin Mary</b>	“the virgin’s name was Mary”	Lk. 1:27; cf. Mt. 1:23
<b>Suffered</b>	“Christ also suffered once for sins”	1 Pet. 3:18; cf. 1 Pet. 2:23
<b>under Pontius Pilate</b>	“before Pontius Pilate”	1 Tim. 6:13; cf. Mt. 27:2
<b>Was crucified</b>	“they crucified him”	Mk. 15:25; cf. Acts 2:36
<b>Died</b>	“Christ died”	1 Cor. 15:3; cf. Jn. 19:30

<b>And was buried</b>	“he was buried”	1 Cor. 15:4; cf. Lk. 23:35
<b>He descended to the dead [or “into Hades”]*</b>	“he had also descended into the lower regions of the earth”; “he was not abandoned to Hades”	Eph. 4:9; Acts 2:31; cf. Ps. 16:10; Rom. 10:7; Mt. 12:40; 1 Pet. 3:18–20; Rev. 1:18; Jn. 5:25
<b>On the third day he rose again from the dead</b>	“he was raised on the third day”	1 Cor. 15:4; cf. Acts 10:40
<b>And ascended into heaven</b>	“he parted from them and was carried up into heaven”	Lk. 24:51; cf. Eph. 4:10
<b>And sits at the right hand of the Father</b>	“he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”	Heb. 1:3; cf. Acts 2:33; Psalm 110:1
<b>From there he will come</b>	“Jesus ... will come in the same way”	Acts 1:11
<b>To judge the living and the dead</b>	“to be judge of the living and the dead”	Acts 10:42
<b>I believe in the Holy Spirit</b>	“and of the Holy Spirit”	Mt. 28:19
<b>The holy ... church</b>	“the church ... holy and without blemish”	Eph. 5:27
<b>The ... catholic [<i>katholikos</i>] (“through the whole”); universal or worldwide]** church</b>	“the church throughout [ <i>kata</i> ] all [ <i>holos</i> ] Judea and Galilee and Samaria”; “one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles”	1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 9:31; cf. Eph. 1:21; 4:4
<b>The communion of saints</b>	“called to be saints together”; “we have fellowship [ <i>koinōnia</i> , communion] with one another”	1 Cor. 1:12; 1 Jn. 1:7
<b>The forgiveness of sins</b>	“the forgiveness of sins”	Col. 1:14; cf. Acts 13:38; Acts 2:38
<b>The resurrection of the body</b>	“the resurrection from the dead”	Php. 3:11; cf. Acts 24:15; Php. 3:21
<b>And the life everlasting</b>	“in the age to come eternal life”	Mk. 10:30; cf. Dan. 12:2
<b>Amen</b>	“Amen”	Rev. 22:21

\* Some translations of the Creed say “he descended into hell,” but the English “hell” was used in the past to mean nothing more than the Hebrew “Sheol” or the Greek “Hades.” The church has never held that Christ suffered in hell. Rather, the descent clause (descensus) means that in his human soul “our Lord triumphantly descended into the lower world, and took possession of the kingdom of the dead” (William Burt Pope, *Compendium of Christian Theology*).

\*\* The word “catholic” was in use to describe the church long before the Roman Catholic Church had any formal existence (e.g., Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, 8.2), and is merely a compound of two biblical Greek words which appear together in Acts 9:31 (*kata* [“through”] and *holos* [“the whole”]).