

In the HOUSE *of the* LORD

LESSON #5 – HOMEWORK



PART I

Background on the Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed was developed to respond to controversies over the doctrine of the Trinity (that God is three persons yet one God) and the deity of Jesus Christ (that Jesus is both true God and true man at the same time). These controversies were raging in the first few centuries of the Christian Church. As a result, the Nicene Creed talks more about Jesus and His relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It has become common practice in Lutheran churches that when Holy Communion is celebrated, the Nicene Creed is used. The Apostles' Creed is used more often when Holy Communion is not celebrated in the worship service.

One obvious difference between the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds is the use of the pronouns. The Apostles' Creed begins, "I believe ..." It is a personal profession of a Christian individual's faith. The Nicene Creed, however, begins, "We believe ..." This is a reminder that this is the confession of the whole Christian Church on earth concerning the teachings of Scripture about our Triune God. Believers join their voices and their faiths with one another to speak out God's truth.

The First Article of the Nicene Creed

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

Digging Deeper

Let's examine where the doctrine/teaching of God the Father as professed in the First Article of the Nicene Creed is expressed in our Bibles.

"I believe ..." Read Romans 10:9. How are we saved?

- Read John 14:1. In whom must we believe in order to be saved?
- Read James 2:19. James says that even the demons believe in God. What is the difference between a Christian's faith in God and what a demon believes about God? (Go back to John 14:1 for help.)

"In one God ..." Read Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 44:6. Who alone is the one true God?

"The Father ..." Read Isaiah 63:16 and Matthew 6:9. Why do we address God as "our Father?" What does that title for God mean to you?

"The Almighty ..." Read Psalm 91:1 and Revelation 4:8. What does it mean that God is "almighty?"

“**Maker ...**” Read Isaiah 17:7 and Isaiah 54:5. What does it mean that God is our “maker?”

“**Of heaven and earth ...**” Read Genesis 1:1,8. How did God create the heavens (the sky?)

- Read Psalm 104:5 and Jeremiah 51:15. How does the Bible describe God creating the earth? (You can also read the whole first chapter of Genesis for more background.)

“**And of all things, seen and unseen ...**” Read Psalm 89:11-12 and Amos 4:13. What are some of the visible and seen things that God has created?

- Read Colossians 1:16. Many Bible scholars believe that these “powers, rulers and authorities” are speaking about the spiritual realms of angels and demons. What are other invisible and unseen things that God has created?
- Read Exodus 14. How does God prove that He is almighty?
- Read Luke 8:22-56. What are some ways that Jesus proves He is almighty?

Because “blessed ... are those who hear the word of God and obey it” (Luke 11:28), you are encouraged to hear God’s Word this week in your daily Bible reading.

Daily Bible Reading: Mark 1-8

Memorize the following passage: Hebrews 11:3 *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

Digging Even Deeper

In his Large Catechism where Martin Luther goes more in depth on the basic teachings of the Bible, he explains the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed with more detail (Large Catechism, Part 2, Article 1):

13] What do you mean by these words: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker, etc.? Answer: This is what I mean and believe, that I am a creature of God; that is, that He has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul, and life, members great and small, all my senses, reason, and understanding, and so on, food and drink, clothing and support, wife and children, domestics, house and home, etc. 14] Besides, He causes all creatures to serve for the uses and necessities of life sun, moon, and stars in the firmament, day and night, air, fire, water, earth, and whatever it bears and produces, birds and fishes beasts, grain, and all kinds of produce, 15] and whatever else there is of bodily and temporal goods, good government, peace, security. 16] Thus we learn from this article that none of us has of himself, nor can preserve, his life nor anything that is here enumerated or can be enumerated, however small and unimportant a thing it might be, for all is comprehended in the word Creator.

17] Moreover, we also confess that God the Father has not only given us all that we have and see before our eyes, but daily preserves and defends us against all evil and misfortune, averts all sorts of danger and calamity; and that He does all this out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a benevolent Father, who cares for us that no evil befall us. 18] But to speak more of this belongs in the other two parts of this article, where we say: Father Almighty.

19] Now, since all that we possess, and, moreover, whatever, in addition, is in heaven and upon the earth, is daily given, preserved, and kept for us by God, it is readily inferred and concluded that it is our duty to love, praise, and thank Him for it without ceasing, and, in short, to serve Him with all these things, as He demands and has enjoined in the Ten Commandments.

PART II

The Second Article of the Nicene Creed

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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. 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.

Use of the Creed in worship

Jesus once asked His disciples, “Who do you say I am?” Jesus was not asking for the opinion of the crowds. He wanted a confession of faith. Peter gave his confession when he answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

Our confession of faith in worship is no different than Peter’s. We tell God and each other who God is and what He has done for us.

In every age, the same question is put to the Church, “Who do you say I am.” We confess in unison and unity, “We believe in one God ...” We are confessing the same profound truth that has passed over the lips of Christians for countless generations.

Digging Deeper

Let’s examine where the doctrine/teaching of God the Son as professed in the Second Article of the Nicene Creed is expressed in our Bibles.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ ... Read John 20:31. Christ is not the last name of Jesus. Rather it is a title. Christ means “anointed.” It is the New Testament form of the Old Testament title “Messiah.” Read Acts 10:37-43. When was Jesus anointed? What was He anointed to do?

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 ... Read Matthew 3:17, John 3:16, and John 1:1-18. What do our creeds mean when they confess that Jesus is the Son of God, begotten of the Father?

Through him all things were made ... Read John 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, and Colossians 1:16. God the Father created everything through His spoken Word. Who was that Word through whom everything was created?

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human ... Read Ephesians 4:10 and Colossians 2:9. Jesus was the Son of God ruling with His Father in heaven. He descended to come to earth at His birth. “Incarnation” is a big “church” word that we use regularly in our creeds. Incarnation means that the Son of God took on human flesh. When did this happen?

Read Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:34-35, and John 1:14. How did the Son of God dwell in the womb of Mary if she was a virgin? Again, when did the Son of God take on human flesh and make His dwelling among us?

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried ... Read Philippians 2:5-8. The creeds move from Jesus' birth to His suffering, death and burial – His passion. This is part of Christ's "humiliation." Go back to the second article of the Apostles' Creed. What are the six steps of Christ's humiliation, where He humbled Himself as a human? (Hint: The first step is "he was conceived by the Holy Spirit.")

Read John 18-19. List what happened to Jesus as part of Him being crucified, suffering death and being buried.

Read Philippians 2:9-11. The creeds move from Jesus' humiliation to His "exaltation." During His humiliation, Jesus did not make full use of His glory and power as the Son of God. However, in His exaltation, as the God-Man, He once again makes full use of His heavenly power and eternal glory. What are the five steps of Christ's exaltation in the second article of the Apostles' Creed? (Hint: The first step is "he descended into hell.")

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures ... Read John 20. Three days after His crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead. List the events of Jesus' resurrection.

Read 1 Corinthians 15. What does Jesus' resurrection mean for you and your resurrection?

Read Psalm 16:10, Matthew 12:39-40, and Luke 24:25-27. Why is it important that Jesus rose from the dead as predicted and prophesied by the Scriptures (the Bible)?

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father ... Read Mark 16:19-20, Acts 1:6-11 and Ephesians 4:7-10. Forty days after Easter, Jesus bodily ascended into heaven. Of what does Jesus' ascension assure us?

Read Psalm 110:1, Matthew 26:64, and Ephesians 1:20-22. Jesus' ascension does not mean that the Lord is now absent from His Church until Judgment Day when He comes again. Rather, Jesus is very active in His rule and authority over this world. Of what does Jesus' sitting at the right hand of the Father assure us?

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

Read Matthew 25:31-46, Acts 17:31, and Revelation 1:7. On the Last Day, the Lord Jesus Christ who ascended will return to judge those who have died and those who are still alive. He will judge all people based on whether they believed in Him as their Savior or not. Jesus will make His judgments not based on who we are or what we have done, but on whether we have faith in Him. If Jesus is coming one day to judge all of humanity, then what is the single most important thing we need to have upon our death or Christ's return in judgment?

Because God instructs us to "let the word of Christ dwell in you" (Colossians 3:16), you are encouraged to hear God's Word this week in your daily Bible reading.

Daily Bible Reading: Mark 9-16

Memorize the following passage: John 3:16-17 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

Digging Even Deeper

In his Large Catechism where Martin Luther goes more in depth on the basic teachings of the Bible, he explains the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed with more detail (The Large Catechism, Part 2, Article II):

31] Let this, then, be the sum of this article that the little word *Lord* signifies simply as much as *Redeemer*, i.e., He who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same. But all the points which follow in order in this article serve no other end than to explain and express this redemption, how and whereby it was accomplished, that is, how much it cost Him, and what He spent and risked that He might win us and bring us under His dominion, namely, that He became man, conceived and born without [any stain of] sin, of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, that He might overcome sin; moreover, that He suffered, died and was buried, that He might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owe, not with silver nor gold, but with His own precious blood. And all this, in order to become my Lord; for He did none of these for Himself, nor had He any need of it. And after that He rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death, and finally ascended into heaven and assumed the government at the Father's right hand, so that the devil and all powers must be subject to Him and lie at His feet, until finally, at the last day, He will completely part and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, etc.

32] But to explain all these single points separately belongs not to brief sermons for children, but rather to the ampler sermons that extend throughout the entire year, especially at those times which are appointed for the purpose of treating at length of each article—of the birth, sufferings, resurrection, ascension of Christ, etc.

33] Ay, the entire Gospel which we preach is based on this, that we properly understand this article as that upon which our salvation and all our happiness rest, and which is so rich and comprehensive that we never can learn it fully.

PART III

The Third Article of the Nicene Creed

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian 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.

Why Creeds?

While it certainly proper and right for Christians to confess their faith in their own words at various times and places, whether witnessing to an unbeliever or teaching our children. However, when Christians gather together in worship, we unite our voices and our faiths with those around us, as well as those who have gone before us.

Creeds are summaries of our historical faith. They are reminders that what we believe is an ancient faith – a biblical faith, which has been believed and taught for generations. Our personal professions of faith are wonderful and necessary – for the Bible says, “It is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Romans 10:10). However, our individual confessions cannot replace the Creeds.

While the Christian Church confesses three ancient Creeds – the Apostles’, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds – we do at times use what Martin Luther called “the fourth Creed.” It is called the Te Deum Laudamus – Latin for “God We Praise You.” It is a Creed that is set to music and meant to be sung as a profession of faith. The history of the Te Deum, like the history of the Apostles’ Creed, is shrouded in mystery. However, it believed to date back to 387 A.D.

The Te Deum is like the Apostles’ Creed in that it calls upon the name of God immediately. It then proceeds to name all those who praise and worship God, from various ranks of angels to the Christian faithful who are already in heaven to the Church spread throughout the world. The hymn then returns to its credal formula, praising the Father and the Holy Spirit for the work of Jesus Christ and recalling His birth, suffering, death, resurrection and glorification.

The Te Deum can be sung as a chant in the Service of Morning Praise or as a hymn found in Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal. Here is the Te Deum from Morning Praise:

*We praise you, O God, we acclaim you as Lord;
all creation worships you, Father ev-er-last-ing.
To you all angels, all the pow'rs of heav'n,
cherubim and seraphim, sing in end-less praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of heav'n-ly hosts,
heaven and earth are full of your glo-ry.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of proph-ets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the ho-ly Church ac-claims you:
Father of majesty unbounded, your glorious, true, and only
Son,
and the Holy Spirit, ad-vo-cate and guide.*

*You, Christ, are the King of glo-ry,
the eternal Son of the Fa-ther.
When you became man to set us free,
you humbled yourself to be born of a vir-gin.
You overcame the sting of death
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all be-liev-ers.
You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Fa-ther.
We believe that you will come to be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your peo-ple,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory ev-er-last-ing.*

Digging Deeper

Let's examine where the doctrine/teaching of God the Holy Spirit as professed in the Third Article of the Nicene Creed is expressed in our Bibles.

We believe in the Holy Spirit ... Read Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14. What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Father and the Son?

The Lord, the giver of life ... Read John 6:63 and 2 Corinthians 3:6. Just as we could not give ourselves physical life, we cannot make ourselves spiritually alive through faith in Jesus Christ. Why is the Holy Spirit, then, called the giver of life?

Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified ... Read John 14-16. On the eve of His death, Jesus spoke to His disciples at length regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. The Father sends the Holy Spirit through Jesus. How does Jesus describe what the work of the Holy Spirit will be?

Who has spoken through the prophets. Read 1 Peter 1:10-11 and 2 Peter 1:21. The prophets and the apostles recorded the words of Scripture through "divine inspiration." How did the Holy Spirit divinely inspire the prophets and apostles in their writings?

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. Read Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. The apostle Paul is writing these verses to Christians in Rome and Christians in the city of Corinth. He is appealing for the Holy Spirit to work in them to be united. How does Paul illustrate this unity that should exist among Christians within the Christian Church? Why is this unity so important?

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. Read John 3:5, Romans 6:3 and Ephesians 4:4-6. The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to convert hearts from unbelief to faith in Jesus Christ. What else does the Holy Spirit use to create faith?

Read Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21 and Titus 3:5. What does Baptism have the power to do?

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 22. The Holy Spirit does not just prepare us for this life. Because He has granted us faith in Jesus through His holy Word and the Sacrament of holy Baptism, to what are you now looking forward?

Read Psalm 41:13, 2 Corinthians 1:20 and Romans 16:25-27. Amen is a small Hebrew word that carries a lot of meaning. The Amen is regularly spoken or sung by the congregation in public worship. Amen means "So shall it be" or "I agree" or "This is true." Why is Amen such an appropriate response for Christians following the invocation, a prayer, a hymn or a creed?

Since we have “gained access to the Father by one Spirit” (Ephesians 2:18), you are encouraged to learn more about God through the Holy Spirit’s words in your daily Bible reading.

Daily Bible Reading: Luke 1-6

Memorize the following passage: Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Digging Even Deeper

In his Large Catechism where Martin Luther goes more in depth on the basic teachings of the Bible, he explains the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed with more detail (The Large Catechism, Part 2, Article III):

The Large Catechism, Part 2, Article III.

38] For neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on Him, and obtain Him for our Lord, unless it were offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel. The work is done and accomplished; for Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, resurrection, etc. But if the work remained concealed so that no one knew of it, then it would be in vain and lost. That this treasure, therefore, might not lie buried, but be appropriated and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed, in which He gives the Holy Ghost to bring this treasure home and appropriate it to us.