

Topic

● I INTRODUCTION

● A THE NICENE CREED

● 1 The Creed:

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

- 2 *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,
one in Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.*

- 3 *For us
and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
By the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary,
and became man. [Literal: "human"]*

- 4 *For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died, and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in fulfillment of 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*

- 5 *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.*

- 6 *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.*

- 7 Adopted in 325 AD by the First Ecumenical Council, summoned by the Emperor Constantine

● B WE

- 1 We do not profess our own experience in and through this Creed

- a We proclaim the Christian faith, the faith of the professing community

- b We announce the shared faith of a community

- (1) We say, not "I believe." but "We believe!"

- (2) Those reciting the creed should receive some sense of support from all the others
reciting the same Creed

- (a) I am not making this journey alone

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- (b) Rather, we are making it as a community!
- 2 The community, not individuals, is the one God uses to guarantee the communication of Jesus and the Gospel
 - a Acts showed that Jesus offered the assembled community, the Church in embryo, all that was necessary.
 - (1) Acts 1:1*
 - (a) *In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2* until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*
 - (b) 3* After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.
 - (2) This assurance of a complete revelation is behind the reference to Jesus staying with the Church **40 days**
 - (a) The time period is symbolic of completion: the whole time needed to complete the necessary teaching
 - (b) **Jesus did not quit our instruction one second too soon**
 - (c) He stayed the entire time needed to communicate to us all that we need to experience Salvation
 - b Acts also showed that the faith of the Church is based upon this entire truth about Jesus
 - (1) **Judas who died unbelieving needed to be replaced**
 - (a) Acts 1:15*
 - [1] In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) 16* and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—
 - [2] 17* he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." 18* (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.
 - [3] 19* Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)
 - [4] 20* "For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms, "May his place be deserted; let there be no-one to dwell in it," and, "May another take his place of leadership."
 - [5] 21* Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.
 - [6] 22* beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.
 - (b) Twelve official witnesses to Jesus were necessary to insure completion in the Church's witness
 - [1] **Remember that "12" is a number which signifies completion**
 - [2] "11" witnesses would mean that there was some gap in what the Church knew and taught about Jesus
 - [3] Since Judas failed to witness to Jesus, his death left a gap
 - (c) **Judas needed to be replaced by someone who was present from the Baptism of Jesus through the Ascension – who knew the entire ministry**
 - [1] **By someone who experienced and accepted all that Jesus shared**
 - [2] By someone who experienced all that Jesus did by healing and serving
 - [3] By someone who experienced all that Jesus said by teaching and preaching
 - (2) James, one of the Twelve, (not to be confused with "James the 'brother' of the Lord,) when martyred, was not replaced
 - (a) Acts 12:1*
 - [1] *It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.*
 - [2] 2* He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

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- [3] *3* When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.*
- 3 **Individuals can, and do, experience God's goodness**
 - a Individuals are called to follow their own consciences
 - b But it is wrong for them to conclude their individual experiences are infallible
- 4 **The community alone is assured it possesses the full reality of Jesus**
- C **BELIEVE**
 - 1 **"Creed," and "believe" are English words which we use to translate into English terms used in other languages**
 - a The Latin word "**credo**" is translated as "**I believe**"
 - b The Latin translated the Greek: "**Pisteuomen**" which had a distinct meaning for Christians
 - c "**I believe**" tried to capture the Biblical notion of faith
 - (1) The Biblical and religious understanding of "**belief**" differs from the modern understanding
 - (a) Today, "**faith**" means "**accepting as true the unproven**"
 - (b) It usually refers to accepting a series of thoughts and doctrines, **as true**
 - [1] For example, some Christians are challenged to **accept as true** the fact that the world was created in seven days despite the evidence of evolution
 - [2] And Catholics are asked to **believe** that there are seven Sacraments
 - (2) The original English meaning and the Biblical meaning of "**belief**" are very different from our modern understanding of the word
 - (a) "Faith" expressed a certain way of apprehending reality
 - [1] Of looking at our relationship with God
 - [2] Of looking at our relationship with the world
 - (b) Literally and originally, "**to believe**" meant "**to hold dear**"
 - [1] The German equivalent still captures this meaning
 - [a] "**Prefer**"
 - [b] "**Give allegiance to**"
 - [2] "**Believe**" is related in English to a broad range of words
 - [a] "**Beloved**"
 - [b] "**Love**"
 - (3) One of earliest English usages warned Christians
 - (a) They were not to set their hearts on worldly goods
 - (b) "**Don't set belief**" on them
 - (4) "**Credo**" itself seems composed of
 - (a) "**Cor**": "**heart**"
 - (b) "**Do**": "**give**"
 - 2 The word is combined with "**we**"
 - a As a community **we assert**
 - (1) **We are offering our allegiance**
 - (a) To the source of **our love: the Father**
 - (b) To the one offering **us the love: the Son**
 - (c) To the love itself **we share: the Spirit**
 - (2) **We claim we are not, as a group, giving our allegiance to**
 - (a) Ourselves
 - (b) Others

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- (c) **Mammon**
- b Our **profession of faith** invites us
 - (1) To find strength in our communal declaration
 - (2) And to witness to our world the Good News which we have accepted and live
- 3 **Mental doubts are inevitable**
 - a The **heart's allegiance** doesn't eliminate the mind's pondering
 - b **Doubts do not indicate any spiritual laxity**
 - (1) Rather they indicate we are using the minds that God offered us
 - (2) **God by making us free and fallible accepted the possibility we**
 - (a) Would err in our thinking,
 - (b) Would question,
 - (c) Would doubt
 - (d) Would even cease to believe
 - c **The only thing worse than thinking about religious truths and having doubts is not thinking about them**
- **D IN ONE GOD**
 - 1 The Nicene Council met while some Greeks still professed a belief in a pantheon of gods and goddesses
 - a The empire seemed to be declining in some areas
 - b Some blamed this on a belief in the one Christian God
 - c They urged the Emperor to return to the gods that had made the empire great
 - 2 **The Trinity does not complicate our God**
 - a God remains one
 - b The basis of Jewish faith remains the basis of Christian faith
 - 3 Jesus and the NT never challenged the unity of God
 - a Some of the strongest verses that show that Jesus is God also teach that God is one
 - b These verses mention Jesus and the Father and a singular verb
 - 4 We have **one God**
 - a But God has revealed Himself in different ways of relating with us, **different "missions"**
 - (1) **God Creates:** source of life
 - (2) **God Redeems:**
 - (a) Jesus comes from the Father for our sake
 - (b) And He is generated by the Father
 - (3) **God Sanctifies:** shares the unity of Father and Son with us
 - b The **missions** reflect the **different "Persons"**
 - (1) **We certainly can't understand, comprehend, the infinite God**
 - (2) **We can only experience this God as He wishes to reveal Himself to us**
 - (3) In religion "**Mystery**" has a meaning other than its English meaning
 - (a) The normal English meaning is **"that which can't be known"**
 - (b) In religion the word means: **"that which is only known to the extent it is experienced"**
 - (4) Our one God is known, is experienced, in three **differing missions**, in the **three different ways** by which this God has revealed Himself to us
- II THE FATHER
 - **A THE FATHER ALMIGHTY**
 - 1 **No force is superior in the universe**

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- 2 The first great writers of the Church, themselves called "Fathers of the Church," taught
 - a The word "Father" was not used to imply "masculinity"
 - b Rather it was selected to imply "ultimate source"
 - (1) Primitive medicine gave no role to the woman in conception
 - (a) The man alone carried the seed of the entire child in himself like a seed that is planted in soil
 - (b) Life resulted when he implanted this seed in a woman
 - (2) People with this ancient understanding of conception would see that "Father" meant source, the ultimate source of all that is
- 3 We must recall
 - a Genesis 1:27
 - (1) So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
 - b God, therefore, must be equally feminine and masculine!
 - c God is as much "Mother" as God is "Father" because God is the complete source and nurturer of all life
- B MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH
 - 1 "Heaven and earth" is a Biblical phrase which signifies "everything"
 - a Nothing in the universe exists independent of God
 - b Nothing! Nothing exists independently of God
 - (1) Not just that there are no other god or gods
 - (2) But no "thing" exists apart from our God
 - 2 Everything, thus, must reflect our God
 - a And our revealed experience of this God is
 - (1) All loving and serving
 - (2) All good
 - b Somehow, therefore, the whole universe was/is created
 - (1) To serve us and our needs
 - (2) To help us be ourselves
 - c And, thus, the whole universe shares in the goodness of our God
 - (1) Genesis 1:31
 - (a) "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."
 - d Everything in the universe is a love gift from God to us
 - (1) Look at the stars in the skies
 - (2) They are all part of a love letter from God to you!
 - 3 We are the summit of creation
 - a All was made for our use and our pleasure
 - b All exists for our completion and perfection
 - c Our misuse does not strip this universe of its inherent goodness and purpose
- C OF ALL THAT IS SEEN AND UNSEEN
 - 1 We need some background into the philosophic thinking at the time of the Council to grasp the teaching of this verse
 - a Some believed that God created only the "spiritual," "the unseen" -- the unseen alone is good and perfect
 - b These same people believed that God did not make the "seen," "the material" -- because of their background in Greek philosophy, they incorrectly concluded that the seen is imperfect, evil

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- 2 The Persians in ancient times had two chief gods in their religion "Zoroastrianism"
 - a A good God who creates the spiritual
 - b An evil god who creates the material
- 3 St. Augustine was affected by this thought before his conversion
 - a He never fully rid himself of a fear of the material, the tangible
 - b His fear of bodily pleasures taints American religious thought to the present day
- 4 This concept is wrong
 - a The physical was made by our God
 - b And the physical universe also reflects His goodness and love
 - c The "physical world" which God calls "good" includes the world of our feelings, all our feelings, and our urges and sexual drives
- III THE SON
 - A WE BELIEVE IN ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST
 - 1 Jesus is "Lord"
 - a "Lord" is "Kyrie," the word used to translate "Yahweh"
 - b And so He is God, equal to the Father
 - 2 The "Lord" became "Jesus"
 - a God entered our history
 - b And He united with us:
 - (1) He didn't just appear to be human
 - (2) He became human
 - 3 "Christ"
 - a The reason He became human, the reason for this mission, is expressed by the title "Christ," "the Anointed"
 - b He was commissioned to save us, not to condemn or threaten us -- that is the Biblical role of the Christ
 - 4 "One"
 - a There is no other "Lord" or "Savior" for us
 - (1) Christianity is different from other religions where gods periodically enter the world
 - (2) Hinduism believes its gods often take on human form
 - (3) The gods of Roman and Greek mythology regularly enter the world and interact with humans
 - b No other force or person can "save" us
 - (1) No other person can offer us what we need to be ourselves
 - (2) We are made in the image of our God
 - (3) Only our God can satisfy our inherent need for love, for perfect love
 - c Our history, our experience of our savior, is decisive
 - (1) Salvation history has a definite direction
 - (2) It is not an endless cycle eternally repeating itself (as some Greek philosophers thought)
 - (3) We participate in this direction -- our lives have purpose
 - d Jesus can't share the fullness of His mission with any person or thing
 - B THE ONLY SON OF GOD
 - 1 The Father is the primary source of being God
 - a All other ways are subordinate
 - b They, Son and Spirit, are not lesser, but flow from the Father

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- 2 The primary form [Father] is loving
 - a Then there is the being loved [The Son]
 - b And then there is loving back [The Spirit]
- 3 Entry into our world is not primary to being God
 - a "Son" implies derivation, subordination, dependence
 - b Yet "God" asserts there is an identity of substance, an equality
 - c The next phrases establish this identity even more
- 4 The only true product, the only perfect product of God is the Son
 - a He alone, then, is a complete mirror of the Father
 - b All others before (in our world) and after are incomplete
- **C ETERNALLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER**
 - 1 This phrase rejects an early heresy called the "Adoptionist View"
 - a The heresy held that Jesus was simply a great man, a very great man, but still only a man
 - b At his resurrection, he was blessed with the Father's Spirit and became divine
 - c God "adopted" him into his godhead as a reward for his exemplary life
 - d Only at this moment did Jesus become the "son" of God
 - 2 The Council responded to this error by teaching that the Father always generates the Son
 - a The Son, therefore, is precisely what the Father is
 - b The Father fully and perfectly knows Himself
 - c He expresses all of Himself in one Word: since He is perfect, the Word is the complete expression of the Father
 - d And this Word is the Son: the Father offers all of Himself in love to this Word
- **D GOD FROM GOD**
 - 1 The Son is more than "godly," "godlike," "good"
 - 2 The Son is God!
 - a He is not just touched by the Spirit of God
 - b Rather, He fully possesses the Spirit of God
- **E LIGHT FROM LIGHT**
 - 1 I'm not positive why this phrase was added but it and the two surrounding phrases were added to refute the gravest heresy the Church ever faced
 - a This heresy, Arianism, almost dominated the Church
 - b The Merriam Webster International Dictionary definition of "Arianism" is:
 - (1) "relating to Arius or his doctrines especially that the Son is not of the same substance as the Father but was created as an agent for creating the world"
 - c The Arians may have felt that there was some darkness or lesser light in Jesus
 - 2 He is Light, He is "the light"
 - a Light is symbolic of
 - (1) Truth
 - (2) Salvation
 - (3) Goodness
 - b He touches us with the Light of God, the full Light of God
 - 3 Primitive people, before electricity
 - a Easily saw evil in darkness
 - (1) Life was constantly threatened in the dark

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- (2) Darkness was a time for robbers, murderers, thieves
- b And saw goodness and safety in light
- 4 Jesus is the Light, with no diminishment
- **E TRUE GOD FROM TRUE GOD**
 - 1 This phrase is another response to Arian and his error
 - a Arian taught that
 - (1) God is so "other" that it is impossible for there to be direct contact between Him and the material world
 - (2) Consequently, God creates lesser gods and lesser-lesser gods through them
 - (3) Finally there is a demigod, a half god who creates the material world
 - (4) This final demigod is Jesus
 - b In Arian's view, Jesus is not fully man or God
 - 2 Our Creed corrects this error
 - a Jesus is true God of true God
 - b He is of the same substance with this God
 - c And He is in no way lesser
- **G THROUGH HIM ALL THINGS WERE MADE**
 - 1 Genesis 1:31
 - a God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.
 - 2 The Son is all that the Father is, proceeding from the Father
 - a He is the image of all that proceeds from the Father; He receives all that the Father is
 - b The Son is the image of all creation
 - c You, therefore, are a reflection of the Son
 - 3 Nothing exists independent of God
 - a So everything exists in the Son
 - (1) It does not exist in the Son in a material sense
 - (2) Rather it exists in a spiritual sense
 - b Everything reflects the goodness of the Son
 - c This phrase is another way of teaching the essential goodness of our universe
 - 4 All has been made through Him
 - a And He is the very goodness of God
 - b So nothing can be evil in itself
 - c All that exists must be good in itself
- **H AND FOR OUR SALVATION**
 - 1 The phrase refines our understanding of His mission
 - a It specifies "what" He does on our behalf
 - b He comes "to save us!"
 - c He does not come to punish us or condemn us
 - 2 And His mission continues!
 - a Our God wants our salvation!
 - b He does not want our "judgement" -- as we understand the word
- **I HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN**
 - 1 The phrase does not attempt to teach that Heaven is somewhere "up there"

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- a Heaven is being with God
- b God, as spirit, is everywhere
- c Heaven is being loved and loving in return
- d God comes to those who know this love
- 2 It teaches that the Son "preexists" as God
 - a He is in Heaven
 - b Therefore He is God
- **J BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**
 - 1 The phrase describes how Jesus is present in our life and in our world
 - a His presence is not the result of our efforts
 - b Rather it is accomplished solely by God's Spirit, God's life force
 - 2 No effort of any human was needed then – or now
 - 3 Our task is to
 - a Acknowledge who Jesus is
 - (1) Our Christ – Savior
 - (2) Our Lord – Our God
 - b And to accept Him as He is by allowing ourselves to be saved with all the love, power, life, of God
- **K HE WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY**
 - 1 HE WAS BORN
 - a He actually "en-fleshes"
 - b He incarnates Himself
 - c He is "born" as human
 - 2 OF THE VIRGIN MARY – Of a woman, Mary, who was a "Virgin"
 - a Man's acceptance is required of God's gift
 - b We do nothing to "earn" God, to cause God to be present with us
- **L AND BECAME MAN**
 - 1 He became human fully and completely
 - a Hebrews 4:15*
 - (1) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.
 - b He didn't just "appear" to be human
 - (1) Genesis 18:1*
 - (a) The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. 2* He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground.
 - (b) 3* He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. 4* Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.
 - (2) God "appeared" human to Abraham but there was no union of God with human flesh at this moment of salvation history
 - (3) One of the first great Christian theological errors, heresies, was "docetism"
 - (a) "An opinion especially associated with the Gnostics that Jesus had no human body and only appeared to have died on the cross."
 - 2 We must remember this truth today: Jesus became man
 - a All that God is unites with all that we are
 - b He is one with us in everything but our acts of sinning

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- (1) Love must love
- (2) Perfect love must love perfectly
- **M HE WAS CRUCIFIED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE**
 - 1 The creed contains a reference to an historical person: Pilate
 - a It teaches us that our **faith is founded on reality**
 - b Our faith is not just symbolic
 - c It is not just an expression of a dream or a myth
 - 2 **Our God actually entered and became part of our world, our history**
 - a God becomes involved in the reality of our story
 - b God becomes personally involved in our lives
- **N SUFFERED**
 - 1 Jesus was not just an angelic figure who went through a painless act
 - 2 He was fully man
 - 3 **He experienced pain as we do**
- **O DIED**
 - 1 **Some people had challenged the reality of the death of Jesus**
 - a They claimed Jesus didn't really resurrect
 - (1) He didn't need to resurrect because He didn't really die
 - (2) He just went into a coma
 - b He was taken down from the cross while He was still alive
 - c **The Gospels try to answer this charge by using the women as witnesses**
 - (1) They witness His death
 - (2) They witness His burial
 - 2 He experienced the reality of a human death
 - a The gift of His love was absolute
 - b Jesus withheld nothing
- **P AND WAS BURIED**
 - 1 **The burial was necessary to establish the reality of His death**
 - 2 **There is no theological symbolism to the burial**
 - 3 **There was a ceremonial importance**
 - a The early Christians realized they died with Jesus in **Baptism**
 - b They stayed under the water briefly
 - c This staying under the water celebrated their union with Him in His burial
 - 4 **Notice: Jesus did not die and then rise immediately**
 - a He died Friday 3:00 PM
 - b He rose very early Sunday
 - c He was buried at least 30 hours: a "Dead God" -- not really, but symbolically
 - d His burial should remove all fear from religion -- we can't fear a dead God!
- **Q ON THE THIRD DAY**
 - 1 **Specifying the length of time Jesus was buried certifies to the reality of His death**
 - 2 **He rises on Sunday**
 - a He rose on the first day of the week
 - b God began

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- (1) The first creation on Sunday
 - (2) The new Creation on Sunday: Easter
 - (3) And our share in new creation on Sunday: Pentecost
 - c That's why the Church expected the final creation to occur on Sunday: the Return of Jesus
 - **R HE ROSE AGAIN**
 - 1 He conquered death
 - a Therefore, He conquered sin
 - b And conquered evil
 - 2 He lives Now!
 - **S ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES**
 - 1 This phrase does not refer to the NT Resurrection accounts
 - 2 It refers to the way the Resurrection was foretold in the OT
 - 3 Therefore, all this was done in accord with the plan of God
 - a The death of Jesus was not a change in the plan of God
 - b God remains the Lord of History
 - **I HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN**
 - 1 This is not a claim that He disappeared from our view
 - 2 Nor is it a claim that Heaven was in the sky
 - 3 Rather, it is an assertion that Jesus was assumed into glory
 - a Heaven is being with God
 - b In the case of Jesus, the Ascension attests to His being with God, His being God
 - 4 Easter is more than "revivification"
 - a Others in scripture resurrected only to die anew at some later date
 - b The Ascension attests that Jesus' resurrection was different
 - c He will never know death again
 - **U AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER**
 - 1 The reference is to a position of prominence with the Father
 - a The background of the reference is to Psalm 2 and to Psalm 110, important psalms for the early Church
 - b Psalm 2:7
 - (1) I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.
 - c Psalm 110:1 Of David. A psalm.
 - (1) The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
 - d The Psalms assert
 - (1) Jesus is God's "Son"
 - (2) And Jesus is exalted to God's "right hand"
 - 2 He is seated with God
 - a So He is equal to God
 - b He is not serving God
 - 3 He is fully God
- **V HE WILL COME AGAIN IN GLORY**
 - 1 The work of Jesus is not fully complete: evil, loneliness, still exist

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- a In the universe
- b Within us
- 2 **Jesus will not leave us incomplete**
 - a You will be perfect
 - b And so will I be
 - c And so will the universe be
- 3 **Jesus will return to accomplish this: His return is assured**
 - a All evil will be vanquished
 - b Nothing will ever threaten your peace, your love
 - (1) Nothing from within
 - (2) Nothing from without
- 4 **He will return in glory**
 - a All disorder, all sin will be conquered by His love
 - b Creation will be complete as God intended -- will accept the love God offers it
- **W TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD**
 - 1 Remember what OT "Judges" are
 - a Leaders of God's people
 - b Saviors of the defenseless
 - 2 **Jesus will return to complete the judgement**
 - a The fullness of God's love will be experienced
 - (1) This love is already offered
 - (2) But our limitations keep us from experiencing it
 - (3) All these limitations will one day be removed
 - b The Father saw our sin
 - (1) He spoke a "Word of judgement"
 - (2) This Word en-fleshed in us; united with us
 - c The Word, Jesus, saw our sin
 - (1) And He identified Himself with us
 - (2) He does this to free us, to save us
 - d The Spirit, (Word uniting with us,) is the answer to our loneliness
 - 3 So the Word will complete our judgement: we will experience the Spirit
 - 4 "The living and the dead"
 - a Those who die before the return of Jesus will not miss out on the saving power of God
 - b "Judgement," loving, will be perfected within all of us
- **X AND HIS KINGDOM WILL HAVE NO END**
 - 1 We can have complete and lasting peace since the love and life offered us are endless
 - 2 We must remember that the word "Kingdom" actually means "Kingship"
 - a Jesus is serving us
 - b We are not serving Him
 - 3 Jesus will continue to serve us endlessly -- including in "Heaven"
- **IV THE SPIRIT**
 - **A WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE LORD**
 - 1 "Lord" means that the Holy Spirit is equal as God with Father and Son

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- 2 "Holy" means not just any life force, any "spirit," but the very Spirit of God Himself
- 3 "Spirit" is a reference to the life force of God.
 - a The love that God is
 - b The love that unites the Father and the Son
- B THE GIVER OF LIFE
 - 1 The "Life" force of the Father and Son is the only life force in our universe
 - 2 So all life must flow somehow from the Spirit
 - a Thus there is a third "function" or "mission" to our God
 - b He sanctifies us, makes us holy
 - c He makes us more than we can ever be by ourselves
- C WHO PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON
 - 1 So the Spirit is the very life of God, the unity of the Father and Son
 - 2 This life and unity are now shared with us
 - 3 This part of the Creed divides Catholic and Orthodox Churches
 - a Orthodox say the Spirit proceeds from the Father "through" the Son
 - b Catholics say from the Father "and" the Son
- D WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON HE IS ADORED AND GLORIFIED
 - 1 He is coequal to the Father and the Son
 - a Not just in being God, being divine
 - b But also in having a relationship with us
 - c And having a mission to us
 - 2 He is also coequal in deserving our loving response
 - 3 Love, the Spirit of God in our lives, deserves the same honor we give the Father and Son
- E HE HAS SPOKEN THROUGH THE PROPHETS
 - 1 God has only one Spirit
 - 2 And the prophets spoke through God or God spoke through them
 - a The Spirit of God "falls" on them
 - b Therefore, in the OT, God is revealing Himself
 - (1) This revelation is only a partial revelation
 - (2) It is made complete in the NT
 - (3) The prophetic revelation is not done by predicting future events
 - (4) Rather, it is accomplished by revealing glimpses of the "Hidden God"
 - 3 Since ours is a God of love
 - a His Spirit is a spirit of love, of loving
 - b Whatever emanates from the prophets then must be -- and is -- a message of love from God to us
- V CONCLUDING TRUTHS
 - A WE BELIEVE IN "ONE"... [CHURCH]
 - 1 There is one Jesus so His one Body is united in one Spirit
 - 2 Therefore, the Church must also be one
 - a We see and create divisions
 - b We are blinded by our pride
 - c We have divided what God has united

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- 3 Despite our divisions, the Church is, in reality, one
- 4 Unity is not what we make the Church, but what Jesus makes us
- 5 We are one whether
 - a We know it or not
 - b We live it or not
- B "HOLY"...
 - 1 The Church is the community formed by the Spirit of Jesus
 - 2 Since this Spirit is "holy," we are all truly saintly
 - a We are other than the world sees us
 - b We are other than we see ourselves
 - 3 Our constant challenge is to claim and live the holiness of the Spirit
 - a We must not live our human weaknesses, our sinfulness
 - b Saints are those who believe they are saints and treat themselves and others with this sacredness
- C "CATHOLIC"...
 - 1 The term means "including or concerning all humankind; universal:"
 - 2 The Father creates all and loves all
 - a He sends Jesus to save all
 - b Jesus shares this mission with the Church
 - (1) Matthew 28:18*
 - (a) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19* Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
 - 3 The Church can never confine its love within any boundaries
 - a Geography
 - b Race
 - c Nation
 - d Class
- D "APOSTOLIC" CHURCH
 - 1 Meaning #1: The love we share is the love witnessed by those Jesus officially delegated to announce it
 - a There is an unbroken succession from them to us
 - b The love we experience is not our own creation
 - c It is God's continuing gift
 - 2 Meaning #2: Jesus was sent with a mission
 - a He shares that mission with us
 - b John 20:21
 - (1) Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22* When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23* If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
 - c Evangelism is essential to the existence
 - (1) Of the Church
 - (2) Of individuals Christians
 - d Evangelism is accomplished
 - (1) Not by Bible-thumping and doorbell-ringing

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- (2) But by loving, accepting, forgiving as Jesus does to us
 - e The lack of it is a symptom of a lack of an experience of the reality of the Holy Spirit
- E WE ACKNOWLEDGE ONE BAPTISM FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS
 - 1 Some demanded re-baptism for those who had denied their faith and repented
 - 2 Once given, God never withdraws His life and love
 - 3 We are forever washed clean by Jesus
 - a He cannot divorce us
 - b He will not divorce Himself from us
- F WE LOOK FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD
 - 1 Jesus lives and so do we
 - 2 Death cannot hold or contain us
 - 3 And we will have a continuing, unique, personal experience
 - 4 The power of Jesus over death is not confined to those physically still alive
- G AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME
 - 1 Not only will we live perfect
 - 2 But we will also live in a perfect age
 - 3 Fully and completely, we will allow ourselves to be loved by God; and, in return, love God, ourselves, and all others
- H AMEN
- VI WHAT IS A CREED?
 - A There is an ancient legend
 - 1 The Twelve Apostles were about to divide and spread across the world to evangelize
 - a They felt a need to agree on the content of the message
 - b This need led to the "Apostles' Creed"
 - c Each apostle contributed one truth
 - 2 It is a completely unfounded legend
 - 3 Actually, the Apostles Creed dates from a period more than 300 years after the Apostles died
 - B From Kerygma to Creed
 - 1 "Kerygma" refers to the proclamation of religious truths, especially the truths taught in the Gospels.
 - 2 On Pentecost, Peter was driven by a compulsion to proclaim what the assembled disciples had seen, heard, and experienced
 - 3 Peter outlined the beliefs that became fundamental to Christianity
 - a The Day of Yahweh foretold by the prophets is at hand now
 - b It was ushered in by Jesus of Nazareth
 - c He was sent by God
 - d His credentials were His words and deeds
 - e By the plan of God, He was crucified and killed
 - f Death could not hold Him
 - g He fulfilled the vision of David who foresaw saw the Messiah's resurrection
 - h God has made this Jesus Lord and Messiah, Christ
 - 4 Even Paul, who got the story secondhand followed this outline
 - 5 This confession eventually was summarized as "Jesus is Lord!"
 - 6 By the time of St. Justin (160 AD) stock formulae seem to have come into use
 - a There were many variations

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- b But the core confession and profession were always the same
- C The Creed as a Profession of Faith
 - 1 St. Justin tells us about the sacramental rite
 - a Baptism
 - (1) Converts were asked standard questions
 - (2) They responded with "I believe," "I give my heart's allegiance to you"
 - 2 By the 4th century, these questions had evolved into a declaratory statement
 - a It was framed as a collection of statements of belief
 - b "I believe" or "We believe"
 - D The Creed as a "Symbol"
 - 1 Originally, the questions were asked to allow the convert to make a profession of faith
 - 2 But the declaratory form became a convenient summary of the Trinitarian doctrine
 - 3 "Symbolism" is a traditional word for "summaries" of this kind
 - a In Lent, as Baptism approached, the bishop handed the candidates the creed, the "traditio symboli"
 - b He then proceeded to explain it phrase by phrase
 - c The candidates were asked to recite it publicly
 - d This recitation demonstrated they were sufficiently grounded in the faith to be baptized
 - E The Creed as a Story
 - 1 In its catechetical instruction, the declaratory form of the Creeds tells the story of creation and salvation and sanctification
 - 2 It is much like the "Shema" which became Israel's classic confession of faith
 - 3 The Baptismal Creed tells the story of God's acting on our behalf
 - a Each of the three parts focus upon an action of God
 - b Each focuses upon a mission of God
 - (1) Creation by Father
 - (2) Salvation by Son
 - (3) Infusion and sanctification by Spirit
 - F The Creed as a Doxology
 - 1 Like the "Shema" of Israel, the Creed is both
 - a A chant of praise, (The Greek word for praise is "doxa")
 - b And a witness of faith
 - 2 In the Liturgy, the Creed becomes a testimony of praise to God
 - 3 The Creed can help us to see everything in a new light and to thank God for the resulting vision
 - G The Creed as a Rule of Faith
 - 1 By the 4th century, the creed began gaining a new function
 - a It became a text of orthodoxy
 - b It became a standard for orthodoxy
 - c The Church began adding or refining statements to resolve doctrinal controversies
 - d Thereafter, true believers were challenged to accept all the tenets of the Creed
 - 2 It became an instrument to identify and separate true believers from heretics
 - H Interpreting the Creed
 - 1 For us today, the Creed
 - a Remains a "Profession of faith" to be used in evangelizing

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- b Remains a symbol of faith, a summary of who we are
- c Remains the story of how our God acts
- d Remains a doxology praising the action of our God
- e Remains a guarantee and protector of our orthodoxy
- 2 But the Creed can create problems
 - a **Its words and thoughts are from a different culture**
 - b We can misinterpret them by reading into them the meaning of our culture: "Judge" has radically changed its meaning
 - c **Some phrases were inserted to resolve a particular problem threatening Christianity at that time**
 - (1) We have little or no concept of the problem
 - (2) **So we can lose the significance of the verse's teaching**
 - (a) The phrases that correct the tendency of Gnosticism or Arianism to make Jesus a lesser or a demigod
 - [1] "Only begotten"
 - [2] "Light from Light"
 - (b) "Descended into hell" is confusing in the "Apostles' Creed"
 - [1] Today we have lost the original meaning when this phrase was inserted
 - [2] "Hell" for them was not a reference to our "Heaven/Hell"
 - [a] But a reference to "Sheol"
 - [b] A reference to the abode of all the dead
 - [3] It referred to "Sheol," "the pit," "the abode of eternal death" for all alike, good and evil
 - [4] It is from this abode of death that Jesus rescued those who had died before Good Friday
- 1 Remember
 - 1 The "Nicene Creed" is "We believe"
 - 2 It challenges us, as a Church, to stand together as we give our hearts to the Triune God who
 - a Creates us
 - b And saves us
 - c And makes us holy
 - d And makes us Church,
 - e Makes us a communion of saints
- ↓ We believe!