

# ELIJAH PROJECT SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

## *Church History – Week 1*

### *The Apostles' Creed – Study Handout*

#### **Purpose of the Apostles' Creed**

The Apostles' Creed is one of the earliest summaries of Christian belief. It developed from the Old Roman Creed used in the 2nd century church during baptism. New believers confessed this creed before entering the church. The creed summarizes belief in the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Early creeds existed to protect the church from false teaching. The Apostles' Creed helped defend Christianity against several heresies such as:

- Docetism – taught that Jesus only appeared to be human and did not truly have a physical body.
- Gnosticism – taught salvation came through secret spiritual knowledge.
- Marcionism – rejected the Old Testament and claimed the God of Israel was different from the Father of Jesus.
- Arianism – taught that Jesus was a created being and not fully divine.

#### **Major Doctrines Found in the Creed**

- God the Father – Creator of heaven and earth. Christianity begins with belief that God is the creator of all things.
- Jesus Christ – The Son of God and Lord. Christian doctrine teaches the Hypostatic Union: Jesus is fully God and fully man.
- The Virgin Birth – Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, fulfilling Isaiah 7:14.

- The Crucifixion – Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried as the atoning sacrifice for sin.

## **Doctrines Continued**

- The Resurrection – Jesus rose on the third day, proving victory over sin, death, and the grave.
- The Ascension – Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, a position of authority.
- The Second Coming – Christ will return to judge the living and the dead.
- The Holy Spirit – Believers receive the Holy Spirit as the seal of salvation (Ephesians 1:13–14).
- The Church – The phrase 'holy catholic church' means the universal body of believers, not the Roman Catholic denomination.
- Forgiveness of Sins – Through Christ's sacrifice believers are justified and reconciled to God (Romans 5:8).
- Resurrection of the Body – Believers will receive glorified bodies at the final resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:52).
- Eternal Life – The final hope of Christians is everlasting life in the presence of God.