

## ELIJAH PROJECT SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

### Module: Church History

#### Week one: The Apostles creed

##### **Slide 1**

- **What is the Apostles creed**

A Christian creed and symbol of faith explicitly in structure with sections affirming belief in God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles' Creed developed from an earlier confession known as the Old Roman Creed used in the 2nd century church for baptism.

##### **Slide 2**

The creed is as follows: **The apostles creed**

**I believe in God the father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only son our lord. Who was born of the Virgin Mary. Who suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, died, and was buried. Descended into hell, and rose again from the dead on the third day. Ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the father almighty. Who will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (universal) church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ever lasting.**

The tradition of assigning the creed to the apostles can be traced to art from the 6<sup>th</sup> century in the artwork titled "credo apostolorum"

Early creeds existed primarily to protect orthodoxy from false teaching.

This creed breathes the gospel in its totality. It is not scripture but is scriptural in its entirety. It is a trinitarian sword against the follow heresies.

##### **Slide 3**

1. **Docetism – A heresy that taught that Jesus only appeared to have a physical human body and to suffer on the cross, but was not truly incarnate in real flesh**

- 2. Gnosticism- An early religious heresy movement that taught salvation comes through secret spiritual knowledge (gnosis) and often claims the physical world is evil while the spiritual realm is good**
  
- 3. Marcionism- a 2<sup>nd</sup> century teaching that rejected the Old Testament and claimed the God of Israel was a different, lesser god than the loving father revealed by Jesus Christ.**
  
- 4. Arianism – a 3-4<sup>th</sup> century teaching that claimed Jesus Christ was created by God the father and therefore not eternal or fully divine like the father.**

The creed supports the trinitarian view of the Godhead. The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.

This creed is used in baptismal ceremony in many church sects as a declaration prior to submersion in baptism.

The creed is twelve parts and each part played a vital role

Note: the apostles creed has remained through schism in the church and is fully agreeable with scripture.

## ● **The structure of the creed**

I want to dissect the creed and highlight its vital emphasis on the foundation of the apostles, the Christian doctrines of faith.

### **Slide 4**

- 1. I believe in God the father almighty maker of heaven and earth.**

Notice it establishes belief that God is the sole creator of all that exist the heavens and the earth.

Understanding who God is is the first portion of the creed why? Because we must come to know him. We wonder why we don't have faith the answer is, faith is confidence in the character of God and if we don't know kind of God God is, we can't have faith

**Psalms 9:10 says “and they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.”**

The word name here translates to character in the Hebrew, we must know his character.

the American church has strayed from the God who is holy, we’ve minimalized him to fit our comfort. we’ve created a God of complacency and compromise through the deceptive lense of false grace. We must be sure to understand that our view of God is how we will respond to God. It sets the tone of our reverence. If we see him as holy we will respond to his holiness. If we see him as a genie in the bottle give me what I want scapegoat for our sins. Well never walk in reverence to who he truly is

**Proverbs 9:10 (NASB 2020)**

**“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,**

**And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”**

It’s not enough to just acknowledge that He’s real but true belief is expressed through how we live. The danger of departing from the truth is getting stuck in reprobation of mind and walking in constant rebellion.

**What does it say in Roman’s 1?**

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people **who suppress the truth** <sup>in</sup> **unrighteousness,** <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident <sup>in</sup> within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes, that is,* His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> **For even though they knew God, they did not** <sup>in</sup> **honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened.** <sup>22</sup> **Claiming to be wise, they became fools,** <sup>23</sup> **and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and** <sup>in</sup> **crawling creatures.**

<sup>24</sup> **Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.** <sup>25</sup> **For they exchanged the truth of God for** <sup>in</sup> **falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed** <sup>in</sup> **forever. Amen.**

Our perception of God determines how we act towards him

Our obedience is determined by our reverence.

### **Slide 5**

#### **2. And in Jesus Christ his only son, our lord.**

This part gives us two focuses

Christ as the son of God

Christ as our lord.

Two important things to recognize as it is vital in understanding the identity of Christ and his role. As you saw in biblical worldview there are many types of Jesus's across a broad spectrum of many religious views. The difference between the Jesus you believe in and the Jesus they believe in is vital.

What we have in the person of Christ is a complexity that has been discussed by scholars for decades. A mixture of humanity and divinity often referenced in combination as the hypostatic union.

This part of the creed takes us down the path of christology. The study of the person of Christ and who we believe him to really be.

Here is why this is vital to Christian doctrine and theology to have a firm understanding of our savior.

The Mormons would argue that Jesus came as a spirit child of God but was not of the same essence of the father.

The Jehovah's witnesses would argue that Jesus wasn't God in the flesh. They believe him to be Michael the archangel in prior existence. They believe him to be a created being not the eternal God

This is where the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union becomes essential.

If Christ were not fully man, He could not stand in the place of humanity and overcome sin on our behalf. The role of representing mankind in obedience to God would be removed from the equation.

But if Christ were not fully God, the sacrifice He offered would not possess the divine and eternal value required to redeem humanity.

Scripture tells us in **Leviticus 17:11** that the life is in the blood. The Christian hope rests in the blood of Jesus.

For that sacrifice to provide eternal redemption, the blood that was shed had to possess eternal worth. If Christ were merely human, His death could only offer a temporary or partial pardon.

But because Christ is fully God and fully man, His sacrifice possesses infinite value and is sufficient to redeem all who believe.

### **Slide 6**

#### **3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary**

This portion of the creed points of towards the prophetic fulfillment of the promised messiah.

Isaiah 7:14 (NASB 2020)

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and she will name Him Immanuel.”

The virgin birth is essential to Christian doctrine because it reveals two important truths about Christ.

First, it affirms the divine origin of Jesus. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, meaning His life did not originate through the ordinary process of human generation. His conception was a divine act of God.

Second, it affirms the true humanity of Jesus. He was born of the Virgin Mary and entered into the human experience just as every person does — through birth.

This statement of the creed protects the doctrine of the incarnation, the truth that God took on human flesh.

John 1:14 tells us:

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”

Jesus was not merely a spiritual being who appeared human. He truly entered the world as a man, sharing in our humanity while remaining fully divine.

The virgin birth therefore preserves both sides of Christ’s nature:

- His divinity, because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
- His humanity, because He was born of Mary

This again points us back to the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union, that Christ is fully God and fully man in one person.

Without the incarnation there could be no redemption, because the Savior had to truly enter the human condition in order to redeem it.

And no Mary was no the coredeemer of the world and even the Catholic Church acknowledges it now.

### **Slide7**

#### **4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell**

All religions deny the resurrection the moment of atonement

This not only points to the historical record of his crucifixion but expresses belief in the resurrection.

Most religions don't deny the crucifixion they deny the resurrection

This is the part they try to disprove this so what solidifies his divinity, his triumph over death, he'll, and the grave!

It was fulfillment of prophecy that our messiah would suffer and that by his stripes we are healed.

He descended into the realm of the dead to exercise judgement and liberation.

. The descent of Christ marked the fulfillment of the Old Covenant. He entered the realm of the dead proclaiming liberty to the righteous who waited in hope and declaring judgment over the powers of darkness.

Biblical framework behind this idea

#### 1. Proclamation to the spirits

- 1 Peter 3:18–19 (NASB)

“having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits in prison.”

This is often interpreted as Christ proclaiming His victory.

## 2. Gospel preached to the dead

- 1 Peter 4:6

“For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead...”

Many early church fathers saw this as Christ announcing redemption to the faithful who died before the cross.

## 3. Leading captivity captive

- Ephesians 4:8–9

“When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive... Now this expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth?”

This is commonly interpreted as Christ liberating the righteous dead (Abraham’s bosom / Paradise).

## 4. The prophecy Jesus applied to Himself

- Luke 4:18

“He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives...”

The early church connected this proclamation to His victory over death.

Early Church understanding

Early Christians like Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Augustine of Hippo taught that Christ descended to Hades to proclaim His triumph and release the righteous.

### **Slide 8**

- 5. The third day he rose again from the dead: he ascended to heaven and sits on the right hand of God the father almighty!**

Notice it doesn't say three days later but the third day.

Many will argue that it was three days but only do it out of not knowing what the Bible says. But if the word is specific then we should be specific with the word

This wording reflects the biblical language used throughout the New Testament and points to the fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus Himself repeatedly taught that He would rise on the third day (Matthew 16:21)

This is the part that is most combated the world has no problem with Jesus being crucified but that he was resurrected is the part they will deny. This was vital in this age because many spread rumors that Jesus never resurrected. Even the disciples were accused of stealing his body!

### **Slide 9**

- 6. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

We believe in the second coming of Christ and the final judgment.

He rescued those who were captive in Sheol and now we await his return where we will join him in the air for eternity.

We believe in his second coming. Not his third coming but his second coming I personally believe that biblically the second coming and the rapture are the same event.

This is the focus of our faith, enduring until the end awaiting the coming messiah who will take us up into eternal glory!

### **Slide 10**

#### **7. I believe in the holy ghost: the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints**

As we approach this section of the creed, it is important to understand that the phrase “**holy catholic Church**” does not refer to the Roman Catholic Church as it exists today.

**The word catholic simply means universal**, referring to the worldwide body of believers made up of all who place their faith in Jesus Christ.

Through faith in Christ we receive the Holy Spirit and are adopted into the family of God.

The Holy Spirit is the seal of our salvation, the guarantee of our redemption, and the down payment of God’s purchased possession (Ephesians 1:13–14). Without the Holy Spirit the believer would be spiritually dry and powerless, for the Spirit is the living water that Jesus said would flow from within those who believe (John 7:38).

The apostles believed in the active work of the Holy Spirit—His power to perform miracles, His authority in casting out demons, and His role in bringing salvation and transformation to the lost. Without the Holy Spirit they could do nothing

### **Slide 11**

#### **8. The forgiveness of sins.**

**This points toward the justification of mankind in the eyes of God. When we believe and receive the Holy Spirit, God looks past our sin. We’re justified through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. This statement demonstrates the the apostes believed that through what Christ did on the cross mankind could be forgiven.**

**We repent and receive the Holy Spirit and are baptized in him for the remission of sins.**

**Christ did not come for nothing. He accomplished everything. The thing that separated us from God has not been erased and he not lives in us.**

**Paul said while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Roman 5:8**

**The result of atonement transitions us into the identity of sonship**

## **Slide 12**

### **9. The resurrection of the body: and the life everlasting**

**This portion of the creed points to the final hope of the believer—eternal life with Christ. It reminds us of the final stage of salvation often referred to as glorification, when believers will be raised into glorified bodies and enter into the eternal kingdom of God. Scripture tells us that in the twinkling of an eye we will be changed and raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:52). These glorified bodies will no longer suffer the effects of sin—no pain, no sickness, no weakness, and no decay. The limitations and brokenness of this present world will be gone as we are made new and perfected in the presence of the Lord. The creed therefore ends with the promise that those who belong to Christ will live forever with Him in a restored and eternal kingdom.**