



EDUCATION & FORMATION
CREEDS & COUNCILS
APRIL 14 - MAY 12, 2024

A name, not an ethical system, not a list of commandments, not a doctrinal statement, but a name: Jesus Christ, is at the center of our faith. “The most important thing about Christians is not what we do... but to whom we belong as shown by the one whose name we bear.” Because of the centrality of Jesus, believers throughout history have sought to articulate summary statements about Him: Who He is. What He has done. Who are we in relation to Him. These summary statements about Jesus Christ are the creeds and confessions of the church.

During Spring E&F, in our course, “Creeds & Councils” we will explore the confessions of the early church. We will begin with the creedal impulse. Not every faith has a creed. Christianity does. Why is that? We will move chronologically through the great creeds of the early church: The apostles, followed by the Nicene, which was explained at Chalcedon, concluding with the Athanasian creed. Behind each creed is a rich history. Each creed is full of even richer content. And each creed has ongoing relevance for today. This Spring, during E&F we will consider the history, content, and going relevance of the great creeds and councils of the early church.

Syllabus:

April 14

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THE CREEDAL IMPULSE IN SCRIPTURE AND THE EARLY CHURCH

Dr. Ryan N. Danker was named the Director of the John Wesley Institute in October 2021. Danker is an author, historian, and scholar of modern English Christianity. He has degrees from Northwest Nazarene University, Duke University, and Boston University. Danker has extensive work in ecumenical efforts. He has served on the faculty of Greensboro College and Wesley Theological Seminary. He has taught at Trinity School for Ministry and Virginia Theological Seminary.

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From the beginning of the Christian faith, there has been an urge – a desire – to provide something of an outline of the implications of God becoming flesh, of dying on the cross, and rising again to launch the new creation. This proclamation and the emergence of the Church and its Scriptures are intrinsically connected.

### Three general areas of interest:

Creedal segments in Scripture – canon

- Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3)
- Creedal statements from the church embedded in Scripture – and therefore older than the NT itself (1 Timothy 2:5; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Timothy 3:16)
- Paul's Summary to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)
  - For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

The worship of the church – *lex orandi lex credendi*

- Baptism
- Eucharist
- *The Didache* – 2nd century liturgical and catechetical text

The Rule of Faith – *regula fide*

- Everett Ferguson  
“...the rule of faith was a summary of apostolic preaching and teaching, to be found most authoritatively in written form in the Scriptures.”

Justyn Martyr

- “We piously believe in the God of the Christians, whom we regard to be the only one of these things from the beginning, the Maker and Fashioner of the whole creation, what is visible and invisible; and the Lord Jesus Christ, Child of God, who was proclaimed beforehand by the prophets as one who was going to be present with the race of humanity, the herald of salvation and teacher of good doctrines.” (*Acts of Justin*)

Ireneaus

- “We hold indeed to the rule of truth, that is, that there is one God Almighty, who established all things through his Word and formed and made all things out of that which was not so that they might exist.” *Against Heresies*
- “For the church, although dispersed throughout the whole world, as far as the ends of the earth, received from the apostles and their disciples, the faith in one God the Father Almighty, who has made the heaven, the earth, the seas, and all things in them; and in one Christ Jesus the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who has proclaimed through the prophets the plans of God and the comings of Christ, both the birth from the virgin, the passion, the rising from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming [again] from heaven in the glory of the Father for the summing up of all things and the raising of all humanity, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, God, Savior, and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” to him [Phil 2:10-11], and that he might make a just judgment on all, that he might send the spiritual hosts of wickedness, the angels who transgressed and went into apostasy, and the impious, unjust, lawless, and blasphemers among human beings into the eternal fire; but might grant incorruptible life and eternal glory to those who are righteous, holy, and keep his commandments, and who persevere in his love either from the beginning or by repentance, and surround them with eternal glory.” *Against Heresies*

Tertullian

- “The rule of faith which is believed: there is but one God, and he alone is the creator of the world, who by the sending forth of his Word in the beginning brought the universe into being out of nothing; and this Word, called his Son, was seen in various ways in the name of God by the patriarchs, was heard always in the prophets, and last of all was brought down into the virgin Mary by the Spirit and power of God the Father, was made flesh in her womb and was born from her as Jesus Christ; thereafter he proclaimed a new law and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles, was nailed to the cross, was resurrected on the third day, was taken up to heaven to sit at the Father's right hand and to send in his place the power of the Holy Spirit to guide believers, and will come again in glory to take the saints into the enjoyment of life eternal and heavenly promises, and to condemn the impious to everlasting fire, both parties being raised from the dead and having their flesh restored.” *On the Prescription of Heresies*

## THE APOSTLE'S CREED

Arthur Freyre has been a member of Christ the King with his wife Christie, since 2019. Prior to moving to Alexandria, Arthur and his wife were members of Restoration Anglican Church, in Miami, Florida. Arthur currently works as an attorney at the Law Offices of Poblete Tamargo in Old Town Alexandria. He also writes a newsletter on how Washington views Latin America, which can be found on LinkedIn. When he is not serving at church, Arthur was recently appointed to serve on the Canons and Constitution committee for the ACNA.

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INTRODUCTION:

*And I believe what I believe is what makes me what I am
I did not make it no it is making me
I did not make it no it is making me
I said I did not make it no it is making me
It is the very truth of God and not the invention of any man.
~Rich Mullins, Creed, a Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band.*

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Early Church:

- The Apostle John's death ended the Age of the Apostles, and the church ushered in a new age in its history: the Age of the Apostolic Fathers. During this period, the church developed liturgy, began canonizing Scripture, and provided believers with a rule of faith.¹
- The church at this time faced two threats:
 - o Outside threat-Roman persecution.
 - o Inside threat- Gnosticism.
- Solution- The creed becomes one of the tools that the Church uses to assert its authority.
 - o Guard against Heresy: "The Creed is a sign of unity. It is expected of all who are baptized that they will understand what it means to believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit."²
 - o How? By setting forth the essential elements of the faith, the Church signals what is necessary for salvation. There is no secret knowledge, no secret ceremonies. Christ did assume human flesh to redeem us.
- Benefits of the Creed:
 - o Informational: Allows the believer to explain the faith.
 - o Evangelistic: If a believer has to flee persecution and enter a strange land, the Creed allows them to evangelize a new area.
- Structure of the Creed:
 - o The Apostles' Creed answers the following three questions:
Who is God the Father? Discusses Creation.
Who is God the Son? Discusses Christ's redemptive work.
Who is God the Holy Spirit? Discusses the role of the church.
- *Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome: (215AD)*-The Creed was used in the baptismal liturgy.

Early Middle Ages:

- 710-724 AD: The Revision to the Creed by St. Priminus, who, along with "Benedictine monks, engaged in missionary work in the Lake Constance region, an area that borders Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, possibly to deal with potential heresy."³
- 811-813: Charlemagne accepts using the Apostles' Creed as part of the liturgy in his kingdom. The uniformity stems from the desire to develop a push for better education. Also, the Apostle Creed would define the Holy Roman Empire, unlike the Nicene Creed, which would represent the Byzantine Empire.⁴

REVISIONS TO THE CREED:

- The Nicene Creed influenced some of the revised language.⁵ (See page 3 for the comparisons).
- *Phrase #1:* Christ Descended into Hell. (See Article III of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571).
- *Phrase #2:* Communion of Saints. (See Article XIX of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571).

CONCLUSION:

Luke Timothy Johnson writes, “The rules of baseball distinguish ‘the game of from other team sports played with balls, but do not exhaust the possibilities of excitement, valor, excellence, and failure inherent in the sport as actually played.’ Likewise, the creeds establish ‘boundaries for and around the Christian people,’ but they do not exhaust the meaning of Christian life and practice.”⁶

Progression of the Apostles’ Creed:

Apostles’ Creed (400 AD)

God The Father:
I believe in God the Father almighty.

God The Son:
And in Christ Jesus...Who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried and on the third day rose again from the dead.

God The Holy Spirit, the church, and the Age to come.
And in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.

Apostles’ Creed (700 AD)⁷

I believe in God the Father almighty, *creator of heaven and earth*;

And in Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord, Who was *conceived* by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, *suffered* under Pontius Pilate was crucified, **dead**, and buried. **He descended to hell**, on the third day rose again from the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the *holy catholic* Church, **the communion of saints**, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of body, and the *life everlasting*. Amen.

ACNA Prayer Book (2019):

God The Father:
I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

God The Son:
I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord,
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary,
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended **to the dead**.
On the third day rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come to judge the living and the dead.

God The Holy Spirit:
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.⁸

Endnotes

- 1 Henry Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, "Introduction" p. 1 (1956).
- 2 Thomas Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 8 Quoting Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* and Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Catechism*.
- 3 Donald Fairbairn & Ryan Reeves, *The Story of Creeds and Councils: Tracing the Development of The Christian Faith*, The Era of Creeds: The Apostles' Creed, p. 112.
- 4 Fairbairn & Reeves, p. 114.
- 5 Fairbairn & Reeves, p. 116.
- 6 Prof. Phil Harold Lecture #11: "Credo: Making Sense of the First Four Ecumenical Councils. Quoting David Neff's review in *Christianity Today* of Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (Nov. 1, 2003).
- 7 Donald Fairbairn & Ryan Reeves, *The Story of Creeds and Councils: Tracing the Development of The Christian Faith*, The Era of Creeds: The Apostles' Creed, p. 117
- 8 Book of Common Prayer, p. 20.
- 9 John Rodgers, *The Faith of Anglicans*, Anglican House (2021), p 8.
- 10 Church Theology Podcast (Episode 90), *The Chalcedonian Definition*, with Kirk Miller and Stephen Wellum.
- 11 Donald Fairbairn and Ryan M. Reeves, *The Story of Creeds and Confessions, Tracing the Development of the Christian Faith*, Baker Academic (2019), p. 159.
- 12 Fairbairn, p. 11.
- 13 Fairbairn, pp. 104-105; 145.
- 14 Anglican Communion Website: available at <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/109014/Thirty-Nine-Articles-of-Religion.pdf>
- 15 Fairbairn, pp. 107-108.

THE NICENE CREED

Steven and Marie (Mia) Basilici began attending Christ the King (CtK) in September 2022. After completing thirty-five years with the US Army, it's been our pleasure to settle down with our two unruly Labradors just around the corner from CtK in Shirlington. When we're not visiting one of our three adult children or our three fabulous grandchildren, Steve can be found at the Department of Justice as a fulltime Chief of Staff for the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) or pursuing his MDIV at the Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) Washington, DC Campus. Mia, after many years as a homeschool Mom and expert mover, has reentered professional life as a Registered Nurse at the Virginia Hospital Center and is currently both a Charge Nurse and an Assistant Patient Care Director for her ward. Both Mia and Steve were surprised by joy and awakened to faith in Jesus Christ as young parents at Ft. Bragg, NC, in 1996 and have visited many churches in the DC-area over the years and finally feel they have found a home at CtK.

Summary

The Nicene Creed used during our Sunday service today, emerged through a sixty-three-year, ad hoc process, beginning with the Arian controversy in 318, formally ending at the Council of Constantinople in 381, and emerging in its current form in extant literature seventy years later in 451.

Within that sixty-three-year period three authoritative church councils took place: the Council of Nicaea in 325, the Council of Alexandria in 362, and the Council of Constantinople in 381. The necessity for church councils to draft clear statements of belief was catalyzed by two theological issues: 1) the Trinitarian nature of God versus the Arian Heresy, the heresy of Modalism, and the issue of the full equality in essence of the three persons of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and 2) the cause of salvation as an action performed by God Himself descending to earth to save man or man seeking to ascend to God by following Christ upward.

The majority, if not all, belief systems (both religious and philosophic) of the ancient world understood salvation to be initiated and accomplished by man as he ascended upward to God. In stark contrast, the Christian faith was anchored in the belief that salvation was initiated and completed by God the Father through His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. This radical Christian doctrine, against all consensus, was that God actually descended from heaven and took on flesh to save man.

The other key dynamic important to the ultimate emergence of today's Nicene Creed was the inflection point in history from Roman persecution of Christianity to the Empire's endorsement and sponsorship of it as the dominant faith. As we shall see, this newfound acceptance of Christianity as a dominant religion was then, and remains today, a two-edged sword.

Timeline and Essential Events

306 AD Constantine, the Emperor of Britain and Gaul (modern day France) begins his conquest of the rest of the Roman Empire.

318 AD The Arian controversy breaks out. Beginning in Alexandria, Egypt. A Theologian named Arius from Antioch (on the coast of the Mediterranean north of Israel in modern day Syria), a protégé of the church father Origen, adopted philosophic terms from Hellenistic Platonism in describing the nature of God, which led him to believe that the Son was created and not the same in essence as God the Father. So, Christ, the anointed one, was not in essence God and was not eternal, he was part of creation, a created being.

324 AD Constantine becomes Emperor of the whole Roman Empire. Through a series of successive military campaigns, Constantine conquers and consolidates the entire Roman Empire under his sole Emperorship, moves the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople, and ends Roman persecution of Christianity as the result of his own conversion to the Christian faith.

325 AD The Council of Nicaea
Constantine, at the request of his theological advisor Hosius of Cordoba (Spain), convenes the Council of Nicaea (located at current day Iznik, Turkey). The council was attended by approximately 350 Bishops from throughout the entire Roman Empire and from outside of the Empire. Key leaders that powerfully influenced the outcome of the Council were Alexander of Alexandria, Egypt, and one of his Deacons, the 22-year-old Athanasius, who spent the rest of his life defending and improving upon the original creed produced at the Nicaea Council.

Theological Issues Addressed at the Council of Nicaea

The primary theological issue being addressed by the council was Arius' line of reasoning about the nature of Christ. Whether Christ was the same in essence as God (and therefore God himself) or a created being and not the same in essence as God. His logic was heavily influenced by the Platonic philosophy that also influenced the theology of Origen.

Arius asked whether there was once when there was not the Son, and therefore whether the Son was eternal or not. He reasoned that the Son was not before he was begotten and if there was once when the Son was not, then the Son was a creature (created). To Arius begotten = created. The issue was exacerbated by the word begotten in Greek. There are two almost identical words in Greek that deal with concepts of being. The first is gennetos - "having been begotten" and the second genetos - "having come into existence."

The other theological issue dealt with by the council concerned the modus operandi of salvation (how one was saved). Was salvation essentially man ascending to God through his efforts within the faith or was salvation based upon God descending from heaven through incarnation to save man? The Arian position was that since Christ was a creature and part of creation, then man, by following Christ as a way-shower, ascended to God.

The Arian Heresy

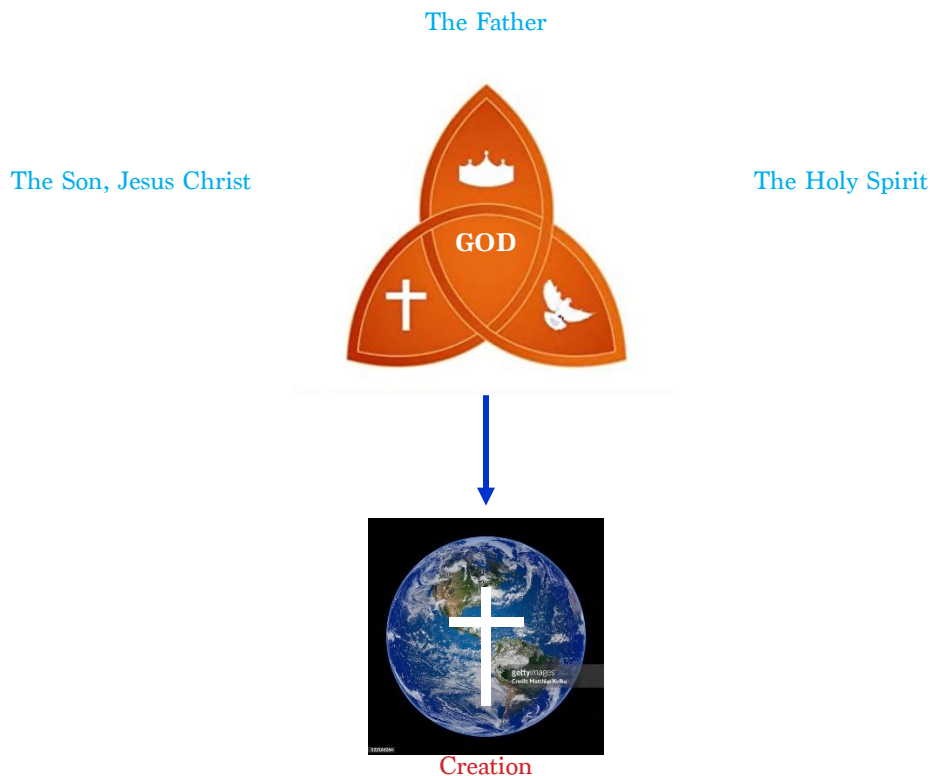


The Council's response to Arius' position was definitive and universal. Arianism was ruled a heresy and on both theological issues. The creed finalized at Nicaea was specifically addressing the Arian Heresy and contained a detailed paragraph that is not included in today's Nicene Creed anathematizing (separating from the church) anyone who held the Arian belief.

Christian Affirmations, What We Believe...

The Christian doctrine of the nature of God is that the Son and the Spirit must be just as fully and equally God as the Father is. Otherwise, it would not be God who came down to save us, and we would be left with the impossible task of saving ourselves.

Additionally, the Son really had to come down through the incarnation. Otherwise, we would again be left with the impossible task of rising-up or ascending to God on our own. The Christian Faith is anchored in the belief that God acted in sending His Son from heaven into creation through incarnation to save man and that this work of salvation is entirely accomplished by God in Jesus Christ through the cross.



The Creed of the Council of Nicaea

We believe in **one God and Father** All Governing, creator of all things visible and invisible.

And in **one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God**, begotten from the Father as only begotten, that is, from the *ousia* (*essence*) of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, *homoousios* (*of the same essence*) with the Father, through whom all things came into being, both in heaven and in earth;

Who for us men and for our salvation **came down and was incarnate, becoming human.**

He suffered and the third day he rose and ascended into the heavens. And will come to judge both the living and the dead.

And [we believe] in **the Holy Spirit.**

But, those who say, once He was not, or He was not before his generation, or became to be out of nothing, or who assert that He, The Son of God, is of a different *hypostasis* or *ousia* (*essence*), or that he is a creature, or changeable, or mutable, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.

56 Additional Years of Dispute, 325 - 381 AD

The church-wide acceptance of the Creed of Nicaea sets a precedence for creed writing but the use of Greek philosophical terms, specifically the words *homoousia* and *hypostasis*, led to rising suspicions about the Creed of Nicaea in its adoption of philosophic rather than Biblical language.

ousia = substance or essence

homoousios = of the same substance or essence “consubstantial” or “coessential” or “one in being”

**hypostasis* = a synonym of *ousia*, the underlying substance that made something what it was

The bishops comprising the Council of Nicaea in 325 were not unaware of the challenge of using non-biblical language in a creedal statement and were purposeful with the inclusion of *ousia* (*essence*), *homoousios* (*same essence*), and *hypostasis* (*as a synonym of ousia as essence*). They strongly believed that if they did not use the same philosophic language that was used in developing the Arian position, they would leave the door open for future confusion and error. Unfortunately, the meaning of the word *hypostasis* changed dramatically in usage over the course of the 4th Century and was later understood as referring to *the concrete manifestation of the underlying substance - more in the sense of “a person” than a “substance.” This issue led to the writing of other local creeds that avoided the use of philosophic terms. Three examples are:

341 AD The Dedication Creed, written in Antioch, modern day Syria.

343 AD The Western Creed of Sardica, written in what is today Sophia, Bulgaria.

344 AD The Macrostich or Long-Lined Creed, written in Antioch, modern day Syria.

330s AD The Sabellianism/Modalism/Monarchianism Heresy

An additional challenge arose concerning the nature of God with the heresy of Sabellianism, also known as Modalism or Monarchianism, that affirmed a single person of God, called the Son-Father, who manifested in different ways or modes over time but did not have independent existences as distinct persons.

Political Pressure on the Church

337 AD Emperor Constantine dies.

The Roman Empire is left to Constantine's 3 Sons: Constantine II (ruled Britain and Gaul), Constans (ruled Italy and the Balkans), and Constantius (ruled the eastern portion of the empire).

340 AD Constantine II is killed in a military campaign and the empire is split into east and west ruled by Constans and Constantius

350 AD Constans, a supporter of the Creed of Nicaea, is assassinated, leaving the whole empire under the rule of Constantius.

357 AD Anti-Nicene position becomes imperial policy.

A small group of Bishops in Sirmium (modern Serbia) issue a creed, supported by Constantius, who supported the anti-Nicene position, that prohibited the use of essence language and explicitly stated that the Son was subordinate to the Father. Constantius aggressively championed this position in a campaign to coerce acceptance across all the churches within the empire.

The elevation of Christianity as the dominant religion within the Roman Empire did not come without a price. The emperor held the power to banish and reinstate the bishops of the church, which often occurred for political reasons that were divorced from church authority or consensus. Church leadership were at the mercy of the emperor.

361 AD Constantius dies, and his nephew Julian the Apostate becomes emperor.

Julian renounces Christianity for Paganism and sought to sow discord within the church by reinstating all the bishops that had been banished regardless of their theological position. The collective political and internal pressures compel Athanasius to decisively deal with the emerging challenges to the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith.

362 AD Athanasius convenes the Council of Alexandria.

The Council of Alexandria was convened by Athanasius who brought together the groups of bishops that had different understandings of the meanings of the Greek philosophic terms included in the Creed of Nicaea. The Eastern Bishops still held to the original definition of hypostasis as a synonym with ousia, both meaning essence or one hypostasis in God, while others understood hypostasis to mean 'person,' indicating three hypostaseis or persons in God.

Athanasius encouraged the use of both terms in the expression "three hypostaseis in one ousia" (three persons and one essence), which was accepted by all parties. He was also able to reaffirm the use of the term homoousios as the standard way to profess the Sons equality with the Father. And finally, Athanasius realized and called for the need of adding creedal language about the Holy Spirit.

373 AD Athanasius dies.

379 AD Theodosius I comes to power.

While the western portion of the empire was pro-Nicene, anti-Nicene imperial policy continued in the east until the 370s when Theodosius I, a Nicene, gained control of the eastern empire in 379. Theodosius enforced the Nicene faith throughout the eastern empire and installed Gregory of Nazianzus as Bishop of Constantinople who then called for the convening of the Council of Constantinople.

380 AD Gregory of Nazianzus (Gegory the Theologian) becomes Bishop of Constantinople.

381 AD Council of Constantinople

It was through the work done at the Council of Constantinople that the Nicene Creed used today was established. The Council did not publish a new creed but reaffirmed the Nicene faith as expressed in the creed established by the Council of Nicaea in 325. Additionally, the council addressed the issue brought up by Athanasius at the Council of Alexandria in 362 and the full deity of the Holy Spirit was proclaimed. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed does not emerge in extant literature until 451, seventy years later. Below is the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed with the original language in black font and the additions in boldened, blue font.

451 AD The Nicene-Constantinopolitan (Today's) Creed

We believe in one God and Father All Governing, creator of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the **only begotten** Son of God, begotten from the Father **before all time**, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, homoousios with the Father, through whom all things came into being;

Who for us men and for our salvation came down **from heaven** and was incarnate **by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became** human.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures; and ascended **to** heaven, **and sits on the right hand of the Father** and will come **again with glory** to judge the living and the dead. **And his kingdom shall have no end.**

And in the Holy Spirit, **The Lord and life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father, who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, Who spoke through the prophets;**

And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

ANGLICAN THEOLOGY: Thirty Nine Articles of Religion

Article Two: Of the Word or Son of God, which was made very Man. The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, *took Man's nature* in the womb of the blessed Virgin, *of her substance*: so that *two whole and perfect natures*, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were *joined together in one Person, never to be divided*, whereof is one Christ, *very God, and very Man*; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.¹⁴ (Emphasis added)

CONCLUSION: The Chalcedonian Definition serves as a way (not the only way) to express the truth that God the Son personally came down and became a man so that he, the Son, could live, die, and be raised as a man for our salvation. The Definition was never meant to stand on the level of the Nicene Creed, let alone on the level of Scripture, but was intended as an explanation of the Son's "coming down" enshrined at the center of the creed. Although not universally accepted by all Christians, the Chalcedonian Definition was an attempt to explain and proclaim the mystery of the incarnation and the nature and person of a divine Redeemer who took on humanity for us and for our salvation.¹⁵

CHALCEDONIAN DEFINITION IN THE PROGRESSION OF ECUMENICAL COUNCILS:

<u>Council (Year)</u>	<u>Heresy/Issues Addressed</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Summary</u>
• Nicaea (325)	Arianism	Original Nicene Creed	Declared Christ is "homoousios" with the Father (of the same substance as the Father)
• Constantinople (381)	Arianism & Macedonianism	Revised the Nicene Creed	Declared Christ is "born of the Father before all time"
• Ephesus (431)	Nestorianism & Pelagianism	Reaffirmed the Nicene Creed	Proclaimed Mary as the Theotokos ("God-bearer")
• Chalcedon (451)	Eutychian doctrine of Monophysitism	Chalcedonian Definition	Described and affirmed the hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ, human and divine
• Constantinople (553)	Nestorian issues & Origenism	Further clarified the Chalcedonian Definition	Further clarified what it meant for God's eternal Son to come down and possess a human will through which he could bring healing
• Constantinople (680-81)	Monothelism & Monoenergism	Further clarified the Chalcedonian Definition	Rejected the concept of a single energy or will in Christ, recognizing that Christ lived in two ways at once; that his <i>human</i> submission to the divine will was a crucial part of his obedience by which he accomplished our salvation.
• Nicaea (787)	Repudiated Iconoclasm		Restored the veneration of icons

Quicumque Vult,¹ commonly called **The Creed of Saint Athanasius**

Athanasius was the preeminent champion of the orthodox, Trinitarian theology that was defined at the Council of Nicea in a.d. 325, where the Council adopted a doctrinal statement--now called the Nicene Creed--affirming Christ's deity. The Athanasian Creed was probably not composed until the Eighth Century, long after Athanasius's death in a.d. 373, but the creed is associated with Athanasius because it reflects his teaching. The Athanasian Creed is one of the three ancient "ecumenical creeds" composed in the first, undivided millennium of the Christian Church. It is a product not of Eastern Orthodoxy but of the West, where it is affirmed by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike.

All three of the main branches of Protestant Christianity affirm this creed: The Lutheran "Formula of Concord" of 1576 (Epitome, ¶ II) states, "In the primitive Church symbols were composed . . . (such as are the APOSTLES', the NICENE, and the ATHANASIAN CREEDS): we publicly profess that we embrace them." The Reformed (or "Calvinist") "French Confession of Faith" of 1559, prepared by Calvin himself and a pupil (De Chandieu), states (in Art. V), "We confess the three creeds, to wit: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian, because they are in accordance with the Word of God." The Anglican "Thirty-Nine Articles" of 1562 include an article VIII ("Of the Three Creeds"), which states, "The Three Creeds, [the] 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." See also, to the same effect, ACNA's 2019 BCP, p. 767, ¶ 4.

The Athanasian Creed is used not often in public worship (but sometimes on Trinity Sunday). It is too long to memorize easily; it is theologically complex, and employs terms from Aristotelian logic; and it has a severe dogmatic tone. (See, e.g., verses 1-2, 28-29, 44.) But this creed is historically important, is authoritative in our Anglican tradition, and is worthy of study and reflection.

¹The title *Quicumque Vult* is Latin for "Whosoever will," the opening words of the creed.

1. WHOSEVER WILL BE SAVED, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic¹ faith.²
2. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.³
3. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity,
4. Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.⁴
5. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.⁵

¹The word "catholic" here is not the phrase "Roman Catholic"; rather, in this context the word "catholic" means *universal* or *world-wide*. The true catholic Christian Church is the spiritual body--the Body of Christ--that includes all Christians, from all times and in all places (see 1 Cor. 10, 12; Eph. 1:22-23, 2:19-22, 4:4-16), and the truly catholic Christian faith is the authentic teaching of Christ to His Apostles, handed down by them through "faithful men" (2 Tim. 2:2), and professed by all true Christians everywhere.

²Salvation by faith is a resounding theme of the Scriptures. See, e.g., Mark 16:16 ("He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned"); Acts 15:9, 26:18; Romans 1:17 ("the just shall live by faith"), 3:22-31, 4:9-16, 5:1 ("justified by faith"), 9:30-32; Gal. 2:16, 3:8-11, 3:24-26; Eph. 2:8 ("You have been saved through faith"); Php. 3:9; 1 Peter 1:5.

³Hebrews 3:18-19 ("they were not able to enter because of unbelief"), 11:6 ("without faith it is impossible to please Him"). This proper insistence on holding the true, orthodox faith must not be understood to require a lofty intellect. Rather, to have saving faith is to "receive the kingdom of God [like a child]" (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17). See also Matt. 18:3; Psalm 131:2; 1 Peter 2:2.

⁴As these Aristotelian philosophical terms are used in this context, the *substance* of something is its essential nature; and a *person* is "an individual substance of a rational nature." Thus, the three members of the Trinity are an undivided divine "substance"--*i.e.*, the one and only God--so that, as the Nicene Creed says, the Son is "of one *substance* with the Father"; but the Father, Son, and Spirit are each distinct and un-"confounded" individual "Persons".

⁵Luke 3:22 (Father, Son, and Spirit distinctly present at Jesus' baptism); Acts 7:56 (Father and Son appear distinctly to Stephen); Matt. 28:19 ("baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"); 2 Cor. 13:14 ("The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit"); Eph. 2:18 ("through Him [Christ] we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father"); 1 Peter 1:1-2 ("chosen according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ").

6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.¹
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.²
8. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated.³
9. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.⁴
10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.⁵
11. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.⁶
12. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

¹John 17:5 (“glory which [the Son] had with [the Father] before the world was”); Hebrews 1:3 (the Son “is the radiance of [the Father’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature”); 1 Peter 4:14 (“the Spirit of glory and of God”).

²As to the Son’s equality with the Father, see John 10:30 (“I and the father are one”); 14:9 (“He who has seen me has seen the Father”). The Holy Spirit is identified with both Father and Son; see, e.g., Matt. 10:20 (“the Spirit of your Father”); Romans 8:9 (“the Spirit of God . . . the Spirit of Christ”); Gal. 4:6 (“God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son”); Php. 1:19 (“the Spirit of Jesus Christ”); 1 Peter 1:11 (“the Spirit of Christ”).

³Psalms 90:2 (“Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God”); Psalm 33:6 (“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath [or “Spirit”] of His mouth all their host”); John 1:3 (“part from Him [“the Word,” the Son] nothing came into being that had come into being”); Col. 1:16-17 (“by Him [the Son] all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist”).

⁴“Incomprehensible” (Latin *immensus*) here means unmeasured or unlimited. See 1 Kings 8:27 (“heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee”); Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:23-24 (“Do I not fill the heavens and the earth”).

⁵Isaiah 63:16 (“Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old”); John 1:2 (“He [“the Word,” the Son] was in the beginning with God”); Hebrews 9:14 (“the eternal Spirit”).

⁶1 Tim. 1:17 (“the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God”); 6:15-16 (“the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality”).

13. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.
14. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.²
15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.³
16. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.⁴
17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.⁵
18. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.⁶
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person⁷ by himself to be both God and Lord,

¹2 Cor. 6:18 (“I will be a Father to you, . . . says the Lord Almighty”); Rev. 1:8 (“I [the Son] am the Alpha and Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty”); Job 33:4 (“the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath [or “Spirit”] of the Almighty gives me life”).

²Exodus 15:11; Psalm 72:18 (the Lord God, . . . who alone works wonders”); Psalm 136:4; 1 Tim. 6:15-16.

³As to the Father’s deity, see Psalm 89:26; John 6:27, 20:17; Romans 1:7, 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:3, 8:6 (“there is but one God, the Father”); 15:24; 2 Cor. 1:2-3; Gal. 1:1-4; Eph. 1:2-3, 1:17, 4:6, 6:23; Php. 2:11; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1. As to the Son’s deity, see Isaiah 9:6 (“mighty God”); John 1:1 (“the Word was God”), 12:39-41 (after quoting Isaiah 6:10: “These things Isaiah said, because He saw His glory, and He spoke of Him”); 20:28 (“Thomas . . . said to Him, My Lord and my God!”); Romans 9:5 (“Christ . . . who is over all, God blessed forever”); Php. 2:6 (“He existed in the form of God”); Hebrews 1:8 (“But of the Son He [the Father] says, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever’”; quoting Psalm 45:6); 1 John 5:20 (“This is the true God”). As to the Spirit’s deity, see Acts 5:3-4 (“why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? . . . You have not lied to men, but to God”), and compare 1 Cor. 6:19 (“Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit”) with 2 Cor. 6:16 (“we are the temple of the living God”).

⁴Deut. 6:4 (“The Lord is our God, the Lord is one”); Romans 3:30 (“God . . . is one”); Eph. 4:6 (“one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all”); 1 Tim. 2:5 (“For there is one God”); James 2:19.

⁵Matt. 11:25 (“I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth”); 1 Cor. 8:6 (“one Lord, Jesus Christ”); Php. 2:11 (“Jesus Christ is Lord”); 2 Cor. 3:17 (“the Lord is the Spirit”).

⁶Mark 12:29 (“The Lord our God is one Lord”); quoting Deut. 6:4; Eph. 4:4-5 (“There is . . . one Lord”).

⁷That is, each divine Person in the Trinity is to be so acknowledged.

20. So are we forbidden by the catholic¹ religion, to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.²
21. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.³
23. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.⁴
24. So there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.⁵
25. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another, none is greater, or less than another;
26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.⁶

¹As to the meaning of "catholic" in this context, see footnote 1 in verse 1.

²1 Cor. 8:5-6 ("For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him").

³John 1:14-18 ("the only begotten from the Father").

⁴John 15:26 ("the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father"). Like the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed teaches the so-called "double procession" of the Spirit--*i.e.*, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*.

Western theologians, centered in Rome, taught the double procession and added the phrase *and the Son* (Latin *filioque*) to the Nicene Creed, apparently on the basis of Scriptural teaching that the Spirit is *sent* by both the Father and the Son (see John 15:26 ("I will send [the Helper] to you"); Gal. 4:6). They believed that to teach otherwise was to deny the Son's equality with the Father and to impugn the Son's deity. Eastern Orthodox theologians, centered in Constantinople, taught (and still teach) the single procession of the Spirit from the Father only, denying the double procession both on Scriptural grounds and on the basis that the Creed--adopted, supplemented, and ratified at ecumenical councils of the world's Christian bishops--could not be modified on the sole authority of the Bishop of Rome without a Church council.

⁵Eph. 4:6 ("one God and Father of all"); John 1:14, 18, 3:16 ("only begotten Son"); Eph. 4:4 ("one Spirit").

⁶Proverbs 8:22-31; John 1:2 ("He [the "Word", the Son] was in the beginning with God"), 17:5 ("the glory which I [the Son] had with Thee [the Father] before the world was"); 17:24 ("Thou didst love me before the foundation of the world").

27. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.
28. He therefore that will be saved, let him think thus of the Trinity.

29. FURTHERMORE, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.²

30. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;³

31. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of his Mother, born in the world;⁴

32. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.⁵

33. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood;

¹John 4:23 ("the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth"); Matt. 14:33 (the disciples "worshiped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!";) Php. 3:3 ("worship in the Spirit of God").

²John 3:18 ("he who does not believe has been judged already"), 8:24 ("unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins"); Acts 16:31 ("Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved"); 1 John 4:2-3, 5:1, 5:12, 2 John 9 ("Anyone who . . . does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God").

³As to Christ's being "the Son of God", see Matt. 16:16; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 1:34, 1:49, 3:18, 10:36, 11:27, 20:31; Acts 9:20; 2 Cor. 1:19; Hebrews 4:14; 1 John 4:15. As to Christ's being "God", see verse 15. As to Christ's being "man", see Acts 2:22; Romans 5:15; 1 Cor. 15:21, 15:47; Php. 2:8; 1 Tim. 2:5. The title "Son of man", which Jesus applied to Himself, appears 30 times in the Gospel according to Matt.

⁴As to Christ's being born of a human mother, see Isaiah 7:14 ("a virgin will be with child and bear a son"); 9:6; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-2:7; Romans 1:3 ("born of a descendant of David"); 9:5; Gal. 4:4 ("born of a woman").

⁵As to Christ's soul, see Isaiah 53:10; Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34; John 12:27. As to Christ's flesh, see Luke 24:39 ("a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have"); Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14 ("He Himself likewise also partook of . . . flesh and blood"); 1 Pet. 4:1.

34. Who, although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ.
 35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by taking of the Manhood into God;²
 36. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.³
 37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;
 38. Who suffered⁴ for our salvation,⁵ descended into hell,⁶ rose again the third day from the dead.
 39. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty,⁸
 40. From whence he will come to judge the quick and the dead.⁹

¹ 1 Cor. 8:6 ("one Lord Jesus Christ").

² John 1:14 ("the Word became flesh"); Php. 2:6-7 ("although He existed in the form of God, . . . [He took] the form of a bondservant, [and was] made in the likeness of men"); Hebrews 2:14.

³ As to "person" and "substance", see footnote 4 in verse 4. The "unity" of Christ's "person" is an essential fact of the Incarnation: The person of God did not merely co-exist with a separate human person in the body of Jesus; rather, God Himself really became man in the single person of Jesus Christ. At the same time, we do not blend or "confuse" the divine "substance" and the human "substance" in Christ by making Him a half-divine, half-human demi-god; rather, the Son remained God, fully and undiluted, even as He became fully man.

⁴ Matt. 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19.

⁵ Isaiah 53:3-6; Matt. 20:28, 26:28; Acts 26:22-23; Romans 3:25, 4:25, 5:8-10; 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7, 5:2; Col. 1:20-22, 2:13-15; Hebrews 5:7-10, 7:27, 9:12, 9:26-28, 10:12; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18; 1 John 1:7, 2:2.

⁶ Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27; Eph. 4:8-10; 1 Peter 3:18-19. In this context, "hell" does not mean the place of punishment for the damned, but instead means simply the place of departed spirits, like the Hebrew *sheol*.

⁷ Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20; Acts 2:24, 3:15, 4:10, 10:40, 13:30, 17:31, 25:19, 26:23; Romans 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:1-8; Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:10, 4:14; Hebrews 13:20; 2 Tim. 2:8; 1 Peter 1:3; Rev. 1:5, 18.

⁸ Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:6-9, 7:55-56; Eph. 1:20-23, 4:10; Col. 3:1; Hebrews 8:1, 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22.

⁹ Matt. 16:27, 24:30, 25:31-46; Mark 13:26, 14:62; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5; 2 Peter 3:7-10; Jude 14-15; Rev. 1:7-8, 21:12.

41. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies,¹
 42. And shall give account for their own works.²
 43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

44. THIS IS THE CATHOLIC⁴ FAITH, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.⁵

¹ Job 14:13-17, 19:25-27; Daniel 12:2; Matt. 22:23-33; 1 Thess. 4:14-17; Rev. 20:12-13.

² Ecclesiastes 11:9, 12:14 ("God will bring every act to judgment"); Matt. 12:36 (man shall "render account for [every] careless word] in the day of judgment"); Luke 12:42-48; Romans 2:5-10 (God "will render to every man according to his deeds"); 14:12 ("each one of us will give account of himself to God"); 1 Cor. 3:10-17 ("each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it"); 2 Cor. 5:6-11 ("we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"); Gal. 6:7-8 ("whatever a man sows, this he will also reap"); Col. 3:23-25 ("he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality"); 1 Peter 4:5 ("they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead"); Rev. 21:12 ("Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done").

³ John 5:28-29 ("those who did the good deeds [shall come forth] to a resurrection of life, those who committed evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment"); 1 Cor. 6:9-10 ("the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived"); Gal. 5:19-21 ("those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"); Rev. 20:11-15 ("the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds"); 21:8 ("their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone").

⁴ As to the meaning of "catholic" in this context, see footnote 1 in verse 1.

⁵ See footnote 3 in verse 2.