

# THE NICENE CREED - TWO VERSIONS

This creed was recorded at the Council of Nicaea (325 CE) to clarify early Christian beliefs as they were confronted with the Arian heresy. The heretic Arius (ca. 250-336) held that although Jesus was the divine Son of God, he was also created, meaning that he was not eternal alongside God the Father. This posed problems for the orthodox Christian belief in a Trinity that was made of three distinct persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who were also one being, threatening the Son's eternal nature also threatened this unity. These versions of the Nicene Creed reveal how doctrine changed over time to accommodate and clarify changing Christian realities.

## THE FIRST VERSION OF THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, The only-begotten of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten-not made-one in substance with the Father\_ Through Him, all things were made, both those in heaven and those on earth.

For us men and for our salvation, He came down from Heaven, was incarnate, and was made man. He suffered (death) and rose again on the third day. He ascended into Heaven, and He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit.

And anyone who says that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before He was begotten, He was not, or that He was made of things that were not, or that He is of different substance or essence [from the Father], or that He is created, subject to change, or to conversion-the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes him.

## THE FINAL VERSION OF THE NICENE CREED

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

For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day, He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures, 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.

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

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.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. What caused a need for a document of this type, and how was it designed to be used?
2. How do both versions of the creed deal with the specific, if thorny, issue of the Christian Trinity?