

A person without faith is like a blind man. Faith gives man spiritual vision by which he can see and understand the essence of all that surrounds him: how and why everything was created, what is the goal of life, what is right and what is not, and ultimately what one must strive towards.

From earliest times, the Apostolic-period Christians have used the Creed to remind themselves of the principles of the Orthodox Faith. In the ancient church there existed various short creeds. But in the 4th century there appeared false teachings about the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. Thus it became necessary to complete these short creeds and more accurately define the Church's teaching.

The Nicean Creed was composed by the Fathers of the 1st and 2nd Ecumenical Councils.

The Creed  
*I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*

*And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light: true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father; by Whom all things were made: Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man; And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried; And arose again on the third day according to the Scriptures; And ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.*

*And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life; Who proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets. In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, And the life of the age to come. Amen.*

We begin the Creed with «I believe.» This is because the essence of our religious convictions depends not on external experiences but on our acceptance of God-given truths. Surely one cannot prove truths of the spiritual world by any laboratory experiments. These truths belong to the sphere of personal religious experience. The more a person grows in the spiritual life — the more one prays, thinks about God, does good — the more his inner spiritual experience develops, the clearer the religious truths become to him. In this fashion, faith becomes for him a subject of personal experience.

What do we believe in according to the Creed?  
 We believe that God is one fullness of perfection; we believe that He is a perfect spirit, timeless, without beginning, all-powerful and all-wise. God is everywhere, sees all, and knows beforehand when something will happen. He is good beyond measure, just and all-holy. He needs nothing and is the reason for everything that exists.

We believe that God is one in Essence and Trinity in Persons (i.e., the one true God has appeared to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the Trinity, one in Essence and indivisible. The Father is not born and does not proceed from the others. The Son pre-eternally was born of the Father, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father.

We believe that all the Persons of the Holy Trinity are equal in divine perfection, greatness, power, and glory. That is, we believe that the Father is true and perfect God, the Son is true and perfect God, and, the Holy Spirit is true and perfect God. Therefore, in prayers, we simultaneously glorify the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one God.

We believe that the entire visible and invisible world was created by God. In the beginning God created the invisible, great angelic world, otherwise known as Heaven. As stated in the Bible, God created our material or physical world from nothing. This was not done at once, but gradually during periods of time which in the Bible are called «days.» God created the world not out of necessity or need but out of His all-good desire to do so

in order that His other creations might enjoy life. Being Himself endlessly good, God created all things good. Evil appeared in the world from the misuse of free will, with which God has endowed both angels and people. For example, the Devil (Satan) and his demons were at one time angels of God. But they rebelled against their Creator and became demons. They were cast out of Heaven and formed their own kingdom called «hell.» From that moment on, they tempted people to sin and became our enemies and the enemies of our salvation.

We believe that all things are under God's control; that is, he provides for every creature and guides everything

through the prophets. Then in the beginning of the New Testament, He spoke through the Apostles and now lives in the Church of Christ, guiding her pastors and people in the truth.

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ founded the Church on earth for the salvation of all who believe in Him. He sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles on Pentecost. Since that time the Holy Spirit abides in the Church, that grace-filled community or union of believing Orthodox Christians, and preserves her in the purity of Christ's teaching. The grace of the Holy Spirit abides in the Church, cleanses those who repent of sins, helps the believers grow in good deeds, and sanctifies them.

We believe that the Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. She is One because all Orthodox Christians, although belonging to different national, local churches, are one family together with the angels and saints in Heaven. The oneness of the Church depends on oneness of Faith and Grace. The Church is Holy because her faithful children are sanctified by the word of God, prayer, and the Sacraments. The Church is Catholic because what we believe is the same teaching held to be true by all Orthodox Christians, always and everywhere. The Church is called Apostolic because it preserves Apostolic teaching and the Apostolic succession. From ancient times, this Apostolic succession passes on without interruption from Bishop to Bishop in the sacrament of Ordination. The Church will remain of our Lord and Savior until the end of time.

We believe that in the sacrament of Baptism the believer is forgiven all sins. The believer becomes a member of the Church. Access to the other sacraments of salvation becomes available to him at this time. In the sacrament of Chrismation the believer receives the grace of the Holy Spirit. In Confession or Repentance, sins are forgiven. In Holy Communion, offered at the Divine Liturgy, the believer receives the very Body and Blood of Christ. In the sacrament of Matrimony, an inseparable union is created between a man and a woman. In the sacrament of Ordination Deacons, Priests, and Bishops are ordained to serve the Church. In Holy Unction, the healing of physical and spiritual illness is offered.

We believe that before the end of the world Jesus Christ, accompanied by angels, will again

come to the earth in glory. Every person, according to His Word, will resurrect from the dead. A miracle will occur in which the souls of people who have died will return into the bodies which they possessed during their earthly life. All the dead will come to life. During the General Resurrection, the bodies of the saints, both those resurrecting and those still living will be renewed and become spiritualized in the image of the Resurrected Body of Christ. After the resurrection, everyone will appear before the Judgment of Christ, to receive what he is due, according to what he has done when he lived in his body, good or evil. After the Judgment, unrepentant sinners will enter into eternal torments and the righteous into eternal life. This will begin the Kingdom of Christ, which will have no end.

With the one word «Amen» we witness to the fact that we accept and acknowledge with our whole heart this Creed which we confess to be true.

The Creed is read by a Catechumen (one about to receive Baptism) during the sacrament of Baptism. During the Baptism of an infant, the Creed is read by the Sponsor. The Creed is sung at the Liturgy and should be read daily at Morning Prayers. An attentive reading of the Creed greatly strengthens our faith. This happens because the Creed is not just a formal statement of belief but a prayer. When we say «I believe» in a spirit of prayer, along with the other words of the Creed, we enliven and strengthen our Faith in God and in all those truths which are contained in the Creed. This is why it is so important for the Orthodox Christian to recite the Creed daily or at least regularly.

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# THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ORTHODOX FAITH



to a good goal. God loves and looks after us as a mother looks after her child. For this reason nothing bad can befall a person who trusts in God.

We believe that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came down from heaven for our salvation. He came to earth and took on our flesh by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Being God from all eternity, He in the time of King Herod took on our human nature, both soul and body, and is therefore truly God and truly man, or the God-man. In one divine Person He combined two natures, divine and human. These two natures will remain with Him always without change, neither blending nor changing from one into the other.

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, while living on earth, enlightened the world by His teaching, His example, and miracles. He taught people what they should believe and how they should live so that they may inherit eternal life. By His prayers to His Father, His complete obedience to the Father's Will, His sufferings and death, He defeated the devil and redeemed the world from sin and death. By His Resurrection from the dead, He laid the foundation for our resurrection. After His Ascension in the flesh to Heaven, which took place forty days after His Resurrection from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ sat at the right hand of God the Father; that is to say, He received equal power with God the Father and since then together with Him governs the face of the world.

We believe that the Holy Spirit, proceeding from God the Father from the beginning of the world, together with the Father and the Son gives existence to all creation, gives life, and governs all. He is the source of a grace-filled spiritual life, both for angels as well as people, and equally with the Father and the Son is worthy of all glory and worship. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament spoke

