

The Nicene 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 only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.
Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life;
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Nicene Creed, as we know it, is actually the result of two councils. The first, the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) and the second, the Council of Constantinople (AD 381). The two councils were corporate gatherings of leaders throughout the church to settle a century-long debate over the nature of the Trinity. The Nicene Creed is perhaps the most well known creed today because of its attempt to summarize how the church can believe in one God and also say that God is three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). It was the first creed to have universal authority throughout the church and it provided clarifying statements on the language of the Apostles' Creed regarding the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit.



The Nicene Creed was the result of the church's need to articulate an accurate summary of the biblical teaching on the nature of God against false teaching and much misunderstanding surrounding the essence of who God is. For those newer to Christianity, the attention to detail could be seen as unnecessary hair splitting. However, the Bible does not speak of God generically. It speaks of him with intention and specifics—specifics that if missed, will distort our view of God and cause us to worship a God of our own imagination.

To further illustrate the significance of the Trinity for the Christian life, Michael Reeves writes,

“For what makes Christianity absolutely distinct is the identity of our God. *Which* God we worship: *that* is the article of faith that stands before all others. The bedrock of our faith is nothing less than God himself, and every aspect of the gospel—creation, revelation, salvation—is only Christian insofar as it is the creation, revelation, and salvation of *this* God, the triune God. I could believe in the death of a man called Jesus, I could believe in his bodily resurrection, I could believe in a salvation by grace alone; but if I do not believe in this God, then, quite simply, I am not a Christian. And so, because the Christian God is triune, the Trinity is the governing center of all Christian belief, the truth that shapes and beautifies all others. The Trinity is the cockpit of all Christian thinking.”¹

¹ Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, 15-16.

