

# The Nicene Creed

## Introduction

The Nicene Creed, more precisely called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian church in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism.

Arius, whose teachings gave rise to a theological doctrine known as Arianism, among other things, denied the divinity of the Son, the second member of the Trinity.

In response, the church gathered at the council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 with the purpose of defining the nature of God for all of Christianity and eliminating confusion, and controversy within the church. The Council of Nicaea overwhelmingly affirmed the deity and eternity of Jesus Christ and defined the relationship between the Father and the Son as being “of one substance.” It also affirmed the Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three co-equal and co-eternal Persons.

In its present form, this creed goes back originally to the Council of Nicaea (325), with additions by the Council of Constantinople (381). It was accepted in its present form at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but the filioque clause (“and the Son”) was not added until 589.

It consists of three sections—one for each person of the Trinity—and concludes with four statements affirming the universal tenets of the Christian gospel.

The Nicene Creed remains a standard of Trinitarian orthodoxy.

**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 living 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<sup>1</sup> 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.**

<sup>1</sup> “Catholic” means universal; that is, there is one church across all times, places, and peoples (Belgic Confession, art. 27; Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 54).