

## **Councils, Confessions, Creeds, and Catechisms**

### **The Apostles Creed**

#### Historical context:

During the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and early parts of the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries the persecution of the church produced a regrettable shift, the Roman Catholic Church. It evolved naturally to support the growing church in the midst of its trials. It is responsible for four important matters between 100 A.D. and 350 A.D.

- 1) The role of the bishop in Rome, or the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \* The bishopric quickly grew in importance in each church during persecution.
  - \* The bishop of Rome was soon identified as the prominent of all bishops: Peter and Paul were both martyred in Rome. The center of the empire was Rome. Clément, Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Cyprian all emphasized the bishop of Rome. The apostolic authority rested upon only the bishop of Rome.
  - \* The leadership of a single bishop gave the growing church stability and focus.
- 2) The determination of the actual Canon, or the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \* Willingness to be martyred depended heavily on a credible Canon.
  - \* Apostolic authority was fading, and confidence needed a source.
  - \* Each local church was collecting and evaluating writings long before councils made their statements of approval.
  - \* Question: If the Catholic Church was leading the charge to determine which books were to be included, then why isn't the Apocrypha included?  
Answer: In the early years, the books of the Apocrypha were deemed at the very least to have inconclusive evidence for inclusion, and at the very worst, to be in direct disagreement with apostolic doctrine. They were not even recognized by the Roman Catholic Church until 1546 at the Council of Trent.
- 3) The development of strict liturgy, or the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \* Early on were left to the administration of bishops only.
  - \* Communion soon came to be viewed as a sacrifice to God. Augustine taught the basic tenets of transubstantiation very early. The making of bread into the body of Christ, and the wine into His blood was only at the eucharist prayer (which further elevated the office of the bishop).
  - \* Baptism was administered usually only twice a year, Easter and Pentecost. Candidates were placed in a sort of formal probationary period called a catechumen. Infants began to be recognized as legitimate candidates. The sick were baptized as a suspected means of healing.
- 4) The establishment of a basic theology, or the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \* It was test for orthodoxy.
  - \* It was a basis for fellowship.
  - \* It was a convenient summary of doctrine.
  - \* It was originally a baptismal creed: Expressing faith in Christ and the doctrine He taught, Reassuring the church of agreement with basic doctrine on the Trinity.

Content:

Paragraph 1 – A statement on God the Father

He is Almighty.

He is Maker of heaven and earth.

Paragraph 2 – A statement on Jesus Christ, God the Son

He is the only begotten Son of the Father.

He is our Lord.

He is born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered at the command and approval of Pontius Pilate.

He was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

He rose back to life from death.

He ascended into heaven (the presumed location of the Father)

He sits at the right hand of the Father.

He will return to judge in finality.

Paragraph 3 – A statement on additional beliefs

The existence and work of the Holy Spirit.

The holy catholic (*universal*) church.

The communion (*fellowship in unity*) of the saints.

The forgiveness of sins.

The resurrection of the body.

The everlasting life awaiting us.

## The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord;  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
Born of the Virgin Mary,  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,

And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
From there he shall come again to judge the living and the dead.

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