

The Creeds of the Faith Part 4

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[0 : 00] Yeah, maybe I will, Tom. Okay, team, why don't we make a go of it?

What's in a name? At the very heart of the Christian faith is, arguably, not an ethical way of living in the world, though this is important, nor even a set of doctrines, as vital as this is also, but perhaps most fundamentally, a name.

As Peter proclaimed to the Jewish crowd, there is no other name under heaven given by which we are saved. Acts 4.12 As new converts responded to Christ, they took his name, declaring their allegiance to the one whose name they now would bear.

I am Christ's. I belong to Christ. I am a Christian. I believe in his name. But what did it mean to believe in his name?

What was in that name in which, that is to say, in whom we believe? And the creeds emerged in answer to that question.

[1 : 31] Perhaps the first proto-creed was Peter's answer to the question Jesus posed at Caesarea Philippi. Who do you say that I am?

You are the Christ. The son of the living God. And especially in the name was the relation of Jesus to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Lord and his saving arm. As the apostle to the Gentiles preached to the Romans, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

And fundamental to the name was these divine relationships. What we only later came to describe as Trinitarian relationships.

Ring in the first Christians' ears was Jesus' final charge at his ascension to make disciples across the whole world, baptizing them in the name, note the singular, the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[2 : 42] So much indeed was in this name into which Christians believed, into which they were baptized, and to which they came to belong.

And faith, like all strong conviction, has a desire to utter itself before others. As the Master says, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

I believe, therefore I spoke out, echoes the apostle in 2 Corinthians 4. Whether this was in the marketplace, or at the baptismal pool, whether in answer to the puzzled neighbor's query, who are you?

Or perhaps, whose are you? Or in answer to the question, put the catechumens at the font, the baptismal font. Christian, in whom do you believe?

The language of creedal confession came forth. Among these creedal confessions, it sprang up where the gospel of Christ was responded to in faith and allegiance, earliest, to gain wide formal recognition, and use, also, in the West, that is, was the Apostles' Creed.

[4 : 11] It took that name from the early belief that it had been composed by the Twelve Apostles themselves, each contributing one particular phrase.

This, it was said, attested to the apostolic unity of conviction before they all parted to go to the ends of the earth, spreading the good news.

Thus, Peter was said to have supplied the opening phrase, I believe in God the Father Almighty. Then he handed the composition over to Andrew, who added, and in Jesus Christ, his only son.

James then added, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. And so on, through all the Twelve Apostles until Matthias concluded with, life everlasting.

Okay, so, that was, that was the story as they had understood it. But before we continue this story, let's hear the Apostles' Creed that it be fresh in our minds as we make some observations.

[5 : 25] So why don't we recite it together, if you feel comfortable, if, for you, reciting it before studying it is kind of like signing a document before you've read it, you know, lawyers would warn us against such a thing.

Well, please don't feel any embarrassment and refraining or any pressure to participate. But let's, if you, you have on your handout two, one is called the Old Roman form, the Old Rome, the earliest one, and then the second is called T from Textus Receptus.

That is the Received form. That's the one that we all say around the world today. So, why don't we say together, reading from the Received form that developed in the 8th century.

Now, why don't we say it together, if you feel comfortable. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

He descended into hell. The third day, he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.

[6 : 51] Whence he will come 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. Here it was. Well, before we delve into particulars, what I wonder, if you're not already familiar with the Creed, I wonder what your first general impressions are.

Any thoughts? Any first general impressions? questions? What strikes you about it? First things first. First things first.

Yeah. Deals with... There you go. That's right. Really fundamental. Let's get right out of the gate with the most important things, the primary things, the fundamentals.

and see that they're pretty similar. Yeah, we'll come... Similar. Yeah, yeah, we'll come, rather, to the comparison in just a minute. Yeah, yeah, that's, yeah, they are very similar.

[7 : 57] Yeah, yeah, Richard. For me, these words are very familiar since I've recited them from childhood having been brought up in the Church of Rome. Yes, okay, so very, very familiar, yeah.

And is that, is that familiarity a comfort to you? Is that, is that, is it, is it, yeah, yeah, mostly, okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

I just find it grounding. Grounding. Because I'm not in a church that repeats the Creed often. There's something, yeah, anchoring.

Yeah, yeah. There, there is, it's, you know, that it has been uttered with conviction by people across cultural differences of time and place.

Dude, don't they, it kind of gives it a Gibraltar-like character. Amid so much that ebbs and flows in life that rises and falls, emerges and passes away, this has endured the tides and time and taste, tides of time and taste.

- [9 : 05] Yeah, that it is, I feel, I feel that way too. It's grounded in history. Yeah, that's, yeah. Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate, there you go. Yeah, we'll comment about that in a little bit. Yeah, yeah.
- Yeah, I remember upon hearing someone say, Pontius Pilate gets a place in the Creed. It's like entering a big ballroom and you see a dog. Yeah. Pontius Pilate is a story.
- Yeah, that's right. Anchored in history. That's right. Yeah, Matt? A little bit said about the Father and then the Jesus section just goes on and on and on and the Holy Spirit kind of added is, I guess we have to...
- Yeah, yeah, yeah, isn't that interesting? Right, right. So the centerpiece, Jesus, that God's great gift to us is salvation. He is the storehouse of all the treasury that is ours as believers.
- yeah, yeah. Clearly not made up by Pentecostals. Yeah, the language kind of in its tersely concentrated expression just kind of has a lapidary quality, doesn't it?
- [10 : 15] It's just kind of like what you'd describe on a tombstone. Just nice, terse, short phrases. I love that quality about it. And even the rhythmic pleasing cadences kind of have the effect upon the ear that retains it as like a smooth stone in the hand that holds it.
- You ever walk along a beach, you pick up a stone and you just want to keep holding it because it's just so smooth. Same sort of thing to get it to our ear. And in the phrase of Philip Schaaf, one of the great church historians, do you not catch what he calls the scent of antiquity?
- And perhaps you need not be an historian to even say the fragrance of antiquity. Then it goes back so far that Christians were saying this centuries and centuries ago and we still feel comfortable saying it now.
- Those are pretty special things. Pretty special things. And it's all in order. God, Creator, Jesus, Lord, Holy Spirit, Virgin Mary, the life of Christ.
- It's not I believe in God the Father is the last thing. It's the first thing. Yeah. In order. Yeah. It's as if it probably took its skeletal shape which we're going to find in a moment from Jesus when he said go into all the world and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- [11 : 49] So that's kind of the skeletal outline. It just expands each one a little bit. So absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. Well, let's look a little bit at the history. How did the Apostles' Creed emerge and develop into its final received form?
- Okay. So the one the T down at the bottom there, the bigger one, that's called the received form. That's the Textus Receptus.
- Okay. But then the first one that you have there, that's the earliest one. That's called the Old Roman Symbol or R as it's referred to. So we want to know how the Apostles' Creed emerged and developed into its final form.
- How did you get from that first one that we have there on your paper to the bottom one? The upper one to the bottom one. Well, I think we may safely say that the origin of the Apostles' Creed as the collective creation of the twelve apostles themselves, yeah, I think that's probably fictional.
- You know, though this legend won near universal acceptance down through the Middle Ages, I think many and entrenchant are the arguments against it.
- [13 : 03] First, there's, it seems to me, the intrinsic improbability of such a collective construction of something like a creed. You know, when it comes to a creed, experience tells us that even if a committee is tasked of generating the thing, usually it's fundamentally the work of a single mind, even if other people edit it.

You know, that's just kind of how these things work historically. besides, there's no trace at all of the origin story among the apostolics of the earliest, those people who are alive during the time, the apostles, those Christians, and the Nicene fathers.

And had they known of such a story, it would be hard to imagine, it seems to me, they're superseding this creed. if they really thought, hey, this thing came from the apostles, it would have been hard to imagine that they would have felt at liberty to just kind of make up their own.

They might have added a few things, but to make it up. So, you know, can you imagine the, yeah, yeah, not bad apostles, but I think I like mine better, we'll just choose this mine.

No, probably not. Probably not. No, it seems that the origin of what in its primitive form came to be known as the Apostles' Creed, was originally the old catechetical creed used for instructing baptismal candidates in the Church of Rome.

[14 : 34] And in its simple structure we see that it goes all the way back to the command of Jesus to baptize disciples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Raul has noticed that structure.

So, how did it develop then from that first baptismal creed? Well, over time, in different places, a few phrases were added to the core, usually to exclude errors that were gaining currency, or to try to affirm some truth in need of reinforcement.

Notably, these editions had their origin outside of Rome, in some of the outskirts of the spread of the gospel up in Europe.

But, they were recognized back in Rome as true to the faith and were assimilated to give us the final form of the Apostles' Creed, what we now call the Textus Receptus, the received text.

So, we'll come to these accruals in a moment, but first let's look at the creedal affirmations present in the first form, the old Roman symbol, and consider something of their meaning.

[15 : 54] So, we're looking at the top one now, just going to walk down through that and make a couple observations. So, go ahead and glance down at that top one. So, I believe in God the Father Almighty.

So, here, while God as Father would have been for the early Christians primarily in reference to the Son, he was the Father of the Son, his relation to Jesus, and Tom talked about how important that was in the last session, it is clear from their writings that it was also taken to be in relation to us, our Father.

And that was a thought that was cherished as very precious to the early Christians. The term Almighty Almighty, well, it comes to us in translation from the Latin omnipotentum, and it's understandable, omnipotent, well, that seems to be Almighty would be a good translation for omnipotent, but it's likely that the original Roman symbol was written in Greek first, because the earliest church in Rome, even though there were many Romans, they would have been Greek-speaking Romans, so historians think that probably the original was in Greek, and there the term is from a term called Ponto Krator, which is a very active word, conveying not just a capacity, but an actualization of capacity.

Ponto, all things Krator, ruler. So really what's conveyed here is, we might say, all-rueling. I believe in God the Father, all-rueling, or all-sovereign.

And what an incomparable comfort, incomparable comfort it is to know that God our Father is sovereign in all things. So as you hear that Almighty, think of it also in the fuller sense of all-sovereign, sovereign over all things.

[18 : 07] And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord. You know what? I'm going to skip over that because Tom did such a good job on that. The Nicene Creed does a lot of work there.

But then notice, there follows an expansion on Jesus Christ, who was born of the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, was buried.

The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. From whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Now, it's likely that some of this enlargement would have been connected with counterattack, what we might think of as counterattack.

That is, if someone made some sort of claim that was heretical, we'd have to say, as Orthodox, no, that's not right, in fact, that's consequentially wrong, this is the truth instead, that's not the case, this is rather the case.

So you would get phrases that would be kind of filled out to say, no, no, no, that's cordoned off, don't go there, that would be wrong belief.

[19 : 23] one of the earliest heresies to afflict the church, to challenge the church, was called docetism. Docetism, they held that Christ's physical body was not real, it only seemed to be real, it only had the appearance of being real, from the Greek docetism, or to appear that way.

So he really only appeared to be material, he did not really have a physical body, not a material body. And again, you can probably recognize some of the Greek notion of kind of a Gnostic view that, well, the spiritual is good and positive and the material is bad and stained, so God could never have any sort of relation of physicality, anything like that.

So, no, no, no, in contrast to that, we affirm these things. Can you see anything in the description of Christ that might have been a buttress against the claim that he had no materiality?

Any of those phrases that you think? Well, born of the birth. There you go. Yeah, bingo. Yeah, born. Natural birth. Natural birth, there you go.

That's a little too material. That's kind of sanguinary and all that stuff. No, doesn't get any more material than that. Yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah.

[20 : 56] How about dead? Why do you have to bury something? Well, you only bury a body. You don't bury a spirit. So, these things would have been affirming. So, if you were a docetist, you wouldn't really have been able to say that.

So, that would kind of surface the people. Oh, uh-oh, we noticed that Rufus here closed his mouth and didn't affirm this.

Oh, there's suspicion. Let's put the elders on this. He can't affirm this. Let's make sure that there's nothing that's gone too wrong here. So, then pastoral care. Put them on the pastoral care list if they couldn't affirm these things.

So, this is how a lot of the phrases then would have been added. Again, as a defense of orthodoxy or as an affirmation of some certain aspects of the truth that some people either denied or were wobbly about.

But, we probably ought not to exaggerate the motive of counterattack against heresy too, too much as this sort of historical expansion also follows the pattern of apostolic preaching.

[22 : 07] Does it kind of, you know, you're probably reminded of Paul's words when he summarizes the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15. I gave you what was of first importance.

There we go again. You know, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried, you were crucified, buried. So, you know, there's good reason there just in the apostolic preaching to add these things to.

You barely need the inducement of heresies, although that can be a spur also. Now, we've already commented, you've picked this up, at first sight it may seem puzzling for a dog to show up at the party, Pontius Pilate, to be accorded a place in the church's confession.

And again, any thoughts? Why would that be? Why would that be so important to put him in? What might early Christians have been getting at in putting Pontius Pilate in?

Any thoughts? Yeah, yeah. What better way to mark the messiahs coming into history than to cite a historical personage with which everyone would agree, yes, he's part of history.

[23 : 18] Absolutely. Yeah, I think you're spot on. This was their instinct. The importance of anchoring all of these things, all of these saving truths, our saving truths in salvation, they really happened.

They really happened in history. Yeah, absolutely. Perhaps, too, notice, maybe it's felt, we don't seem to add such stress, perhaps on Christ's ascension or his session that is being seated at the right hand of the Father Almighty, his session, it's called.

But this truth was very precious to the early believers, as for them, as it should be for us. It meant that Christ was the great victor who had triumphed over all the hostile powers opposed to him, and consequently his victory was ours, that of his people.

It's interesting that probably the Old Testament scripture most cited, both in the apostolic preaching, we see this in the New Testament, in the epistles, and also in the early writers, was probably Psalm 110, verse 1.

The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. That is Christ's triumphal session where he reigns over all his defeated enemies.

[24 : 49] This was very, very meaningful. works its way into that creed that has those things of fundamental importance. Fundamental importance. This was to them.

So, then finally, I believe in the Holy Spirit. And this kind of completes the Trinity, the Trinity name formula, which is the skeleton of the creed.

But then there follow what seem a string of miscellaneous credenda. as Kelly puts it. Well, then a few other things that we believe too.

The Holy Church, forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body. It could seem like an odd pairing to range one's belief in the Church with the belief in the Holy Spirit.

I mean, after all, the Holy Spirit's one of the Divine Persons of the Trinity. Well, maybe, maybe not. It did take the early Church a little time to work out the Trinity, and the Holy Spirit was kind of the final person to be given sustained attention, theological attention to.

[25 : 58] So in the earliest creeds, we believe in the Father. We believe this, this, and this, and this, and we believe in the Son, and we believe this, this, this, this, this, and this, and this, and this, and we believe in the Holy Spirit. Yeah, well, what particularly do you believe?

We'll get back to you on that. And they did, they did. It just, you know, you can only put be sweeping.

You just, you know, one thing at a time. And they got to it. They got to it. So it's a little sparse on the Holy Spirit at first, but they would add to it. So, and there is, we need to remember, a development of clarification and expression even where there is robust faith.

You know, we can have deep intuitions, and I'm sure Tom talked about this, that, hey, we worship Jesus as God. We know he was a man. How does that work?

That he's God and he's man? That's a great question. We'll get back to you on that one. So sometimes you can believe it vehemently, robustly. You have no doubts.

[27 : 09] But just how to explain it can be a little tricky sometimes. You need to really call upon some of the wonderful gifts that God has given the church to be able to work these things out and articulate them in the vernaculars of the day.

So that's, it'll take a little time to do that with the Holy Spirit. But we get there. You know, the first line there was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried.

That's the only thing that a non-believer, if a non-believer is going to believe anything, it would be only that line. Everything else is fabulous.

He ascended, he sits at the right hand, he will come to judge living and the dead, the Holy Spirit, the church, forgiveness of sins. Yeah. This has to be believed by a believer.

Absolutely. Except Pontius Pilate. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. You'd have to be pretty skeptical to have, to have difficulty with that. That's right. when we, when we, oh, yeah, one thing that's probably worth noting, that the preposition for belief in reference to the Father, Son, is the same as that of the Holy Spirit.

[28 : 35] So, I believe in, or we could even say into, in Greek it would be ace. So, into, I believe into, and one could, and I think should think, I think, read this as a personal trust and reliance upon.

And when we come to the Holy Church, in the final, final form, when we come to the Holy Church, and the following phrases, we simply have believe, it's simply a Greek accusative.

narrative. So, there is a little bit of a distinction in the way in which we believe. It's not as if we are relying personally in terms of faith, trust for our salvation, in terms of these other things, in the way that we do.

So, there's not quite an equivalence and a parody, and there's language here that preserves that. It's certainly how I like to read it. And perhaps we might think of these phrases as connected with the Spirit, the ones that follow the Spirit, as showing us the Spirit in action, gathering the Church, imparting forgiveness by uniting us with Christ, and finally quickening our mortal flesh in resurrection.

So, that's a work of the Spirit. So, in one sense, it kind of follows on. And if the term holy church grates as somewhat exalted, remember that the term church, ecclesia, was borrowed from the Septuagint, that is, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where it was used to translate the Hebrew kahal, that is, the title commonly given to the chosen people of Israel, gathered in solemn assembly before God.

[30 : 33] So, that's what the church meant, that kahal. God's people. Exactly. So, it was used here by Christians, it expressed their convictions that they, believers in Jesus Christ, through Christ, were the new Israel, and heirs to all the promises that were given to God's people.

people. So, that's what they meant by church. And recall that holy, hagios, also goes back to the Old Testament, where it applied, principally, to whatever belonged to God.

That's what made something holy, belonging to God, and in particular, in reference to his people, his holy people, that is, the people that belong to God.

So, that's really what the term holy church means. So, when we say holy church, we're simply saying, God's God-gathered people.

That's what we're saying. So, the... Set apart. Yeah, set apart. Yeah, yeah, for God, for his, his special possession, his people, his gathered ones, his church.

[31 : 47] That's what we mean when we say this. Yeah, yeah, Tom, please. That's serious, you know? I've noticed that before, and if I can just summarize, so the word church in Greek is not special.

In the Old Testament, it's used of the assembly of the Israelites. Yes. But in other Greek contexts, it just means assembly. Yes, yes, yeah, exactly. And so, if they said, I believe in the assembly, you'd be like, what?

Our English translation, I think it does a little bit of a disservice, because there's technically all churches should be holy. So when you say the holy church, you're like, kind of making a particular church, but in Greek, it wouldn't have that context.

It's simply referring to all Christians assembled everywhere. And there's going to be another term that's going to be added, Catholic, that will really emphasize that point, too, and we'll get to that in a moment.

So these, then, were the creedal affirmations of the old Roman creed, out of which the Apostles' Creed, as we know it, grew.

[32 : 59] So when did the Apostles' Creed receive its final form, and what was added to it, and why? So that's what we want to consider now. What was added on to the old Roman symbol that we've just looked at?

So back to history for a moment. Well, the earliest appearance of the Apostles' Creed in its final form, what you have there on the page, is found in the writings of a Saint Prominius, who was a missionary, who worked in the area of Lake Constance, right at the borders of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland now, a little bit prior, just a little bit prior, to that pivotal battle of Tours, 732, there was a very significant historical battle where Charles Martel halted and then repulsed the Muslim advance that was coming up through Spain into Central Europe.

And Charles Martel, the hero of that battle, he was the founder of the Carolingian dynasty. He was succeeded by his son, Charles Martel's son, Pepin the Short, and then his grandson, Charlemagne, or Carl the Great, Charlemagne, we call him in English.

And under these Carolingian kings, an alliance was forged between them, there, the Frankish regents, and the Roman pontiffs.

So it was, their whole territory was evangelized by missionaries, these missionaries like, St. Perminius, and they forged an alliance.

[34 : 45] And the Frankish kings desired their subjects, all their subjects, to be educated uniformly in the Lord's Prayer and in the Creed.

They wanted to be saying the exact same thing all across the kingdom for unity's sake. And Rome, on the other side of the Alps, desired a uniform liturgy also, based upon the Roman practice.

So they thought, okay, let's work together. Let's work together on this. And in the royal effort, the Frankish kings, Charlemagne, took inventory first on all the different creeds, as they were said, in his vast sprawling lands.

Okay, when you say the creed, what do you say? What do you say? What do you say? And they pulled all these together and they discovered that they were, as Raul observed, they were fundamentally similar, but slightly, the ones outside of Rome, were fundamentally similar, but slightly fuller.

There were a few extra phrases that were there as compared to the Roman symbol that we looked at that was used in Rome, the original one. But here is an interesting thing.

[36 : 07] Rather than Rome insisting that the outskirts, the missionary outskirts conform to the Roman creed, Rome adopted the fuller formula from the missionary outskirts.

Pretty extraordinary, but that's what they did. It appeared that in these more distant outskirts there were a few more there was a little bit more theological ferment.

You'd have some Aryan influences that would come in. There were all kinds of things were going on a little bit of not it's so there were there was a little bit more heretical innovation in the outskirts not as much as you had in Rome.

! So in consequence they would add some of these phrases that were really helpful as we noticed in shoring up the truth and stating it a little bit more carefully a little bit more forcefully so Rome ended up concluding hey that's actually helpful we kind of like this you've required a little bit more creedal specificity but we like that specificity so we're going to just take this as a bulwark against distortion that it was helpful there it'll probably be helpful here and why not make a concession if we're happy to do it say we'll use yours makes the local people happy as you can imagine so that's what they did Rome found the additions a useful enrichment and adopted them as J.

N. D. Kelly concludes his is probably one of the magisterial studies of the creeds the early creeds and he writes in persuading Rome to accept a new baptismal confession the church beyond the Alps that is the missionary the mission part the church beyond the Alps was merely handing back to her Rome enriched and improved the same venerable rule of faith which she herself had compiled in the second century as an epitome of the everlasting gospel so that's that's how we got the fuller one from the shorter original extraordinary so let's conclude by considering what were these enriching additions that give us the apostles creed yeah yeah I'm sorry but the Roman symbol do we have a date for the earliest extent of manuscript or when we you just mentioned second century yeah yeah we already have it from the second century so that's yeah and we know that it goes back further than that but that's where we actually we have we have copies from that wow okay thanks so what were these additions these enriching additions that we now have well a few of them were already contained in or reminiscent of the

[39 : 26] Nicene creed this is what Tom talked about last week 381 so for example you'll yeah isn't it the other way around the Nicene creed is reminiscent of these well there are a few phrases that are going to get added to the Roman symbol that when we look at oh that's new where did that come from some of these things we see as echoing what was already in the Nicene creed so when Rome is adopting these things that were used as creeds in the outskirts they said oh look yeah we don't mind taking that phrase in fact we remember seeing that phrase in the Nicene creed that they would have been familiar with so we're in the 8th century now they know the Nicene creed and they thought oh yeah so the Gallic churches are suggesting we add this phrase so for example sorry I thought we were still in the second to the fourth century okay

I'm sorry no this is the eighth century now this is when after the battle of Tours in 732 that's when some of these changes begin to be brought in it is around that time so early eighth century that we have the first appearance in manuscript form of the apostles creed the way we read it now that fuller one that you have that doesn't appear as that we don't have evidence of it exactly in that form until the eighth century so that's yeah we're in the eighth century now sorry about that yeah yeah Louis you had a question no okay so let me give you an example this might be helpful so you'll notice that they have in the in the received form

I believe in God the Father Almighty maker or creator of heaven and earth so that phrase maker creator of heaven and earth that's that was not part of the original but that was in the eighth century that was in some of these other creeds so Rome's thinking do we do we accept that oh we have no problem with that besides it's a phrase that's in the Nicene creed anyway why would we have any trouble adopting that that doesn't seem too racy you know it doesn't seem too risky it's in the Nicene creed it's not unbiblical yeah that's probably the fundamental question to ask yeah yeah absolutely so so that's one of them and you'll notice that's one of the phrases that gets added creator of heaven and earth so and probably they assume well you know we meant that anyway when we talked about God the father almighty father also meant generator of all things so yeah we probably meant that anyway you know and it's nothing strange and it's biblical so why wouldn't we take that yeah we'll take it we'll add that that's okay we'll add that any demure no no every fort the ace take it universally there we go yeah we'll add this so that would be an example of some of the things that they were willing to add and you know perhaps it can be heard maybe a rumble of anti-gnosticism again gnostics oh creation is is you know god god is never going to have any sort of contact with the material universe so if he's going to create he's he's got to have all these intermediators these demiurges and all that that you know he would never be in direct contact with creation that's material stuff that's yuck yuck yuck yuck that's too yucky for god no no no you're absolutely wrong creator creator of heaven and earth okay and heaven and earth is merism if you say you know the two ends of the spectrum includes everything in between creator of everything everything yeah not only that when he created everything he called it good called it good there you go yeah in their face yep there you got that absolutely

I think there's another way to read that clause though and that is as a concession! who made heaven and earth well God the father right well I think Jesus yeah it's that was a lot of the debate so when if you look in proverbs and I can't get into this too much now and this is hopefully that was Tom's glass territory one of the arguments that Athanasius made was Christ is wisdom he created yes the father created but through wisdom and who was that wisdom that's the son so yes you're right Arians would make this I don't think that this would have been a concession to the Arians because the debate would well yes sure the father was involved but who did he do it through the son so yes this is very unimportant oh it sounds good to the ear creator

I love that yeah yeah antiphonal yeah yeah yeah I like it I mean let's make sure that it's true you're right but then hey I have nothing nothing against it sounding sonorous and lovely cadences what wonderful rhythmic cadences well let's then here you notice the addition of Catholic to Holy Church Holy Catholic Church did you see that that was added to we're going to get to that in just a second okay okay again addition of Catholic Church that was added well that's also founded in the Nicene Creed so okay no trouble no trouble by the way the term simply means universal okay it simply means universal so it comes from the Greek catholicos catholicos which is comes from the word kata according to and holos the whole so the church according to the whole that is not just a local church in Philippi or a local church in

[46 : 13] Ephesus but the whole universal church that's what the word catholic means in this confession yeah across time and place across time and place absolutely so and then that final phrase life everlasting that's kind of reminiscent to the Nicene Creed which ends the life of the world to come so okay no problem with any of those now so nothing new nothing new and adopting those changes but there were a few other places where there was something new two in particular could use some comment and we'll make some quick comment on that yeah well you you Argus I'd noticed one of them he descended into hell okay he descended into hell he Christ so Christ's descent into hell is by far the most controversial assertion of the Apostles

Creed you know I tell people that you wait a minute should that even be in the Creed wait is it even biblical he descended into hell and its case continues to be argued and re-argued and re-argued today so what did the phrase originally mean well it's interesting that Rufinus of Aquileia the earliest commentator on the Creed so he's writing about 307 to 309 it was his opinion that it simply meant he descended into hell he said the hell hell is the it's a translation of the Old Testament Sheol translated in Greek as Hades and in English hell so simply the place of the dead or the grave that's what Rufinus thought undifferentiated underworld the place of the dead so it's just another way to say he died so it's it's it's it's it's very likely according to Rufinus that that that's the way that probably at least linguistically he said yeah that's that's that's probably but so we could understand it that way but the belief that Christ was active during the interval between his death and his resurrection his death on the cross and the resurrection and active in the underworld was commonplace in the earliest Christian teaching and preaching so Ignatius

Polycarp Irenaeus Origen Tertullian Cyril of Jerusalem there are quite a few that think this so what according to their understanding was Christ doing in hell or the underworld what was he doing between his crucifixion and the resurrection okay well there were two views and they're not incompatible and sometimes they were blended or mixed one is so think of heralding and harrowing heralding and harrowing okay heralding that is Christ descended into hell to announce his victory over Satan and his demonic denizens and his triumph for his people over death and sin so basically an announcement a heralding Christ is the victor I have had victory over death and hell and Hades opened this gate for all those who trust in me so that was one view that they thought the other harrowing that is taking some out okay that is

Christ actually physically went down to hell and liberated the hell imprisoned particularly that was thought old testament saints who were kept in bondage kind of in a sheol or the bosom of Abraham this kind of undifferentiated place of the dead and he went down there and some and then preached there preached the gospel and some even suggest that there were those not simply the saints who had trusted in God's provision but maybe even some others that hadn't before they had a chance to hear the gospel and they responded to the gospel and he was able to take them out of hell so that notion was later condemned in a church council but it was held at least by some now this might strike some as strange who are accustomed to thinking of salvation in terms of wait surely everything that needed to happen already happened on the cross what need is there to go down to hell in any of that nothing needed there surely if

Jesus took on all what I deserved and hell is what I deserved why wouldn't you descend into hell ah okay so we'll get to this in just a moment this is John Calvin's view this is John Calvin's view yeah and I think that's an interesting way to think about it in terms of the early church many of them thought what a wonderful way to express Christus victor Christ the victor he has fought this great battle of our enemies the law death hell satan and he's defeated them and he announces his triumph and he rescues his own from hell so that's how they thought about this and this sort of thing was very very precious to them and they emphasize it a lot some of you might be thinking of 1st Peter 3 where it talks about this strange description of went down and preached to those who were held in captive

[52 : 28] Jesus in spirit went down and preached to those who were held in captive you think oh maybe there's some biblical basis for that it's interesting that the early church fathers writing about this never seemed to connect this descent into hell with that passage they never did no no I think Augustine is the first to bring that connection Augustine but yes Raul while none of us would certainly want to mute this victory motif so radiantly present in the scriptures John Calvin took the phrase he descended into hell to be a referring to Christ's spiritual sufferings that is Christ on the cross bore the full agony of hell that we his people deserved that is the full weight of

God's wrath rightly do his elect so that phrase he descended into hell is Christ on the cross experienced the full weight of wrath and all that spiritual affliction that is hell what is hell it is what sinners deserve and Christ experienced that he descended into that experience on the cross and that is how John Calvin took that he writes in his institutes the point is that Christ endured the torments of the damned in his soul in order to redeem us from them I don't think Calvin's is probably the original meaning of this but certainly Calvin's is a glorious truth and deeply edifying and it's what I hold in mind when I say the apostles creed the Heidelberg catechism follows Calvin in this question 44 of the

Heidelberg catechism why is there added he descended into hell answer that in my greatest temptations I may be assured and wholly comfort myself in this that my Lord Jesus Christ by his inexpressible anguish pains terrors and hellish agonies in which he was plunged during all his sufferings but especially on the cross has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell he descended into hell Zwingli omitted the phrase from the creed as non-essential or regarded it as redundant simply it just means death so there's that first kind of novel phrase here's the second a brief word on that it's the communion of saints and it might seem that this would be surely straightforward but in fact it's been subject to some pretty fluctuating meanings that have been read into this and part of the ambiguity is the

Latin for the Latin Sanctorum can be taken either as masculine that is holy saints or holies it can be taken either as masculine meaning holy ones people or neuter meaning holy things holy things so it does seem that the original and early meaning was taken to be the former the fellowship of holy persons and it was understood expansively as the fellowship of all the saints!

across all ages both heaven and earth the whole company of the elect maybe even thrown in some of the elect angels so that's the communion of the saints but about the 8th century there came to be a different understanding that was thrust to the fore based upon a neuter reading of saints communion with the saints in other words communion with holy things as indicating the sacraments so some people thought this was a reference to the sacraments so and there was a late tendency also to regard saints and communion of saints to be restricted to the narrow few who were canonized saints and martyrs but this is not original and it's alien to scriptural usage so where this is important it should be rejected so perhaps let me end with a final word on its enduring value Martin Luther writes in his large catechism this symbol of the

[57 : 16] Apostolic Apostles Confession this symbol is at the heart of the Christian doctrine whoever can say it from the heart has all that is necessary for salvation and Calvin would concur and writes in his institutes the creed contains nothing which is not drawn from the pure word of God and comprehends the full sum of salvation J.

D. Kelly the great scholar of early Christianity and especially the creeds writes the Apostles creed is above all a declaration of belief in the triune God and his saving activity it is primarily doxological rather than speculative it is certainly so and for this among other reasons it has found a lasting place in the worship of Christian churches across time and place and a firm place in the hearts of the faithful all right we better end yeah we're late we're late sorry