

## The Nicene Creed

The text customarily called the Nicene Creed has a three-part history in the Western church. The creed was issued as a brief statement at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325), while the First Council of Constantinople (381) later provided a substantial addition concerning the Holy Spirit. Thus historians term this creed the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Even later, a line in the creed was changed (in the Western church only) to capture the significant teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but from the Son as well. It is this fuller document in its Western form that is provided here.

The Nicene Creed contains many of the lines found in the Apostles' Creed, but it was written chiefly in response to minimizations and even denials of the divinity of Christ. Thus the creed asserts that Jesus is of the same (not similar) essence or substance as the Father. It states that he is begotten and not "made," unlike every other thing visible or invisible. Even the rhythmic phrases often translated "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God" are connective, equalizing phrases. They underline three times that the Son is "of" (in the sense of "from") the Father. These lines, taken with those about the Holy Spirit, are best read as reflections on the equality and closeness of the Three who are One. Together these lines form the most closely held and widely confessed statement about our triune God in the Christian church.

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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 worshiped 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.

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1. "Catholic" means universal; that is, there is one church across all times, places, and peoples. ↩