



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



Today I begin the first in a series of articles dealing with the **Apostles' Creed**. What is a "creed?" The word "creed" comes from the Latin verb "credo" which means "I believe." So, a "creed" is a *statement of belief*. For hundreds of years Christians have used the Apostles' Creed as a brief summary of what Holy Scripture teaches about the identity of God as well as His work for us.

The Apostles' Creed developed over several centuries after the time of Jesus as His people,

eventually known as "Christians," worked together to create a common way of speaking about the One, True Faith God had revealed to His people (see Acts 2:42, Ephesians 2:19-20 & 4:3-6, 1st Thessalonians 2:13, Hebrews 1:1-2 and Jude 3). Why, then, is it called the **APOSTLES' Creed**? *The reason is that this creed's entire content comes from the inspired writings of the Apostles found in the New Testament!*

The Apostles' Creed is one of three common creeds used by many Christians for over 1000 years (the other two creeds being the Nicene and the Athanasian). The Apostles' Creed has been used by Christians in at least three ways: **1)** It was used during public Services as a brief summary of the Christian Faith; **2)** It was used as a way to distinguish the truth about God from false teaching about God; **3)** It was used as a tool in mission work to help teach the basic doctrines of Christianity in a simple way.

Sadly, some Christians choose not to make use of the Apostles' Creed. One reason some offer for not using the Apostles' Creed is: *"We have no creed but the Bible!"* But this is no reason to not use the Apostles' Creed! I fully agree that the **ONLY** authority for what Christians believe is God's inspired Word, Holy Scripture. However, there is **NOTHING** in the Apostles' Creed that is **NOT** found in the Bible! In fact, whenever a Christian tells someone what he believes he must speak a "creed." *Therefore, we should use the Apostles' Creed which is the common confession of many Christians throughout history!*

Another reason some no longer use the Apostles' Creed is that some who claim the name "Christian" actually **REJECT** some or all of the teachings of the historic Christian Faith. Some who claim the name "Christian" no longer believe that Holy Scripture is God's inspired Word and the **ONLY**

basis for our teaching and life. *Therefore, it is not surprising that such people refuse to use a creed that is based entirely on Holy Scripture.*

During February through October of 2006 I wrote a series of articles on the **Ten Commandments**. One of the things we learned is that God uses the Ten Commandments to reveal our sin and show us that we deserve only His wrath (see Romans 3:19-20). That's why Martin Luther begins his Small Catechism with the Ten Commandments, so we would first see our need for a Savior from sin, death and hell. *However, in the very next section of his Small Catechism Luther then teaches us about the Apostles' Creed which reveals our Savior and all that He has done for us!*

At this point it would be good for us to see the entire text of the Apostles' Creed, which reads as follows: *"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, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the **Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**"

Some of you reading this may have many questions about various parts of the Apostles' Creed. Therefore, I encourage you to read my future articles in this series where I will unpack all the wonderful wisdom and gracious Good News in the Apostles' Creed that God wants you to know and believe. *I will now conclude this article by saying that the Apostles' Creed sums up what Holy Scripture teaches*

about the One, True God who has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (see Matthew 28:19-20). The Apostles' Creed teaches us that God is our Creator, Savior and Life-giver without Whom we have no true knowledge of our origin, no meaning for our present lives, and no hope for the future.



Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, February 19th! Pastor Eckstein will continue his series on the Apostles' Creed with the 1st article: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's webpage: www.concordiajt.org

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