

# **The Plumb Line**

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# The Plumb Line

*A brief explanation of the Nicene Creed—the symbol  
of faith in the Believers Eastern Church*

Moran Mor Athanasius Yohan Metropolitan

Faith and Tradition Series

THE PLUMB LINE  
Faith and Tradition Series  
(English)

by  
Moran Mor Athanasius Yohan Metropolitan

15 August 2017

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Produced by

Liturgical Commission Authorised by the Metropolitan

Published by

Believers Eastern Church Synod Secretariat  
St Thomas Nagar, Tiruvalla - 689 103, Kerala, India.  
[www.bec.org](http://www.bec.org).

Printed in India

Price: ₹ 80.00

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BEC-FTS - 013 E - '17

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## Preface



*In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit* ✠

**O**ur faith and tradition are the two major factors that define our identity in Christian living. Faith stands for what we believe as a church and tradition denotes how we live according to our faith.

As a church, the faith of Believers Eastern Church is deeply rooted in the Holy Bible, which is the foundation of our life and spirituality. Our tradition is the practices of what the apostles, the composers of the New Testament showed and later was perfected by the vision of the early church fathers.

My hope is that the *Faith and Tradition* series will bring renewal and life to our Christian life and our church, to know Jesus, who gave His life and loved us, more intimately.

✠The blessings of the Triune God be with you all forever.

Synod Secretariat  
15 August 2017

✠Moran Mor Athanasius Yohan  
Metropolitan



## Introduction



*“Then the Lord said, ‘Behold I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people’” - Amos 7:8.*

Is there a touch stone, an absolute, or a plumb line that will help us to know for sure what we believe is true without a shadow of doubt? Because what we believe, determines our destiny.

What is a plumb line? “It is a tool that consists of a small, heavy object attached to a string or rope and that is used especially to see if something (such as a wall) is perfectly vertical.”<sup>1</sup>

When it comes to the Holy Church, with thousands of denominations, one can easily get confused, especially when all claim to be the ‘true church.’ How does one know what is real and true to the Word of God, the apostolic teaching and the holy traditions handed down by the fathers of the church?

Without any doubt, the confession of Nicene Creed has become one of the most

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important statements of faith that became the 'plumb line' for the true orthodox faith of the Holy Church for two thousand years.

We in the Believers Eastern Church acknowledge the Nicene Creed as the official statement of faith for our church. It is part of the regular liturgy for our worship services.

Our faith is based solely on the Word of God. While the Nicene Creed is not part of the Holy Bible, it is the next most important document every believer should endeavour to know by heart. The Nicene Creed is a one-page condensed version of the Holy Scriptures. This creed contains the non-negotiable fundamental truths and doctrines of the Bible, and it covers God's revelation from eternity past to eternity future.

There were many creeds used in the early church, such as the Apostles' Creed and those that candidates would confess before they were baptised. The earliest creeds were made up of questions based on Jesus' command to baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> All such creeds declared the Lord Jesus Christ as

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the only Saviour and as One in the Holy Trinity.

But the Creed of Nicaea introduced a more detailed and complete statement of faith, specifically affirming the deity of Christ and that He is the second person in the Godhead.

The Nicene Creed is the one creed that has been accepted from its inception by orthodox Christians everywhere, and it has become the most important symbol of true faith. It is helpful to note that when the word 'orthodox' is used with a lowercase 'o', it is not referring to any particular denomination but rather to the ancient faith and practices that have been accepted as true and right throughout the history of the church. This commonality is what binds us together with the rest of the Body of Christ and "reinforces our oneness and unity."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus warned us about false prophets who would come and deceive people through their false teachings and cause many to fall away from the authentic faith.<sup>4</sup> The Nicene Creed is a tool for testing these kinds of teachings and rejecting all those that do not conform to the statements it contains.

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We are told in the Scripture to take care of our doctrines and our life.<sup>5</sup> I don't know of any other creed or statement of faith that speaks the cardinal truths and doctrines of the Word of God with such clarity. For nearly two thousand years, the Holy Church has accepted this creed as the plumb line, a standard that tests whether something is true and right. It is the road map for our faith.

Think about the many communities in our dioceses where illiteracy is still a major problem. How precious it is to have this creed that our people can memorise, providing them a solid, unshakable foundation for their faith.

In our parishes in Nepal, they even put music to the Nicene Creed so it would be easier for church members to learn by heart.

The purpose of this booklet is to give a brief explanation of the importance of the Nicene Creed and the meaning behind each of the statements it contains. It is important we understand the background and uniqueness of this creed for the sake of our faith, both individually and as a body of believers.

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I pray that all our church members—from children just beginning to read and write, to the elderly and those who may not be able to read—will memorise this official creed of our church and take it to heart.

May the Holy Trinity's blessings be with you.✠



## The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible.

We believe 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 died and was buried;  
and on the third day He rose again  
according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven,  
and sits at 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.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and Giver of Life;  
who proceeds from the Father;  
who, with the Father and the Son together  
is worshipped and glorified;  
who spoke by the prophets and Apostles.  
We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church;  
We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;  
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the new life of the world to come. Amen



## Chapter One

# The Foundation of Our Faith



*“What shall the righteous do if the foundation  
be shaken” -Psalm 11:3.*

What could be so significant about a list of beliefs that fits on a single piece of paper?

When we hear the name ‘Mahatma Gandhi’, we know it stands for the man who became the father of india by liberating the nation from the colonial rule of England. In only two words, this name represents a man about whom dozens of books have been written.

The word ‘constitution’ is another example. The constitution of a country may be just one piece of paper, but that single document contains the

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laws, rules and principles that bind together the whole nation and the millions who live there.

In the same way, when we use the term 'Nicene Creed', it stands for the non-negotiable principles, articles of faith, dogma, doctrines and beliefs of the Holy Church in one authoritative statement.

The Nicene Creed is a one-page document that, when expanded upon, gives you an overall understanding of the complete Bible, which is thousands of pages long.

The English word 'creed' itself comes from the Latin word 'credo', meaning 'I believe'. In Hindi, it is translated 'path' or 'the way'. In Malayalam, it is 'deed of faith'.

Think of a property deed, like a thousand acre farm land. It is only three or four pages long—that is all. But that brief document represents a world of information, which, if one should compile, would be thousands of pages long!

While the Nicene Creed is not part of the Holy Bible, the fathers of faith worded this important creed so that, just like how a constitution

## THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH

contains the laws of a country, it would represent the principles of the authentic faith of the orthodox church.

As one authour aptly put it, “Whatever else may be said of the ancient creeds, it cannot be denied that they were deliberately constructed to be the epitome of the biblical message. When instructing new converts, Augustine taught, ‘For whatever you hear in the Creed is contained in the inspired books of Holy Scripture.’<sup>1</sup> It was the task of these creeds not merely to reproduce the Bible but to enable Christians to understand what the Bible, both Old and New Testament, means.”<sup>2</sup>

In their book *The Unshakeable Truth*, Josh and Sean McDowell said it like this: “In this succinct statement the Nicaean council captured the truth of who God is and who we are (the creation), what God did and our purpose in life (the incarnation), and what God’s mission is and where we are going (re-creation).”<sup>3</sup>

### *Test of Authenticity*

Think about it. Today, there are well over fourty thousand different Christian denominations

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that all claim to be the ‘true faith’. How do we know if one is real or counterfeit?

Just as a touchstone determines if something is pure gold, or a scientific test is done to authenticate a famous work of art, one of the most important marks of the true church (referred to in the Creed as the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church”) is that it accepts and embraces the Nicene Creed as the symbol of its Christian faith. One cannot be orthodox in faith without adhering to this most important statement of faith. It is the guide the early church fathers passed on to us as the foundation for what we believe as followers of Christ. As David Neff, former editor of *Christianity Today*, put it, “it helps us to stay on track.”<sup>4</sup>

## Chapter Two

# The Origin of the Nicene Creed



*“One of the most remarkable aspects of Christianity today is how few... professed believers have ever seriously studied the history of their religion.” – Bruce L. Shelly*

The Nicene Creed was formulated at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in AD 325. These early ecumenical councils were gatherings of church leaders and theologians to decide upon matters regarding the Holy Church’s faith and practices. The gatherings were called together by the emperors of the time and structured in the pattern of the Roman Senate. Their purpose was to determine and confess Biblical truths and doctrines by adhering to what the early church fathers had passed on under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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In AD 325, the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea was held to combat the heresy that was being spread by a man named Arius, who later came to be called Arius the Heretic. He was a presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt. His claim was that Jesus could not be fully God since He was begotten of God. Meaning, Jesus must have had a beginning, just like everything else that had been created by God.

This heretical teaching questioning Jesus' divinity gained a huge following and the unity of the early church was threatened. That is when Emperor Constantine called all the church's bishops to gather in Nicaea (present day İznik, Turkey). Around three hundred bishops attended the Council, many of them accompanied by fellow clergymen, making this the largest assembly in church history at that time.

Church leaders came to the Council from Asia Minor, Arabia, Persia, Jerusalem, Rome, Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Greece, India (represented by Bishop John of Persia), Georgia, Armenia, Gaul, Hispania, Libya and the Danube. Among them were St Eusebius

## THE ORIGIN OF THE NICENE CREED

of Caesarea (considered the church's first historian), Paphnutius of Upper Thebes (who had had his eyes taken out during the recent persecution of Christians) and St Alexander of Alexandria. Although exact numbers are not known, it is believed the total gathering could have had thousand to two thousand in attendance.

The two-month-long meeting began on 19 June, and for the next many days the Council deliberated over the divine status of the Son of God and His precise relationship with the Father. By the end of the discussion, the group settled on the term *homoousios*, meaning 'of the same substance as', to describe the Lord Jesus as having the same substance as Almighty God. With that wording, "the council fathers wished to say that in whatever way God is God, Christ also is God."<sup>1</sup>

This phrasing pleased the majority of the gathering and it was added onto one of the earlier creeds already in circulation, called the Jerusalem Creed. After adding a few more clauses to the Creed, which confessed the

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purpose of Christ's coming to earth and showed His relationship in the Godhead, the first draft of the Nicene Creed was finalised.

It wasn't until AD 381 that the church was given what we now know as the official Nicene Creed. Two generations after the gathering in Nicaea, the Second Ecumenical Council was held at Constantinople for the purpose of balancing the Nicene Creed's description of the Trinity by adding in more about the Holy Spirit.

### *In the Time of the Apostles*

It is important to realise the Nicene Creed came into existence due to the many writings of the apostles that were already in circulation throughout the churches and were being taught and used in worship. While the canonisation of the New Testament books was not actually completed until AD 395, the wordings and concepts from these writings inspired everything that went into the Creed. In fact, the only word not actually taken directly from the Holy Scriptures is the word *homoousios*—which the church fathers agreed is still implied by Scripture, even though the word itself is not used.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE NICENE CREED

Later on, when it came time to canonise the 27 New Testament books, the church would often compare the writings and letters of the apostles with the Nicene Creed to determine if they were orthodox.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the Lord used the Nicene Creed to protect the purity of the orthodox faith until the legal canonisation of the New Testament was completed. So, it is correct to say both that “the Nicene Creed proceeds from the New Testament” and also that “the New Testament is certified by the Nicene Creed”—both are deeply entangled with each other as part of the same process.<sup>3</sup>

After the Nicene Creed was finalised, it became the plumb line for the church’s faith, the absolute standard protecting against all false teachers and heretics that would seek to destroy the true faith of the Holy Church. This is, as Rev Kenneth W. Collins said, the “only creed that was promulgated by any of the seven ecumenical councils and thus it is the only creed that is truly ecumenical and universal.”<sup>4</sup> In the Believers Eastern Church, it is our only official creed.

*The Nicene Council and the Trinity*

Rev Collins further writes, “The Nicene Council did not invent the Trinity in the early fourth century, as some people imagine... We can trace the dogma of the Trinity straight back to apostolic times. We have it from the pens of bishops and theologians who were charged with preserving and passing on the faith and who lived all over the Mediterranean basin. From this we can only conclude that mainstream theology in the ancient church before the Council of Nicaea was Trinitarian.”<sup>5</sup> What the Nicene Creed accomplished was to take the abstract concept of the Holy Trinity and express it in such a way that new believers from any background could more clearly confess their belief in each One of the Godhead—the Holy Father, the Holy Son and the Holy Spirit.

D.H. Williams, a professor at Baylor University, said, “In the end, the Nicene Creed represented a large-scale attempt to answer the question, ‘Do you know whom you worship?’”<sup>6</sup>

## Chapter Three

# Believing is Key



*“And without faith, it is impossible to please God”  
- Hebrews 11:6.*

**F**aith is the foundation of the people of  
God.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”<sup>1</sup>

According to biblical and true orthodox teaching, our faith is based on the Word of God, which is the revelation of God given to us. When we obey the Word by faith, results follow. When God called Abraham to follow Him, he had no evidence that what God was telling him was true, but he chose to obey. When he did, he experienced the promises of

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God.<sup>2</sup> Faith is not opposed to reason; rather, it is beyond reason.

Throughout the entire Bible, this principle is emphasised. Hebrews 11 gives us a glimpse at the history of the people of faith and the miracles the Lord accomplished through them because they believed.

Believing is a choice we make to receive what God tells us in His Holy Word as truth. Our natural mind and reason do not want to submit or obey. You and I must choose to believe and act based on what God reveals to us in His Word.

When faced with the question, “Do you believe?” our answer must be, “Yes Lord, I believe”.<sup>3</sup> We must have a sacramental lifestyle, daily expressing the genuine faith of our heart.

Even as we, the people of God, collectively confess the Nicene Creed in our worship, the faith behind the words we are saying must always be personal. Each person must believe for himself or herself. No one can believe for another.

## BELIEVING IS KEY

Believers Eastern Church believes the Nicene Creed is not just the symbol of faith for the church as a whole, but also for each individual.

In the following chapters, we will walk through each line of the Nicene Creed and look at the meaning behind the statements we confess.

Take your time as you go through these sections, meditating on the significance within each of these key statements of our belief.

Each phrase of each line in the Nicene Creed carries with it the rich depth of our faith as Christians. Whether it is confessed in fellowship with other believers during a worship service or in the privacy of our own rooms and hearts, it is important that we understand the words we are saying and the meaning behind them.

In the following chapters, we will define the meaning of the statements in the Nicene Creed.



## Chapter Four

# The Father



*“I am God and there is no other”*

*- Isaiah 45:22.*

### **We believe in one God**

**T**he opening line of the creed affirms the ancient Shema: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.”<sup>1</sup> Christians, like Jews, believe that only one God exists. “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.”<sup>2</sup>

While man has invented many religions and tens of thousands of gods, the eternal truth remains unchanged—there is only one God, who is the creator of all. His command for

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us from the beginning has been, “I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before me.”<sup>3</sup> He is for all people in all walks of life. Fallen man has created different religions and castes, but there is only one human race and only one God for all.

The fundamental core faith of the Holy Church is that there is one, true and living God. Jesus is the Lord of all, but He becomes the Lord and the Saviour of each individual when they believe for themselves.

### **The Father Almighty**

It is this one, true God, Yahweh of Israel, whom the Lord Jesus told us is God His Father and whom we, the people of Almighty God, are given the privilege to call our Heavenly Father through faith in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

What an awesome privilege we are given through Christ to not only become the children of God, but also to call this great God “Abba Father.”<sup>5</sup>

We know from Jesus’ high priestly prayer that the Father loves us as much as He loves Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

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Think about that. The Almighty God—perfect and absolute in goodness, truth, justice, wisdom, knowledge and purity—loves you and me just as much as He loves His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus. His love alone is the reason why He sent Jesus to die on the Cross to save us.

### **Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible**

God created all that is visible and invisible out of nothing. The orthodox doctrine of creation is that God brought everything and everyone that exists into being from non-existence. “For he spoke, and it came to be.”<sup>7</sup> This is explained in the first chapter of the Bible.

His presence is always there with His creation. The God who is “over all” is also “through all and in all.”<sup>8</sup> Not only is He the Creator, but in Him “we live and move and have our being” for “He is not far from each one of us.”<sup>9</sup>

The Psalmist so beautifully put it:

“Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?  
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;

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If I make my bed in hell, behold,  
    You are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost  
    parts of the sea,  
Even there Your hand shall lead me,  
And Your right hand shall hold me.  
If I say, “Surely the darkness  
    shall fall on me,”  
Even the night shall be light about me;  
Indeed, the darkness shall not  
    hide from You,  
But the night shines as the day;  
The darkness and the light are  
    both alike to You.”<sup>10</sup>

The Bible talks about the enemy of God and man—Satan—and his evil spirits. Satan is a created being, and so are all his fallen angels. They are invisible powers of darkness. We need only to read the book of Job to see the way Satan seeks to destroy human beings. But Satan is not all powerful and God is. The Bible says, “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”<sup>11</sup>

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Our God also created all the angels that are our guardians and messengers in the invisible world. These are the angels, archangels, principalities, powers, dominions, thrones, cherubim and seraphim. These holy angels are described worshiping God before His throne without ceasing.<sup>12</sup>

Not only did the Almighty create the unseen world of angels, He also created the millions of stars and galaxies, and every aspect of nature and life upon the earth. Finally, He also made man, the only thing He created in the image and likeness of Himself.<sup>13</sup> God made man to reflect His image in creation and the entire universe. He made both male and female, Adam and Eve. The man He created to rule over the earth, and the woman He created to be man's helpmate and the mother of all living.<sup>14</sup>

This perfect world could have gone on if man had continued living in subjection to the will of God. But he, with his free choice, disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit and became a slave to Satan and sin. He fell. Please read Genesis 3 to get the full story of man's rebellion and fall.

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However, our loving God had a plan to rescue man from sin and damnation by sending His Son Jesus to this world as the second Adam to pay for sin by offering Himself as a sinless sacrifice.<sup>15</sup> The Eucharist (Holy Communion) we participate in during our church services each week reminds us of this sacrifice—of the cross, suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who gave Himself to save us from the clutches of Satan and sin. Because of His great mercy and love, we are given the privilege to become the sons and daughters of God and to be part of His Holy Church, which was a mystery He kept hidden in His heart and revealed in these last days with the coming of Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

## Chapter Five

# The Son



*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” - St John 1:1,14.*

### **We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ**

**J**he fundamental confession of a Christian is this: Jesus is Lord. While on earth, Jesus asked His disciples, “ ‘Who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

At His birth, the angels announced to Joseph, “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”<sup>2</sup> He is the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Promised One about

whom the prophets foretold throughout the Old Testament, telling us that He would come through Abraham's line to be the Saviour.

God is one and His plan to save humanity from sin and hell is one: the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man who became the sin-bearer and eternal sacrifice for our salvation.<sup>3</sup> He is the truth and the light of the world.<sup>4</sup>

**The only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds**

The Lord Jesus is the only one that is called "begotten of the Father."<sup>5</sup> He was the only one born of the Father. This line of the Creed is saying that Christ was born of the Father before the commencement of time and before the creation of all that is visible and invisible. God has existed since before time in an eternal, timeless reality without beginning or end, and the Son exists with Him.

The Gospel according to St John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."<sup>6</sup> The only begotten Son has always existed as uncreated, eternal and divine.

## **God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God**

There is a common phrase which says 'life begets life'. This is the principle of heredity. It means that whatever something is, its offspring will also be. Think of an apple tree; the seeds that it produces will become apple trees every time.

So, when we talk about the Lord Jesus being eternally born of God, we are saying He has always existed with the Father; Light from Light, very God from very God. If God is light, then what is born of Him must be light. And if God is "very God", then what is born of Him must be "very God".

"I am here trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I 'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level

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with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to” – C.S.Lewis.<sup>7</sup>

### **Begotten, not made**

All things that exist, other than God, were created by Him—all things visible and invisible. But the Son of God is not a creature. He was not created by God or made by Him. He was born, begotten of the very being and nature of the Father. He belongs to the very nature of God, being one with God, as God Himself.

### **Being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made**

The expression “of one substance” or “of one essence” means simply this: what the Father

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is, so also is the Son. The Father is divine, the Son is divine. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated. The Father is God and the Son is God. This is what we confess in the Creed when we say “the only begotten Son of God... being of one substance with the Father.”

Jesus told His disciples that the person who sees Him sees God the Father.<sup>8</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the radiance of His glory and the express image of His person.<sup>9</sup>

When Jesus said, “I and My Father are one,”<sup>10</sup> He was saying He is also one life, one will, one power and one action with the Father. Whatever the Father is, the Son is. So, whatever the Father does, the Son does as well.

This is why the eternal Son of God is confessed in the creed as the one “by whom all things were made.”<sup>11</sup> Chuck Swindoll writes, “As ‘very God...’ who existed alone as ‘not created,’ He brought everything else that exists into being.”<sup>12</sup>

We read in the Gospel according to St John that “He was in the beginning

with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”<sup>13</sup> Being one with God, the Lord Jesus is the Creator of the universe, who accomplishes the Father’s will.

**Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven**

This is not just another event that occurred; it’s the most important event to ever take place in history. This was the time God became a man to save us from sin—the first Christmas.

St John said it well when he wrote, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life,”<sup>14</sup> and “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”<sup>15</sup>

Jesus’ coming into the world to be born meant giving up His throne in heaven and laying aside His God-powers—all for our sake. This is the mystery of godliness, that God became man in Christ.<sup>16</sup>

The Apostle Paul explained it in his letter to the

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Philippians in this manner: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”<sup>17</sup>

### **And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man**

We believe this was the fulfilment of the prophecy spoken by Isaiah the Prophet seven hundred years before the first Christmas day: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”<sup>18</sup>

It is like a man being sucked down into the depths, drowning in a whirlpool. If he is to be saved, someone else must grasp him and pull him out. The dying man cannot save himself. So it was with the world. All have sinned and fallen away from God.<sup>19</sup> And only God, by coming down to this sinful world, could pull us out of

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sin and damnation. Motivated by His eternal love, the Father sent His only begotten Son to be born through the Virgin Mary to become the Saviour of the world.

This baby born to the Virgin Mary was not like any other child of Adam. He was born by the Holy Spirit without a sin and lived as fully man and fully God. Jesus, the divine Son of God, was not a 'mere man' like all other men. But He was a real man, a whole and perfectly complete man with a human mind, soul and body.

As a man, Jesus experienced all the normal and natural human experiences that we face, such as pain, sorrow, loneliness, disappointment, every kind of temptation, and even suffering and death. He took upon Himself all these and more for the sake of "us men and for our salvation."<sup>20</sup>

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned

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but with the descendants of Abraham.

Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.”<sup>21</sup>

He lived in this world, becoming like all men in all things except for sin.<sup>22</sup> St Peter spoke of Him as the one “who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.”<sup>23</sup>

He could not have become our Saviour if He had not become a man like us, the second Adam who chose not to sin so He could be accepted as the spotless, blameless Lamb of God and become the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world.<sup>24</sup>

**And was crucified, also for us, under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and died and was buried**

The question is, can God die? If Jesus Christ was God on earth in human flesh, having committed no sin, how could He die?

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The Bible says, “the wages of sin is death.”<sup>25</sup> Jesus did not sin; therefore, He could not die. On top of that, He was God, and God cannot die.

Then what does it mean that the Lord Jesus was crucified, died and was buried?

### *The Sinless One*

For Jesus to be the eternal, ultimate sacrifice for the sin of the world, He had to earn the right to do so by meeting the demands of the holy and just God, thereby becoming the sinless, perfect Lamb of God. All of Adam’s race has sinned and no one born from Adam could do this. Only God is sinless. That is why Jesus decided to become God incarnate as the second Adam and live a life on earth without sin.

Jesus once asked His enemies, “Which of you can show me I have sinned?”<sup>26</sup> Even Pilate, the Roman judge who sentenced Jesus to death, himself said, “I find no fault in Him at all.”<sup>27</sup>

If God is just and holy, He cannot overlook sin—it must be punished. All humanity is judged already and condemned to hell forever. But the cry of the human heart is, “what must I do to be saved?”<sup>28</sup>

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Our great joy is that our just and holy God is also the God of love and mercy. He decided to become the answer to our salvation by taking upon Himself the sin of the whole world, from Adam—the first man—to the last human being that would be born. Remember, our God is beyond time—He is past, present and future all at once.

But how did He do that?

The Scriptures do not specify the exact moment when the sin of the world came down upon His shoulders. I believe it is when Christ walked into the Garden of Gethsemane and left His disciples behind to pray so that He could go a little further ahead and kneel before His Father. I believe it was at this point that the sin of the whole human race, from Adam to the last human ever to be born, fell down upon Him like mighty rain, and then He who knew no sin became sin for us.<sup>29</sup> There, under the heavy burden of our sin and curse and hell, Jesus began to sweat blood. But He would not end the story there; He would choose to complete the final act of eternal sacrifice and give His life on the cross, now as the One who bore the sin of the whole world.<sup>30</sup>

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And so, the Lord Jesus, the eternal God who cannot die, became a man like us so that He could die as a man. And since He was without sin, He took upon Himself the sin of the entire world and became sin for us.

We read in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us."<sup>31</sup> God the Father, for our sake, "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."<sup>32</sup>

### *Perfect Sacrifice*

Thus, Jesus earned the right to die, by becoming sin for us. Here is the amazing love of God we can hardly begin to understand. The justice of God and the love of God collided and the result was the Cross of Christ where the guiltless Son of God, now having become sin itself for us, became the sacrifice to redeem us from our sin, from the curse and from hell.

When the human race was dead in sin and trespasses, Christ, who was without sin, became man in obedience to the Father's will; being man, He became a slave; and being a slave, the sinless God in flesh, became a sacrifice and

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died for us on the Cross. This is the most sacred truth of the whole Bible. It is through Jesus' death that He atoned for our sin and we were made to be one with God.<sup>33</sup>

When Jesus died, the entirety of creation stood in silence. The sun hid his face. The land was covered in darkness. The whole earth trembled. The Creator of the universe, the God who earned the right to become the sacrifice for our redemption, was dead.

After His final breath, Jesus was taken down from the Cross. In accordance with Jewish customs, they embalmed His body and laid it in a borrowed tomb. As far as the religious leaders and the Romans were concerned, this was the end of the story.<sup>34</sup>

**And on the third day, He rose again, according to the Scriptures**

Christ is risen!

This truth is the heart of the Christian faith. The Apostle Paul said in one of his letters, "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty."<sup>35</sup>

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As people of the orthodox faith, our church believes in the real death and actual resurrection of Christ.

When Jesus rose from the dead in His new and glorious form, He appeared to His followers in different places without being limited by time and space.<sup>36</sup> Some people think the stone at the mouth of the tomb was rolled away by the angels so Jesus could get out. The truth is, this massive stone weighing hundreds of pounds was rolled away so that His disciples and friends and enemies could see that He had risen.<sup>37</sup>

In the first message spoken by St Peter, he proclaimed Christ's resurrection to the thousands of Jews who had been part of His crucifixion.

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having

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loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.<sup>38</sup>

Before His death, Jesus told His disciples He would rise again. He said to them, “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”<sup>39</sup>

It was His own choosing to lay down His life fully. He offered Himself for our ransom without holding anything back. And it was His own choosing also when He took His life up again in His resurrection from the dead.

In the resurrection of Christ, we see the oneness of the Holy Trinity. “For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”<sup>40</sup> The life and power of God the Father and of Jesus are one and the same.<sup>41</sup> There is no competition between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”<sup>42</sup>

***Free Gift of Life***

So, what does the resurrection of Christ mean for us who believe in the Lord Jesus and confess Him as our Saviour and Lord?

If we believe, we are given the privilege to be partakers of this glorious resurrection with Christ in the life to come.

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”<sup>43</sup>

St Paul writing to Corinthians<sup>44</sup> tells us the incredible promise God has in store for us when it is all said and done. Jesus told His followers, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”<sup>45</sup>

Christ’s resurrection tells us finally that the purpose of our creation is fulfilled, the

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glorification of our human nature, the union of man with God.<sup>46</sup> We are destined to be “partakers of the divine nature.”<sup>47</sup> And with our resurrection, just as Christ was glorified, we too will be brought back into the divine participation and rule with Him.

This is all yours, freely given. You only need to believe.<sup>48</sup> Then we can proclaim with the Apostle Paul, “Oh death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”<sup>49</sup>

The reality of hell does not mean that God actively wishes to send people there. Rather, He longs for everyone to accept His way out of sin and hell and captivity in Satan’s kingdom. The choice is with us.

It is worth reminding ourselves again that there is only one God for all of humanity, and this God has only one way of salvation for mankind—His Son, the Lord Jesus. The only means we have of being saved is through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection, and surrendering our lives to His Lordship.<sup>50</sup>

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St Gregory the Theologian captured it so well when he wrote about our death and resurrection in Christ.

Yesterday I was crucified with Him;  
today I am glorified with Him.  
Yesterday I died with Him;  
today I am made alive with Him.  
Yesterday I was buried with Him;  
today I am raised up with Him.  
Let us offer to Him Who suffered  
and rose again for us . . .ourselves,  
the possession most precious to God  
and most proper.  
Let us become like Christ,  
since Christ became like us.  
Let us become Divine for His sake,  
since for us He became Man.  
He assumed the worse that He might  
give us the better.  
He became poor that by His poverty  
we might become rich.  
He accepted the form of a servant that  
we might win back our freedom  
He came down that we might  
be lifted up.

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He was tempted that through Him  
we might conquer.

He was dishonoured that He might  
glorify us.

He died that He might save us.

He ascended that He might draw to  
Himself us, who were thrown down  
through the fall of sin.

Let us give all, offer all, to Him who gave  
Himself a Ransom and Reconciliation  
for us.

We needed an incarnate God,  
a God put to death, that we might live.

We were put to death together with  
Him that we might be cleansed.

We rose again with Him because  
we were put to death with Him.

We were glorified with Him because  
we rose again with Him.

A few drops of Blood recreate the  
whole of creation!<sup>51</sup>

**And ascended into heaven, and sits at the  
right hand of the Father**

After Christ's resurrection from the dead,  
He stayed around for forty days and showed

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Himself to many. Then, as the apostles witnessed, He went back to heaven and sat down at the right hand of His Father—the place He had been for all of time before He left the glories of heaven to be born as a man for the redemption of mankind.<sup>52</sup>

The Lord Jesus had come down from heaven to live on earth and die on the Cross, and now having finished the work the Father had given Him, He went back for all eternity with His scars and glorified body, where He now dwells, interceding on our behalf before the Father.<sup>53</sup> Jesus, the God-man, is our mediator.<sup>54</sup>

### *Before the Throne of God*

In our worship services, you will notice the priest and all the congregation faces the altar (thronos) where the holy elements are placed for the celebration of the most precious sacrament, the Eucharist.

Why do we do that?

You see, we read in Isaiah 6 that in heaven, the dwelling place of God, the Almighty is sitting on His throne and the heavenly angels (seraphim) are surrounding and worshipping

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Him, proclaiming His glory. And again, in Revelation 4 and 5, we see the same image of worship. And now our Lord Jesus is seated on the throne as the God-man, bearing the marks of His nail-pierced hands. “And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as though it had been slain.”<sup>55</sup>

When we face the altar in worship, we are joining all of heaven in standing before God in awe and worship. This is the orthodox teaching of our fathers which we follow.

**And He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead**

Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead. Despite all of man’s efforts to destroy the rule and authority of God, He has the final say about our lives.

“God is love”<sup>56</sup> and this loving and merciful God who made us in His image has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked.”<sup>57</sup> He wants all to be saved and to become His children through faith in the Lord Jesus.<sup>58</sup> While the devil and his fallen angels are working day and night to take as many as they can to join them in hell, God has done all He can to give us a way out.

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It is our choice to be His by acknowledging the sacrifice of His beloved Son for our sins and being reconciled to Him. The final judgement and eternal destiny of man rests solely on man's choice to believe in the finished work of Jesus or ignore it.<sup>59</sup>

As Jesus was going back to heaven, the angel proclaimed to the disciples, "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."<sup>60</sup>

The Lord Jesus' first coming into the world was to deal with our sin, but His second coming will be to receive us to be with Him and to judge the world. As it says in the book of Hebrews, "To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."<sup>61</sup>

At the end of time, which is only known to God, Jesus will return to earth.<sup>62</sup> "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."<sup>63</sup>

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### **Whose kingdom shall have no end**

And now a new world begins that will never come to an end. Jesus is the royal Son of David by human lineage, about whom it was prophesied, “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”<sup>64</sup>

It is important to note that the Lord Jesus’ kingdom is *not* of this world.<sup>65</sup>

The purpose of Jesus coming into this fallen world was to reclaim and establish God’s rule on earth.<sup>66</sup> The kingdom of God has its own rules.<sup>67</sup> Those who join in with the kingdom of God—choosing the Lord Jesus as the rightful King—submit to live by the rules of the Lord, our King Jesus Christ.

The orthodox teaching has always held to the fact that those who submit to the lordship of Christ live their earthly lives as though they are already gone from this earth and are with Him.<sup>68</sup> The life in the kingdom of God is supernatural. As we live here on earth with our

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hearts and minds fixed on the kingdom of God, the world here will not understand us.<sup>69</sup> It is a spiritual, other-worldly reality, yet it is real and true. Jesus lived in this world with two wills; He was a real human being with a human will, yet He maintained and followed the will of God all throughout His earthly life—another mystery our human minds cannot comprehend.

In God's kingdom, His rule and purposes are never limited by time and space as we know it. That which God planned in eternity past will continue for all eternity future. Someday, when we are forever with Christ, we will come to understand more of this glorious mystery that our human minds cannot fully grasp while here on earth.

## Chapter Six

# The Holy Spirit



*“Come, Holy Ghost, our Souls inspire, And lighten  
with fire.” – Rabanus Maurus(Archbishop of Mainz)  
Veni Creator Spiritus*

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who, with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets and apostles**

**T**he Holy Spirit is a person, not some impersonal power or energy. He is the third person in the Holy Trinity.

When the Bible records appearances of the Holy Spirit, He is sometimes described as a “dove”

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or as “tongues of fire.”<sup>1</sup> These symbolic and metaphorical descriptions were used in order to avoid wrong and faulty interpretations of His appearance.

Jesus said about the Holy Spirit, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”<sup>2</sup>

The Holy Spirit is eternal, uncreated and divine, always existing in the Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Spirit—and worshipped as One God with the Trinity. In our liturgy, when the word *holy* is repeated three times—“Holy, Holy, Holy”—it indicates the Father who is holy, the Son who is holy and the Spirit who is holy.

The Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father” to fulfil the decisions of the Holy Trinity. We see this in creation and in the Virgin Mary’s conception of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> Here again, we run into the holy mystery of God that we humans cannot comprehend, yet we must acknowledge and accept the revelation given to us.

The Holy Spirit is the One who regenerates the sinner and gives us a new birth.<sup>4</sup> The Holy Spirit

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fills the believer with power to be an effective witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> The Holy Spirit is the one who produces godly characteristics in us, by changing us into the nature of Christ.<sup>6</sup> And it is the Holy Spirit who used all the human authours of Scripture to write both the Old Testament and the New Testament.<sup>7</sup>

The original creed of Nicaea in AD 325 simply ended with “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” The other additions about who He is were approved at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381.

Our personal and corporate belief in the Holy Spirit must not just be an objective acceptance of the doctrine, but it must become a personal experience in each one of our lives.

It is through the Holy Spirit that the spiritually dead are made alive.<sup>8</sup> And when Jesus returns, we will be raised from the grave by the Holy Spirit to receive our glorified bodies and meet the Lord in the air.<sup>9</sup>

If the Lord Jesus, as a man on earth, needed to be empowered by the Holy Spirit,<sup>10</sup> how much more do we sinful humans need the Holy Spirit

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in order to live godly lives and be Christ's true witnesses?<sup>11</sup>

As we yield our lives to the Holy Spirit through obedience to the Word and humility, He changes our nature to become like that of Jesus.<sup>12</sup>

The fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives is the proof that we are led by the Spirit.<sup>13</sup> And the gifts of the Holy Spirit enable us to accomplish the task of witnessing and building the body of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

The true worship of the orthodox faith is Trinitarian worship. This means the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are equally acknowledged throughout worship. This is the reason you will often see the Holy Spirit acknowledged in adoration along with the Father and the Son in our liturgy.

## Chapter Seven

# The Church



*“The church has many critics, but no rivals.”*  
– Anonymous

### **We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church**

**T**he original Greek word used for church is *ekklesia*, meaning ‘a called out people’. In the Old Testament, the people of God, the Israelites, were called out to fulfil the plan of God. In the New Testament, the church is called out from the world to be God’s people and to fulfil His eternal plan for the heavenly kingdom.

The church is universal in nature, which means

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it includes everyone in the body of Christ. We become part of the people of God through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

In the Holy Bible, the church is called the body of Christ,<sup>1</sup> the Bride of Christ,<sup>2</sup> the living temple,<sup>3</sup> and “the pillar and ground of truth.”<sup>4</sup>

It is said that today there are well over fourty thousand Christian denominations, all claiming to be the ‘true church.’ How do we know which are true and authentic, based on the Holy Bible and the teachings of the apostles and church fathers? This was a question that arose from the beginning of the church. And the Nicene Creed has become the one document that the orthodox church worldwide has accepted as the means of determining the authenticity of a ‘true church.’

### ***Four Marks***

The four distinct marks of the Holy Church are spelled out in this line of the Nicene Creed:

***One church.*** The visible and invisible church is one, regardless of time and space. God is one—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus is the one Saviour, and there is no other means through which mankind can be saved.<sup>5</sup> And the church God intended is one

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if they function according to His rules. Unity of the church is not based on any human authority or judicial power, but by Christ alone. The Rev Dr Simon Chan said it well, “The one church is one precisely because it is united to Christ the Head by the one Spirit who indwells it”<sup>6</sup> Those groups of people that function by following the apostles’ teachings and living according to the pattern of the Word are members of His church.

***Holy Church.*** The church is holy (set apart) because God is holy.<sup>7</sup> The church is a people called out from sin and the world who live for another kingdom—God’s kingdom. The church on earth is supposed to be the body of Christ with the Lord Jesus as its head, carrying out His will in the world.

The church’s faith is expressed in its doctrines, sacraments, Scripture and worship. These things allow that while we worship here on earth, we are actually joining in with the saints and hosts of heaven before the throne of God.

***Catholic church.*** This does not refer to the Roman Catholic Church, but rather affirms that while a church may be a local body of believers, they are actually part of the worldwide church.

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There is a spiritual unity due to the common faith we all share, especially in the non-negotiable doctrines and foundations of the two thousand-year-old Holy Church.

*Apostolic church.* The Holy Church goes back to the apostles themselves.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the church was built upon the apostles' faith, teachings, traditions and witness, which still remain in the values of the true church today. The present church is a link in the long chain that began in the book of Acts. Our faith and witness survive through apostolic succession, where the apostles appointed leaders who in turn appointed other leaders—a process that continues all the way up to the present.

In this way, the apostolic line survives today. Those who adhere to the orthodox faith handed down by the apostles continue in their pursuit of faith and maintain the centrality of Christ in worship along with Biblical teaching. Use of the Nicene Creed, reading of the Scripture, consecration of the Holy Elements, prayers of the people, confession of sin—all are part of following in the footsteps of the apostles, now as it was in the early days of the church.

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While on earth, Jesus prayed that those who believed on Him might “be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”<sup>9</sup> May this become a reality for the whole church. Jesus only has one body here on earth, and that is His church.<sup>10</sup>

### **We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins**

In the Old Testament, circumcision was the entryway to becoming part of the people of God. And in the Christian church, the way of entry is by baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

Only through faith and faith alone can one become a child of God and be in fellowship with the church and the Lord of the church, sharing in Holy Communion and worship.<sup>12</sup> And partaking in baptism is the fundamental and primary condition for one to become part of the Holy Church. Everything in the church has its origin and context in baptism. This is because in baptism we appropriate the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. After one is baptised, they are sealed by the Holy Spirit and by the

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anointing of the Holy Myron in the name of the Holy Trinity—which is again a mystery.

If someone has been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity, then that baptism has taken effect and rebaptism is unnecessary.

**And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the new life of the world to come. Amen.**

The promise the Lord Jesus gave to His church is that He will come back to rescue us and take us to be with Him. The manner in which this restoration will take place and all the details about it are mentioned by the Apostle Paul.<sup>13</sup>

All those that are dead in Christ will rise again in their glorified bodies just as Christ rose from the dead, and time shall no more be. The Bride of Christ will be with Him throughout eternity.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and

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He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' ”<sup>14</sup>

When will this happen? It could be any day, any time. The signs of Jesus' return are being fulfilled and theologians at large believe there are no signs left to be fulfilled except the preaching of the Gospel to all people, and then the end will come.<sup>15</sup>

We read in the final chapter of the Holy Scriptures, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."<sup>16</sup>



## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion



*“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith  
without wavering” – Hebrews 10:23.*

*A*s we conclude this brief explanation of the Nicene Creed, the only official creed of Believers Eastern Church, we acknowledge that while it is the authoritative framework of our faith, it is rooted in the mystery of God. For example, how can our minds fully comprehend the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—three distinct personalities, yet all one, without embracing the aspect of mystery?

There are certain truths given to us that while they are not *against* logic, they are *beyond* our logic. We choose to believe these truths and

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live by faith that God is God and we are His creation. Our part on this journey is to live by faith and obedience.

When we confess the Nicene Creed, it is important to remember the meaning of the statements our fathers wrote down, which were based on the total revelation of the Holy Bible and the centrality of the cross in the Christian faith.

Then too, these truths must not remain just as objective truths, but they must be believed and received by each individual if we are to become beneficiaries of this redemption. As Rod Dreher said in his book *The Benedict Option*, “Right belief (orthodoxy) is essential, but holding the correct doctrines in your mind does you little good if your heart—the seat of the will—remains unconverted. That requires putting those right beliefs into action through right practice (orthopraxy).”<sup>1</sup>

How I thank God for the fathers of faith who met together in Nicaea in AD 325, led by the Holy Spirit, to write down the whole body of truth in one page and hand it down to the Holy

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Church so that we may live and stay in that truth. As Charles Williams once said of this precious Creed, “It had become a Creed, and it remained a Gospel.”<sup>2</sup>

May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. Amen.✠



# Citations



## Introduction

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.merriam\\_webster.com](http://www.merriam_webster.com).

<sup>2</sup> St Matthew 28:19.

<sup>3</sup> James K.A.Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Brazos Press: Grand Rapids, MI, 2016),p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> St Matthew 24:11.

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 4:23; 1 Timothy 4:16.

## Chapter One

### The Foundation of Our Faith

<sup>1</sup> Sermon 212.2.

<sup>2</sup> D.H. Williams, “*Do You Know Whom You*

*Worship?” Christian History & Biography*, Winter 2005, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, *The Unshakeable Truth: How You Can Experience the 12 Essentials of a Relevant Faith* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House), p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *A History of Christian Worship: Ancient Ways, Future Paths* (Part 1: The Word), directed by Tom Dallis (2010; Worchester, PA: Vision Video, 2010.), DVD.

## Chapter Two

### **The Origin of the Nicene Creed**

<sup>1</sup> Robert Louis Wilken, “*Why a Creed?*” *Christian History & Biography*, Winter 2005, pp. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> “The Nicene Creed,” Ken Collins’ website, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://www.kencollins.com/explanations/why-07.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> D.H. Williams, “*Do You Know Whom You Worship?*” *Christian History & Biography*, Winter 2005, p. 27.

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### Chapter Three

#### **Believing is Key**

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:6 (NIV).

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 12:1-6, 21:1-2; Hebrews 11:8-12.

<sup>3</sup> St Matthew 9:28.

### Chapter Four

#### **The Father**

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4, KJV.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 5:6-7, NIV.

<sup>4</sup> St Matthew 6:9; St John 1:12.

<sup>5</sup> Galatians 4:4-7.

<sup>6</sup> St John 17:23.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 33:9, NIV.

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 4:6, NASB.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 17:27-28.

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 139:7-12.

<sup>11</sup> 1 John 4:4.

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 6:2-3; Revelation 4:8.

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 1:26.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis 1:26, 2:18-25, 3:20.

<sup>15</sup> Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:45;  
Hebrews 7:26-29.

<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 3:1-7.

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### Chapter Five

### The Son

- <sup>1</sup> St Matthew 16:15–16.
- <sup>2</sup> St Matthew 1:21.
- <sup>3</sup> St John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 5:21;  
Hebrews 9:11–15.
- <sup>4</sup> St John 1:9, 8:12, 14:6.
- <sup>5</sup> St John 1:14.
- <sup>6</sup> St John 1:1.
- <sup>7</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*  
<http://www.goodreads.com>.
- <sup>8</sup> St John 14:9.
- <sup>9</sup> Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3.
- <sup>10</sup> St John 10:30.
- <sup>11</sup> Romans 11:36; Hebrews 1:2, 2:10.
- <sup>12</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, Swindoll's *Living Insights*  
*New Testament Commentary*, vol. 4, *Insights on*  
*John* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014),  
p. 22.
- <sup>13</sup> St John 1:2,3.
- <sup>14</sup> St John 3:16.
- <sup>15</sup> St John 1:14.
- <sup>16</sup> See 1 Timothy 3:16.
- <sup>17</sup> Philippians 2:5–8.
- <sup>18</sup> Isaiah 7:14.

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- <sup>19</sup> Romans 3:23.  
<sup>20</sup> The Nicean Creed.  
<sup>21</sup> Hebrews 2:14–18.  
<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 4:15.  
<sup>23</sup> 1 Peter 2:22.  
<sup>24</sup> St John 1:29.  
<sup>25</sup> Romans 6:23.  
<sup>26</sup> St John 8:46, paraphrased.  
<sup>27</sup> St John 18:38.  
<sup>28</sup> Acts 16:30.  
<sup>29</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21.  
<sup>30</sup> Hebrews 5:7–10; 1 John 2:2.  
<sup>31</sup> Galatians 3:13.  
<sup>32</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21, RSV.  
<sup>33</sup> Romans 6:5–7.  
<sup>34</sup> St Matthew 27:57–66.  
<sup>35</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:14.  
<sup>36</sup> St Luke 24:13–16, 24:30–31, 24:36–39;  
St John 20:14, 20:19, 20:27, 21:4–9.  
<sup>37</sup> St Matthew 28:1–8; St Mark 16:1–4.  
<sup>38</sup> Acts 2:22–24.  
<sup>39</sup> St John 10:17–18.  
<sup>40</sup> Colossians 2:9, ESV.  
<sup>41</sup> St John 10:30.  
<sup>42</sup> St John 5:26, NIV.  
<sup>43</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:42–45.

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- <sup>44</sup> 1 Corinthians 15.  
<sup>45</sup> St John 11:25–26.  
<sup>46</sup> Ephesians 2:4–7.  
<sup>47</sup> 2 Peter 1:4.  
<sup>48</sup> Romans 10:9.  
<sup>49</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:55, NASB.  
<sup>50</sup> St John 3:16; Acts 4:12, Acts 16:31;  
Romans 3:23, Romans 10:9.  
<sup>51</sup> Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith*, ed. by  
Constance Tarasar, vol. 1, *Doctrine and  
Scripture* (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's  
Seminary Press, 1981), p. 105.  
<sup>52</sup> St Mark 16:19; St Luke 24:50–51;  
Acts 1:9–11.  
<sup>53</sup> Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25.  
<sup>54</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5.  
<sup>55</sup> Revelation 5:6.  
<sup>56</sup> 1 John 4:8.  
<sup>57</sup> Ezekiel 33:11.  
<sup>58</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4.  
<sup>59</sup> St Matthew 25:41; St John 3:16;  
Revelation 3:20; Revelation 20:1–15.  
<sup>60</sup> Acts 1:11.  
<sup>61</sup> Hebrews 9:28.  
<sup>62</sup> St Matthew 24.  
<sup>63</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17.

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- <sup>64</sup> St Luke 1:32–33.
- <sup>65</sup> St John 18:36.
- <sup>66</sup> St Matthew 4:17.
- <sup>67</sup> St Matthew 5–7.
- <sup>68</sup> Colossians 3:1–2.
- <sup>69</sup> 1 John 3:13.

### Chapter Six

### **The Holy Spirit**

- <sup>1</sup> St Matthew 3:16; Acts 2:3.
- <sup>2</sup> St John 15:26.
- <sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6.
- <sup>4</sup> St John 3:5–8.
- <sup>5</sup> Acts 1:8.
- <sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22–23.
- <sup>7</sup> 2 Peter 1:20–21.
- <sup>8</sup> Ezekiel 37:1–6; St John 3:3–8;  
Ephesians 2:1–7.
- <sup>9</sup> Romans 8:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17.
- <sup>10</sup> Isaiah 61:1; St Luke 4:1; Hebrews 9:14.
- <sup>11</sup> Galatians 5:17–21.
- <sup>12</sup> St John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13; 2 Corinthians  
3:2–6, 3:18; Galatians 5:22–25, 6:8; Ephesians  
2:10, 2:18–22; Colossians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:4–9.
- <sup>13</sup> Galatians 5:22–25.
- <sup>14</sup> 1 Corinthians 12.

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### Chapter Seven

#### **The Church**

- <sup>1</sup> Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 10:17;  
Colossians 1:18, 1:24-26.
- <sup>2</sup> Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 21:9-11.
- <sup>3</sup> Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5.
- <sup>4</sup> 1 Timothy 3:15.
- <sup>5</sup> St John 14:6; Acts 4:12.
- <sup>6</sup> Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), p. 36.
- <sup>7</sup> 1 Peter 1:15-16.
- <sup>8</sup> Acts 2:41-47.
- <sup>9</sup> St John 17:21.
- <sup>10</sup> Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.
- <sup>11</sup> St Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-5;  
1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 2:11-12.
- <sup>12</sup> Galatians 3:26.
- <sup>13</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:12-58.
- <sup>14</sup> Revelation 21:1-5.
- <sup>15</sup> St Matthew 24:14.
- <sup>16</sup> Revelation 22:20, NIV.

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### Chapter Eight

### **Conclusion**

- <sup>1</sup> Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017), p. 52.
- <sup>2</sup> Charles Williams, *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939), p. 49.



## **BELIEVERS EASTERN CHURCH**

Believers Eastern Church has its faith and practices rooted in God's Word, the apostolic doctrines, the Nicene Creed, and holy traditions of the ancient church. We are thoroughly evangelical in nature, eastern in worship, democratic in function and episcopal in governance.

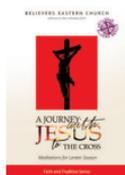
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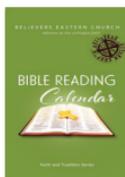
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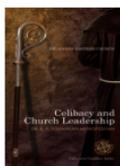
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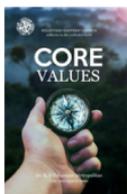
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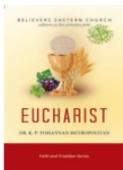
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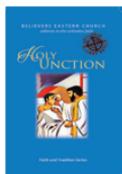
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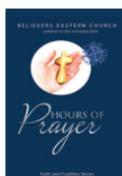
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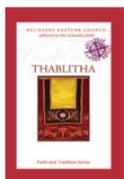
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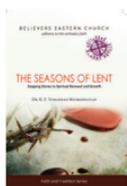
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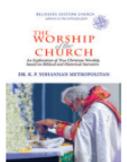
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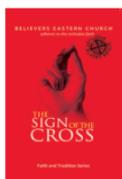
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