

Lesson 12 | Wednesday, February 21, 2024

## **MIND YOUR KING**, lessons from Doy Moyer's Book, [Mind Your King](#).

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From the beginning, promises about what would be the good news of God through Christ was exactly that – something God would provide. From the seed of woman (Genesis 3:15, Romans 20) to the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3, Romans 3:25-26), Jesus is the grace that appeared to bring salvation to all men (Titus 2:15). And when other prophets foretold the coming of the age of the Messiah's blessings, they emphasized too, as we have noted, that at the end of the promise of that message, the people will respond and say, "Our God Reigns" (c.f. Isa 52:7; quoted in Romans 10:15).

Where did they come from? A legend claimed that each of the 12 articles was written by one of the 12 apostles Rufinus of Aquileia (345–411) wrote, "So they [i.e., the apostles] met together in one spot and, being filled with the Holy Spirit, compiled this brief token . . . each making the contribution he thought fit; and they decreed that it should be handed out as standard teaching to believers."

All in all, when you read most creeds, you might have little reservation with the statements affirming faith. Yet, a creed was written by Christians for other Christians. Of course, if the objective was merely to share teaching information within the materials, many often respond that Christians have God's Bible – the revelation about God from God for God's people. And that's true. We share teaching material with other Christians that reflect our study and encourage study in others – even if the material is not widely understood or even accepted. Yet we are not sharing as those who made Creeds share.

The Apostles' Creed represents a set of uncompromisable core beliefs for Christians. As such, the core tradition of it is also found in the Nicene Creed. The Apostles' Creed, like all creeds, functions like a filter for orthodoxy; it indicates what is and what is not "Christian." [Elliot Ritzema (with John D. Barry), Lexham Bible Dictionary, Lexham Press].

"It is called the Apostle's Creed because our ancient traditions date the profession of our faith back to the Apostles themselves. It was created for the first time in Rome toward the end of the 2nd century." (<https://www.acatholic.org/catholic-the-apostles-creed/>).

An early version of what later became the Apostles' Creed, called the "Old Roman Creed," was in use as early as the second century (Kelly, *Creeds*, 101). The earliest written form of this creed is found in a letter that Marcellus of Ancyra wrote in Greek to Julius, the bishop of Rome, about AD 341. About 50 years later, Tyrannius Rufinus wrote a commentary on this creed in Latin (*Commentarius in symbolum apostolorum*). In it, he recounted the viewpoint that the apostles wrote the creed together after Pentecost, before leaving Jerusalem to preach (*Symb.* 2). The title "Apostles' Creed" is also mentioned about 390 by Ambrose, where he refers to "the creed of the Apostles which the Church of Rome keeps and guards in its entirety" (*Ep.* 42, trans. in *Saint Ambrose: Letters*). The text of the Old Roman Creed is as follows, with the last phrase (included by Marcellus but omitted by Rufinus) in brackets (Kelly, *Creeds*, 102): <https://blog.faithlife.com/blog/2015/04/the-apostles-creed-its-history-and-origins/>

Philip Schaff (*Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. 1: 4), says, "A creed may cover the whole ground of Christian doctrine and practice, or contain only such points as are deemed fundamental and sufficient, or as have been disputed. It may be declarative, or interrogative in form" (like a list of questions that check for orthodoxy).

The expression "Apostles' Creed" is first mentioned in a letter from the Synod of Milan dated AD 390, referring to a belief at the time that each of the Twelve Apostles contributed an article to the twelve articles of the creed. According to historian Philip Schaff, the "Apostles' Creed" was inserted in a letter from Marcellus of Ancyra, about AD 341, "with a view to prove his orthodoxy" (*Creeds of Christendom*,

Vol. 2:48). Over the next few centuries, the Apostles' Creed in its final form gained acceptance throughout France and Germany. It was officially recognized by Charlemagne throughout the Frankish Empire in the early ninth century, and was eventually incorporated into the liturgy of the Church of Rome.

History of the Nicene Creed. The creed was adopted mainly to resolve what is known as the Arian controversy. The controversy, led by one clergyman of Alexandria, Arius, objected Alexander's, the bishop of the time, apparent carelessness to blur the distinction existing between the nature of God the Father and the Son. When the controversy arose, Alexander accused Arius of openly denying the divinity of God the Son. He also accused him of being too "Greek" and "Jewish" in his thoughts. It was after this that Alexander and his supporters went ahead to craft the Nicene Creed to bring out clarity in the key tenets of the Christian faith. This was in response to the widespread adoption of Arius's doctrines. The doctrines were henceforth marked as heresy.

The Nicene Creed is different from the Apostle's Creed because it takes to even further – and more precise aim – to use more precise language for the church's faith and to set boundaries. It even introduced a word that is not in the Bible, *homoousios*, of one substance or being, because the bishops felt that it helped explain how God could be one yet twofold (the debate about the Holy Spirit will follow two generations later). With that term the council fathers wished to say that in whatever way God is God, Christ also is God.

In the Campbell-Rice Debate on Creeds (773, 778), Rice names two chief purposes. (1) "A creed is intended to be a public declaration of the great doctrines and truths which we, as a body, understand the Bible to teach. It is not a substitute for the Bible, nor an addition to it. (2) "It is a standard of ministerial qualifications, as well as of the qualifications of other church officers" (his emphasis). He further states, "The Presbyterians have deemed it wise to draw up an outline of the doctrines and truths they understand the Scriptures to teach, and to require all who seek the office of the ministry at their hands, to state distinctly whether they so understand them." Does that sound vaguely familiar?

Apostles' Creed (*Symbolum Apostolorum*). A statement of Christian belief that is used by Western churches, both Catholic and Protestant. While it is explicitly affirmed only in Western churches, it reflects traditions that were affirmed officially by the entire Church in the Nicene Creed. Although its roots are much earlier, in its present form it dates to about the eighth century.

Even the Athanasian Creed, which addressed in its first setting the orthodox doctrine of the trinity, and in the second, the incarnation and the two-natures doctrine of Jesus, has been posted on a Christian Reformed Church website that concludes, "one cannot be saved without believing it firmly and faithfully."

So, when people today think of creeds, they are often viewed as synonymous with false doctrines. However, creeds were not collections of false teachings but were instead instigated to identify everything that was false. So doctrinal error should not be seen as the true characteristic of creeds. A listing of "I believes" could really be all truths of Scripture – but should creeds be accepted?

Moses E. Lard said, "Aside even from anything a human creed may contain, we condemn it per se." And again, "The degrees of approximation to truth are not the point. The thing itself is an apostasy." (Lard's Quarterly, Vol. 1, p. 600, my emphasis, dh)

Alexander Campbell says, "I object to all human creeds as terms of communion. (1) They say, in effect, 'the form of sound words' (N.T. alone) is not well adapted to our needs. (2) They are designed to exclude the evil and receive the good; but good men will not subscribe for sake of place or office in any church, while evil men who want place or office will subscribe whether they believe or not. (3) They are a source of division" (Christian Baptist, Vol. 2, page 44) and "I contend for one divine and infallible creed, and you argue for a human and fallible one along with it, or for the 'principle' of having two creeds." (Vol. 4, 177).

The Apostles Creed – is it in the Bible?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, (Mt 5 :45)  
Creator of heaven and earth, (Gen 1: 1; Rom 1: 20)  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, (Mt 3: 17; Phil 2: 12)  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, (Lk 1: 35)  
born of the Virgin Mary, (Lk 2: 7)  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, (Jn 19: 16)  
was crucified, died, and was buried. (Jn 19: 29 – 42)  
He descended into hell; (1 Pet 3: 19 – 20)  
on the third day He rose again from the dead, (Mt 28:1-10; Jn 20:11-18)  
He ascended in heaven, (Lk 24: 51)  
and sits at the right hand of God, (Heb 1: 3)  
the Father almighty; (Mk 14: 36)  
from thence He shall come again (Mt 16: 27; Acts 10: 39;)  
to judge the living and the dead. (1 Cor 15: 51)  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, (Jn 14: 15 – 20; Acts 1: 7 – 8)  
the Holy Catholic Church, (Mt 16: 18 – 19; Eph 5: 26-27; Col 1: 24)  
the communion of Saints, (Mt 28: 19 – 20; 2 Cor 11: 13; 1 Cor 15: 33)  
the forgiveness of sins, (Jn 20: 22 – 23)  
the resurrection of the body, (1Cor 15: 51 – 54; 1 Thes 4: 13 – 18)  
and life everlasting. (1 Jn 5: 20)