

Session Three: The Creed



Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Matthew 27:46

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (cf. Psalm 22:1)

The Three “A’s” of Alexandria (and Nicaea)

Alexander (d. 328)—bishop of Alexandria, led the opposition to Arius
Mentored Athanasius and brought him to Nicaea as his spokesman
Synod of Alexandria (320)
100 bishops from Egypt & Libya—repudiated Arius
Arius was excommunicated, then appealed beyond N. Africa at Palestine

Arius (256-336) —“elderly, cultured, and ascetic” presbyter from Libya
Logos = lesser God, not eternal nor omnipotent (cf. Jehovah’s Witnesses)
He is the first and greatest creature
“There was a time when the Son was not”
“The Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning”¹⁴
Holy Spirit = first creature made by the Son
Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation.

John 14:28 . . . I am going to the Father, for the Father
is greater than I.

His banishment at Nicaea was the first state punishment of heresy
Returned through efforts of Eusebius of Nicomedia, 328
Died 336—at Constantinople (bishop Alexander’s prayer)
“may Arius suffer the penalty he deserves”
Next day, Arius parades proudly through the city w/mob
‘Relieved’ at market on his way to the Lord’s Supper
See handout, “Letter to Alexander”

¹⁴ Arius, “Letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia.”

Athanasius (299-373)—archdeacon, Alexander’s right-hand man

Became bishop after Alexander (328)

Salvation as *deification* (2 Peter 1:4, “*partakers of the divine nature*”)

United with God requires Christ to be divine (worship, too)

Chief proponent of Nicene Christology in the 4th century

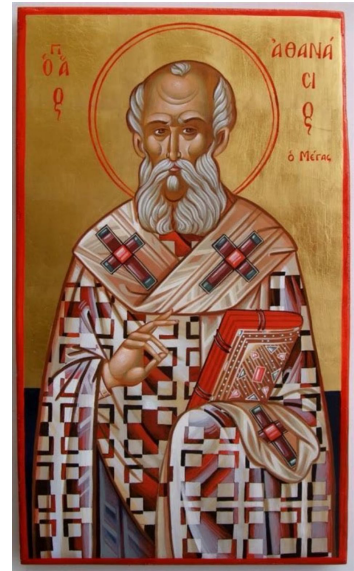
Led opposition to Arius post-Nicaea

Exiled 5 times for his opposition to Arianism

17 of 45 years as bishop in exile

Contra mundum

Edward Gibbon Athanasius is an example of “what effect may be produced, or what obstacles may be surmounted, by the force of a single mind, when it is inflexibly applied to the pursuit of a single object. The immortal name of Athanasius will never be separated from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, to whose defence he consecrated every moment and every faculty of his being.”



Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 325, 381)¹⁵

(Article One)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,

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

(Article Two)

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten (*monogenes*) Son of God,

begotten of the Father **before all worlds; [that is of the substance (*ousia*) of the Father]**

God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;

begotten, not made, being **of one substance (*homoousion*)** with the Father,

(*contra Arius*)

by whom all things were made. **[both things in heaven and things on earth]**

Who, for us men 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;**

KEY

Plain text = common to both creeds

Bold text = Nicaea, but not Constantinople

Green text = additions at Constantinople (381)

¹⁵ Van Dixhoorn, *Creeds*, 17-18.

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 quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

(Article Three)

And [I believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life;
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;¹⁶
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.
And [I believe] in one holy catholic 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.

But those who say, “there was a time when he did not exist”, and “Before being begotten he did not exist”, and that he came into being from non-existence, or who allege that the Son of God is of another *hypostasis* or *ousia*, or is alterable or changeable, these the catholic and apostolic church condemns.

All but 2 bishops (Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmarica) signed the Creed at Nicaea. They were sent into exile along with Arius.

The Received Greek Text¹⁷

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἓνα ΘΕΟΝ ΠΑΤΕΡΑ παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀορατῶν.

Καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον ἸΗΣΟΥΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ· δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο· τὸν δι’ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα, καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, καὶ

¹⁶ The Latin text of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan (381) as revised by the Third Council of Toledo (589) ratified the use of the *filioque* clause (and the Son) to further define the procession of the Holy Spirit. This revision is received by the Reformed and Presbyterian churches but is not received by the Eastern Churches. Here is a more detailed explanation: (<https://heidelblog.net/2014/03/resources-on-the-double-procession-and-filioque/>).

¹⁷ As found at: <https://heidelblog.net/nicene/>. Accessed 9 January 2026. Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes: The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890), 57-58.

καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς· οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.

Καὶ εἰς τὸ ΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΤΟ ἍΓΙΟΝ, τὸ κύριον, (καὶ) τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ ὑἱῷ σὺν προσκυνούμενον καὶ σὺνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν· εἰς μίαν, ἅγιαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν· ὁμολογοῦμεν ἓν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν· προσδοκῶμεν ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν, καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. Ἀμήν.

Received Latin Text¹⁸

Credo in unum DEUM PATREM omnipotentem; factorem cœli et terræ, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum JESUM CHRISTUM, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula [Deum de Deo], Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt; qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de cœlis, et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est; crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est; et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas; et ascendit in cœlum, sedet ad dexteram Patris; et iterum venturus est, cum gloria, judicare vivos et mortuos; cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in SPIRITUM SANCTUM, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre [Filioque] procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum; et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi seculi. Amen.



¹⁸ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 58–59.

Article 1

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

William Lane Craig and the problems of philosophers

Open Theism (video)

Monotheletism (one will)

God and time (eternal, then temporal)