



Defending Your Faith

Expository Apologetics

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

PROVIDENCE REFORMED

BAPTIST CHURCH



Lesson 6 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- For the course of this study, we will be referencing “Expository Apologetics: Answering Objections with the Power of the Word” by Voddie Baucham.
- Chapter 5: Learning Apologetics through Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms



Lesson 6 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- In reviewing the historic Christian creeds last time, we did not cover the Creed of Chalcedon, so I wanted to go back and take a look at it before continuing in our discussion of confessions and catechisms.
- The Chalcedonian Creed was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 in Asia Minor as a response to certain heretical views concerning the nature of Christ. This was especially significant because of a controversy between the eastern and western churches over the doctrine of the incarnation and other matters of ecclesiology. The split that resulted remains to this day as the Eastern Orthodox Church denies that Christ has 2 natures, one human and one divine. “His divine nature is one with His human nature yet without mingling, confusion, or alteration.”



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- The Creed of Chalcedon clarifies the truth about the Person and Natures of Christ: Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.



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- [Tom Nettles says of the Creed of Chalcedon:](#)
- “The creed seeks the consent of the reader that this formula is a true presentation of Old Testament prophecy, the teachings of Christ himself, the true doctrinal tradition of the church fathers, and the unalloyed meaning of the Nicene Creed.”
- “Jesus Christ really was God incarnate, the second person of the eternal Trinity.”
- “Jesus the Christ was truly and fully human.”
- “Without any mixture or confusion of the two natures that would compromise the integrity of either, Jesus was one person.”
- “One must distinguish between nature and person.”



Lesson 6 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- Confessions of Faith, in addition to Creeds, flowed out of the Protestant Reformation to demonstrate the differences between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Churches.
- The Three “Reformed” Confessions include the Belgic Confession of Faith (1561), the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563), the Canons of Dort (1619), the First London Baptist Confession (1644/1646), the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646), and the Second London Baptist Confession (1677/1689).
- While many in Reformed circles today stress the differences between our churches, the overwhelming level of agreement within these confessions is a testament to the history and legacy we share in our understanding of the gospel and the Scriptures.



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- These creeds and confessions serve 3 purposes:
- 1. Confessions of Faith serve to unite believers with their historical roots. 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:2; 3:14.
- 2. Confessions serve to clarify the distinct beliefs of various groups of Christians.
- 3. Confessions serve as a standard and starting point for disciple making.
- Spurgeon wrote of the 1689 Baptist Confession, “This ancient document is the most excellent epitome of the things most surely believed among us. It is not issued as an authoritative rule or code of faith, whereby you may be fettered, but as a means of edification in righteousness. It is an excellent, though not inspired, expression of the teaching of those Holy Scriptures by which all confessions are to be measured. We hold to the humbling truths of God’s sovereign grace in the salvation of lost sinners. Salvation is through Christ alone and by faith alone.”



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- 2 Timothy 2:2 and 3:14 find Paul encouraging Timothy, saying, “the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”, and “continue in the things you learned and became convinced of.”
- The Apostles knew that there is a “pattern of sound teaching” and they spent time writing to the churches in order to confront unsound teaching. The church must know what she believes.
- Voddie finds it “ironic and disturbing that Christians want to (1) forsake confessionalism and (2) make disciples. This is a kind of remaking of Christianity over and over again.” (pg. 96)



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- This is like training doctors without relying on years and years of practical experience by those who practice medicine.
- While we do not want to be slaves of man-made tradition (Matthew 15:6), but it is also wrong to ignore traditions that are based on Scripture (1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15).
- In the foreword of the Second London Baptist Confession we read, “For the information, and satisfaction of those, that did not thoroughly understand what our principles were, or had entertained prejudices against our Profession.” The confession confronts and corrects misunderstandings others had about what 17th century Baptists believed.



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- Confessions also serve as a starting point for disciple making (pg. 97).
- Continuing in the foreword of the Second London Confession, “And verily there is one spring and cause of the decay of religion in our day which we cannot but touch upon and earnestly urge a redress of, and that is the neglect of the worship of God in families by those to whom the charge and conduct of them is committed. May not the gross ignorance and instability of many, with the profaneness of others, be justly charged upon their parents and masters, who have not trained them up in the way wherein they ought to walk when they were young, but have neglected those frequent and solemn commands which the Lord hath laid upon them, so to catechise and instruct them that their tender years might be seasoned with the knowledge of the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures.”



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- This is the foreword to a 32 chapter “minisystematic theology.”
- We should be using our confessions of faith in the discipleship of our children as well as for recent converts or those new to reformed theology.
- Some proclaim, “No creed (or confession) but Christ. But that is a confession! In fact, “Describing the Bible as 66 books of the Old and New Testaments is a confessional statement.” (pg. 98).
- It is not that people are opposed to confessions, it is that they are opposed to historic, reformed confessions that take away their justification for saying that they believe what they believe because “God told me.”



Lesson 6 – Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms

- So what exactly does the Second London Baptist Confession cover?
- <http://www.romans45.org/creeds/bcof.htm>
- And how is it different from the Westminster Confession of Faith?
- https://www.proginosko.com/docs/wcf_lbcf.html



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- These confessions express beliefs held by confessional Baptists and Presbyterians since the time of the Reformation!
- As an example for use in apologetics, consider the Second London Confession, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1: God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.



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- This one paragraph answers questions like:
- 1. How does God know everything?
- 2. Why does God allow evil?
- 3. If God uses the actions of sinful men, doesn't that make Him the author of sin?
- 4. If God knows everything, then why do my choices and actions matter?



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- Chapter 8, Paragraph 2 states:
- “The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being true and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of the same substance and equal with Him; Who made the world, and Who upholds and governs all things which He has made, did, when the fullness of time had come, take upon Himself man's nature, with all its essential properties and common infirmities, with the exception of sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowing her, so that He was born to a woman from the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham and David, in accordant with the Scriptures. Thus two whole, perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; So that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, yet He is one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.



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- This paragraph magnifies Christ and is a clear reflection of the ancient creeds, which are much older than this confession of faith, demonstrating a lineage of belief that goes back to the early church.
- How then do we put all this together? There we find the role of catechisms. (next lesson, part 3).