

## **Trinity and Incarnation**

## **Athanasian Creed, Part 2**

### 1. REVIEW: THE AUTHORITY OF THE CREED

Belgic Confession, Article 9 “This doctrine of the holy Trinity has always been maintained in the true church, from the time of the apostles until the present... And so, in this matter we willingly accept the three ecumenical creeds—the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian— as well as what the ancient fathers decided in agreement with them.”

### 2. THE CONTENT OF THE CREED: The creed has two parts: one focusing on the \_\_\_\_\_ (Lines 3-28) and one on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ (Lines 29-44).

- a. The transcendence of God: uncreated (8), immeasurable (9), eternal (10), almighty (13)

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

- b. The oneness of God: “Thus, the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three gods; there is but one God.” (Lines 15-16; See also 6, 11, 12, 14, 20, 27)

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (Deuteronomy 6:4)  
but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)

- c. The incarnation: “Now this is the true faith: that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is both God and man, equally.” (Line 30) “Although he is God and man, yet Christ is not two, but one.” (Line 34)

All that the Father has is mine... (John 16:15a)  
Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus... (Philippians 2:5)

### 3. THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CREED

- a. The word “catholicity” means that we confess the \_\_\_\_\_ Christian faith shared by all Christian churches (1, 20, 44).
- b. That broad catholic faith has Jesus Christ at its \_\_\_\_\_ and proclaims the necessity of faith in Christ (Lines 1-2, 44).
- c. The catholicity of our faith should affect how we \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel and should make us both humble and confident.

since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God (1 Peter 1:23)

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## THE ATHANASIAN CREED

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[1] Whoever desires to be saved should above all hold to the catholic<sup>1</sup> faith. [2] Anyone who does not keep it whole and unbroken will doubtless perish eternally. [3] Now this is the catholic faith: that we worship one God in Trinity and the Trinity in unity, [4] neither confounding their persons nor dividing the essence.

**[5] For the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another. [6] But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. [7] Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit.**

[8] The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Spirit is uncreated. [9] The Father is immeasurable, the Son is immeasurable, the Holy Spirit is immeasurable. [10] The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit is eternal. [11] And yet there are not three eternal beings; there is but one eternal being. [12] So too there are not three uncreated or immeasurable beings; there is but one uncreated and immeasurable being.

**[13] Similarly, the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty. [14] Yet there are not three almighty beings; there is but one almighty being. [15] Thus, the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. [16] Yet there are not three gods; there is but one God.**

[17] Thus, the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord. [18] Yet there are not three lords; there is but one Lord. [19] Just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually as both God and Lord, [20] so catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords.

**[21] The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten from anyone. [22] The Son was neither made nor created; he was begotten from the Father alone.**

**[23] The Holy Spirit was neither made nor created nor begotten; he proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

[24] Accordingly, there is one Father, not three fathers; there is one Son, not three sons; there is one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits. [25] None in this Trinity is before or after, none is greater or smaller; [26] in their entirety the three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other.

**[27] So in everything, as was said earlier, the unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity, is to be worshipped.**

**[28] Anyone then who desires to be saved should think thus about the Trinity.**

[29] But it is necessary for eternal salvation that one also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully.

[30] Now this is the true faith: that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man, equally.

**[31] He is God from the essence of the Father, begotten before time; and he is man from the essence of his mother, born in time; [32] completely God, completely man, with a rational soul and human flesh; [33] equal to the Father as regards divinity, less than the Father as regards humanity.**

[34] Although he is God and man, yet Christ is not two, but one. [35] He is one, however, not by his divinity being turned into flesh, but by God's taking humanity to himself.

[36] He is one, certainly not by the blending of his essence, but by the unity of his person. [37] For just as one man is both rational soul and flesh, so too the one Christ is both God and man.

**[38] He suffered for our salvation; he descended to hell;<sup>2</sup> he arose from the dead on the third day; [39] he ascended to heaven; he is seated at the Father's right hand; [40] from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. [41] At his coming all people will arise bodily [42] and give an accounting of their own deeds. [43] Those who have done good will enter eternal life, and those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.**

[44] This is the catholic faith: that one cannot be saved without believing it firmly and faithfully.

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<sup>1</sup> "Catholic" means universal; that is, there is one church across all times, places, and peoples (Belgic Confession, art. 27; Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 54).

<sup>2</sup> See Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 44; Canons of Dort, 2.4.