

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR – November 2022

5 Things You Should Know about Creeds

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Most Christians have heard of things like the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed, but many Christians also have a number of misconceptions about creeds. There is a lot of misunderstanding about the nature, history, and purpose of creeds. Here are five things you should know about creeds.

1. The word “creed” comes from the Latin word *credo*, which simply means “I believe.”

The plural form is *credimus*, which means “we believe.” In short, when we recite a creed, we are simply making a statement concerning what we believe. What this means is that if you believe anything, you have a creed. What if you say, “I believe in no creed but Christ”? Well, then, that’s your creed. It’s a short creed, but it is a creed. When we understand that creeds are human statements of faith, it also helps us better understand the relationship between Scripture and creeds. Holy Scripture is inspired. The Greek word in [2 Timothy 3:16](#) is *theopneustos*, which literally means “God-breathed.” Scripture is the inspired Word of God. Creeds are non-inspired words of men. In the Scriptures, we hear God saying, “Thus saith the Lord . . .” In the creeds, we respond, “We believe you . . .”

2. The Bible itself uses creed-like summaries.

Probably the most well-known example of this is the Shema in [Deuteronomy 6:4](#), which begins “Hear, O Israel: The lord our God, the lord is one.” This short creed-like statement is expanded upon by Paul in [1 Corinthians 8:6](#) to take account of the further revelation concerning Jesus Christ. Other creed-like statements in the New Testament are found in [Romans 10:9–10](#) (“Jesus is Lord”) and [1 Corinthians 15:3–4](#).

3. The Apostles did not write the Apostles' Creed.

The legend that the twelve Apostles wrote the Apostles' Creed appears to have originated in the fourth or fifth century, but there is no evidence that the legend is true. There is evidence in the second and third centuries of the existence of short creedal statements in the churches. One of the most well-known is the Old Roman Creed. Its content, and the content of the others, is very similar to the content of the later Apostles' Creed. The content of all these early creedal statements derives from even earlier baptismal liturgies in which the baptized was asked a series of questions to which he or she gave short formulaic responses. The content of these short liturgical statements of faith is the same as the content of the early creedal statements. Some early Christian writers, such as Irenaeus, referred to this content as the *regula fidei* or “rule of faith.” It was a summary of the biblical teaching concerning God.

4. The Nicene Creed was written in order to defend the biblical teaching concerning God against heretics.

Any reader of Scripture will notice that it teaches several things quite clearly.

- First, it teaches that there is one and only one true God.

- Second, it teaches that the Father is God.
- Third, it teaches that the Son is God.
- Fourth, it teaches that the Holy Spirit is God.
- Finally, it teaches that the Father is not the Son or the Spirit, the Son is not the Father or the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father or the Son.

As both Christians and non-Christians asked how all five of these teachings fit together, occasionally an answer would be proposed that solved the difficulties by rejecting one or more of these biblical doctrines. In the fourth century, a man named Arius “solved” the problem by denying that the Son is God. This created a controversy that lasted for decades. The controversy was dealt with at the Councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381). The result of these councils is what we know as the Nicene Creed. It is a statement of the church’s belief about the biblical doctrine of God written to defend that belief against the anti-Christian doctrine of Arius and others. It follows the basic outline of the earlier and shorter creedal statements, but it adds specific language to rule out heretical distortions of that content.

5. The use of creeds is not a slippery slope to Roman Catholicism.

As mentioned above, all Christians have a creed whether they realize it or not. All you have to do to prove this is to ask any Christian (including yourself), “What do you believe the Bible teaches about (pick a topic)?” Whatever the response is, it is a creed. The early Protestants did not reject the ancient creeds of the church. They continued to teach and defend the biblical doctrine of the Trinity as summarized in the Nicene Creed. They continued to teach and defend the biblical doctrine of Christ as summarized in the Definition of Chalcedon. It was only heretics like the Socinians (the liberals of the sixteenth century) who rejected the ancient Christian creeds.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: WHAT’S HAPPENING AT LBC

Ecclesiastes Bible Study – The Wednesday evening Bible study continues to be held at LBC at 7:30pm.

Ladies Bible Study – This study continues to be held at LBC on Fridays at 9:30. All ladies welcome.

Men’s Breakfast – All men are invited to join us for a time of food, fellowship, worship and bible study on Saturday November 19th at 8:30am. The breakfast will be held at LBC. There is no cost for the breakfast, but a free-will offering will be taken.

LBC Games Night – All are invited to join us for a time of games, fellowship and snacks on November 19th at 7pm. The event will be held at Pinehill Apartments. (150 Clarence St, Lanark)

Operation Christmas Child – Shoeboxes continue to be available at the back of the church. Please be sure to return filled boxes back to LBC by Sunday November 13th.

Lanark Highlands Food Bank – As we head into the winter season, let's continue to remember the local food bank. A food pantry box is located at the back of the church,.

Evening Service– Please join us for a time of worship, teaching and corporate prayer on Sunday November 27th at 7pm.