

CLASS 1 – WALKING IN THE POWER OF THE WORD & SPIRIT: DOCTRINE
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FIRST THINGS FIRST

From the Bible Comes Sound Christian Doctrine and Teaching

The Biblical Canon

The biblical canon is made up of the books Christians regard as divinely inspired and making up the Christian Bible. The Canon was generally accepted by the second century, although inclusion of some of the books (Hebrews and Revelation, for example) was debated until the 5th century, when the Canon was decided by the Catholic, meaning “universal,” church.

The Old Testament includes the Hebrew Bible, though some of the books are combined into one, making the number different. The New Testament includes inspired books penned by:

The Apostles (Matthew, John, and Peter), with John writing the most (Gospel of John, 1st-3rd John, and Revelation)

Mark and Luke (not Apostles), who interviewed the Apostles/eye witnesses and wrote two Gospels and credited for Acts (Luke)

Paul the Apostle (wrote Romans, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Timothy, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Colossians, Titus, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, Philemon, Galatians, and Ephesians.

James, the brother of Jesus (wrote James)

Jude, the brother of Jesus (wrote Jude)

When and Why Were the Apocryphal Books Included in the Biblical Canon?

At some point, the church as launched in the book of Acts (2nd Century AD) was influenced negatively by biblical ignorance resulting non-transformation of both the leadership and the people. The church leadership had become corrupt and had corrupted the Gospel.

The Protestant Reformation resulted as reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and others reacted against the corruption in the Catholic or “Universal” church. Martin Luther is generally credited with launching the Reformation when he posted his 95 Theses that criticized the selling of “indulgences” (purchased forgiveness of sin), in 1517.

Luther had been energized and changed when he had stumbled on dusty Bible manuscripts in the monastery where he served. The light came on as he read Romans 1:17, *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”* And, as he studied God’s Word more, he was further changed and recognized that Salvation was by grace, not works. As time went on, he began to criticize many of the doctrines and devotional Catholic practices. So the fire spread!

The Roman Catholic Church responded to the Protestant Reformation with a Counter-Reformation in 1547 (Council of Trent) and declared the Apocrypha books a part of the Canon.

<http://www.bible.ca/catholic-apocrypha.htm>

Apocrypha are statements or claims that are of dubious authenticity. The word's origin is the Medieval Latin adjective apocryphus, "secret, or non-canonical", from the Greek adjective ἀπόκρυφος (apokryphos), "obscure", from the verb ἀποκρύπτειν (apokryptein), "to hide away".

Of the uncanonized ones, the Early Church considered some heretical but viewed others quite well. Some Christians, in an extension of the meaning, might also consider the non-heretical books to be "apocryphal" along the manner of Martin Luther: not canon, but useful to read. This category includes books such as the Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, and The Shepherd of Hermas which are sometimes referred to as the Apostolic Fathers.

SOUND PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY/INTERPRETATION

Doctrine and teaching must follow sound principles of biblical interpretation to avoid error.

The Bible itself is the primary source of study to learn about God and what the Bible teaches. To get to know God, we must study the Bible, His revealed Word.

It is very important that Christians learn to properly study the Bible. There are sound principles that must be followed to avoid bizarre interpretations, based upon inadequate foundations. Faulty interpretations are most likely to take place when verses are taken out of context of the whole, symbolic meaning is read into verses meant to be taken literally, historical context is not considered, Scripture is not used to interpret Scripture and original language is not considered for difficult passages and concepts.

Below are some basic principles which must be followed:

CONTEXT RULES

1. You must consider the historical, geographical, political and cultural context, in relation to the passage/chapter/book.
2. Develop a personal habit of reading the Bible through regularly each year, so that you have a context in which to base your understanding on what a particular passage means. (Today, you can download the spoken Word on to your iPhone or purchase a digital copy, and listen to it while you work or drive, to continue build/refresh your knowledge of the whole of Scripture. It is recommended that you invest in a respected study Bible.)
3. As you study, ask: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
4. Consider the relationship of various chapters and verses to each other to determine meaning.
5. Don't base your interpretation/doctrine on a single verse, but on the whole of Scripture.

SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE

1. Obscure passages must be understood in the light of clearer ones.
2. Remember that no part of the Bible can contradict any other part. If one passage seems to contradict another, one of the passages is being misinterpreted, or even both.
3. As God's Word, the Bible must be consistent with itself.
4. Don't base your convictions on an obscure passage of Scripture.

INTERPRET SCRIPTURE LITERALLY

1. Scripture is to be read in its literal sense.
2. Understand God's words just as you would interpret the language of normal discourse.
3. Look first for the literal meaning, not some mystical, deeper, hidden, secret or spiritualized interpretation.
4. If there is symbolic meaning, use Scripture to interpret Scripture.

CONSIDER GRAMMER/ORIGINAL LANGUAGE TO DETERMINE MEANING

1. Be aware of the sequences of the words and phrases, tenses, and part of speech (verb or noun), to determine meaning.
2. Often it is necessary to consider the original language to fully understand the passage. (Today, there are Greek/Hebrew lexicons, Bible study software, or free sites like www.blueletterbible.org , www.biblegateway.com, etc. that can help you understand.)

APPLY BIBLICAL TRUTH

1. The Scripture is meant to be applied to life, not just read.
2. Ask: What does this mean in regard to our world? How does this apply to me? What needs to change in the way I think and act?

We strongly recommend that all Bible students invest in one or two respected study Bibles. Be sure to make one of your study Bibles the NIV Fire Bible (Global Study Edition) and, also, include an ESV Study Bible or an NASB Study Bible. The NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible (compiled by Jack Hayford), is also a great resource. All study Bibles include Bible book background information, cross references, maps, time-lines and basic commentary, which is very helpful when study time is limited. Students, who want to go deeper, may wish to invest in some respected Bible study software.

Some places to find discounted Bible and books: www.hpbmarketplace.com and www.christianbook.com.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

(Compiled by Marcia Gillis from public sources, upwardlivingpublications.com.)

The Apostles' Creed is an early statement of Christian belief, a creed or "symbol".^[1] It is widely used by a number of Christian denominations for both liturgical and catechetical purposes, most visibly by liturgical Churches of Western tradition, including the Roman Catholic church, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and Western Orthodoxy. It is also used by Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists.

The Apostles' Creed was based on Christian theological understanding of the Canonical gospels, the letters of the New Testament and to a lesser extent the Old Testament. Its basis appears to be the old Roman Creed known also as the Old Roman Symbol. Because of the early origin of its original form, it does not address some Christological issues defined in the Nicene and other Christian Creeds. It thus says nothing explicitly about the divinity of either Jesus or of the Holy Spirit. This makes it acceptable to many Arians and Unitarians. Nor does it address many other theological questions that became objects of dispute centuries later.

The first mention of the expression "Apostles' Creed" occurs in a letter of 390 from a synod in Milan and may have been associated with the belief, widely accepted in the 4th century, that, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Each of the Twelve Apostles contributed an article of a creed.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives the following English translation of the Apostles' Creed.^[21] In its discussion of the Creed,^[22] the Catechism maintains the traditional division into twelve articles, the numbering of which is here added to the text.

1. I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
2. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
3. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
4. Under Pontius Pilate, He was crucified, died, and was buried.
5. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
6. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
7. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
9. the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
10. the forgiveness of sins,
11. the resurrection of the body,
12. and the life everlasting.

Amen.

The English text used in the Mass of the Roman Rite since 2011 is:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.^{[23][24]}

1. Jack Rogers, *Presbyterian Creeds* (Westminster John Knox Press 1985 ISBN 978-0-664-25496-4), pp. 62–63
2. "James Orr: *The Apostles' Creed*, in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia". Reformed.org. Archived from the original on June 22, 2011. Retrieved 2011-05-19.
3. Apostles Creed

THE NICENE CREED

The **Nicene Creed** is the profession of faith or creed that is most widely used in Christian liturgy. It forms the mainstream definition of Christianity for most Christians.^[1]

It is called Nicene /'naisi:n/ because, in its original form (not the form used today), it was adopted in the city of Nicaea (present day Iznik in Turkey) by the first ecumenical council, which met there in the year 325.^[2]

The Nicene Creed has been normative for the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Church of the East, the Oriental Orthodox churches, the Anglican Communion, and Protestant denominations. It forms the mainstream definition of Christianity itself in Nicene Christianity.^[1]

The Apostles' Creed (in its present form later than either form of the Nicene Creed, but in its original form earlier than them) is also broadly accepted in the West, but is not used in the Eastern liturgy.^[3] One or other of these two creeds is recited in the Roman Rite Mass directly after the homily on all Sundays and solemnities (Tridentine feasts of the first class). In the Roman Catholic Church, the Nicene Creed is part of the profession of faith^[4] required of those undertaking important functions within the Church.^[5]

In the Byzantine Rite the Nicene Creed is always sung or recited at the Divine Liturgy^[6] immediately preceding the Anaphora (Eucharistic Prayer) and is also recited daily at compline,^[7] as well as at sundry other services. (1-7)

For English translations of the Nicene Creed in current use, see English versions of the Nicene Creed.

1975 ecumenical version (ICET)

The International Consultation on English Texts published an English translation of the Nicene Creed, first in 1970 and then in successive revisions in 1971 and 1975. These texts were adopted by several churches. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States, which adopted the 1971 version in 1973, and the Catholic Church in other English-speaking countries, which in 1975 adopted the version published in that year, continued to use them until 2011. The 1975 version was included in the 1979 Episcopal Church (United States) *Book of Common Prayer*, though with one variation: in the line "For us men and for our salvation", it omitted the word "men":

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,

of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen. (8)

1. Jeffrey, David L. *A Dictionary of biblical tradition in English literature*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992. ISBN 0-8028-3634-8
2. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology* by William Carl Placher 1988 ISBN 0-664-24057-7 pages 52–53
3. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04479a.htm>
4. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Profession of Faith"
5. Code of Canon Law, canon 833
6. [1] "Archbishop Averky Liturgics – The Symbol of Faith", Retrieved 2013-04-14
7. [2] "Archbishop Averky Liturgics – The Small Compline", Retrieved 2013-04-14
8. Episcopal Church *Book of Common Prayer* (1979), *The Book of Common Prayer*. New York: Church Publishing Incorporated. 2007. pp. 326–327. Retrieved 2013-02-18.

A SAMPLE PENTECOSTAL DOCTRINAL STATEMENT FOR USE IN COMPARISON TO THE APOSTLE'S CREED AND NICENE CREED

The Fundamental Beliefs of the Assemblies of God

(From ag.org/beliefs.)

If you will compare the Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed to the Pentecostal doctrinal statement below, you will find that there is not much difference. All the fundamental Christian beliefs that other Evangelical denominations hold are there. The main differences are #7 and #8 relating to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- 1. The Scriptures Inspired.** The Scriptures, both old and new, are verbally inspired of God, and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible authoritative rule of faith and conduct. (2Tim. 3:15-17 & 1 Thess. 2:13)
- 2. The One True God.** The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM", the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. (Matt 28:19 & Luke 3:22)
- 3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.** The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:
 - His virgin birth – (Matt 1:23)
 - His sinless life
 - His miracles
 - His substitutionary death
 - His resurrection
 - His exaltation to the right hand of the Father –(Heb. 1:3)
- 4. The Fall of Man.** Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our own image." But, man, by voluntary transgression, fell and incurred not only physical death but spiritual death, which is separation from God. (Gen 1:26-27 & Gen. 3:6)
- 5. The Salvation of Man.** Man's only hope of salvation is through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
 - CONDITIONS OF SALVATION – Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, by justification through faith, man becomes an heir of God with the hope of eternal life. (Ephesians 2:8)
 - EVIDENCES OF SALVATION – The internal witness of the Holy Spirit and an external life of righteousness and true holiness. (Romans 8:16)

6. Ordinances of the Church.

- BAPTISM IN WATER – Baptism by immersion is commanded in Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized as a declaration to the world that they have died to self and walk in newness of life. (Matt. 28:19)
- COMMUNION – The Lord’s Supper, consisting of the Bread and Fruit of the Vine, is the symbol of our sharing the divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, a memorial of His suffering and death, and a prophecy of His return. (1 Cor 11:26)

7. **The Baptism in the Holy Spirit.** All believers are entitled to, and should earnestly seek and expect, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, as promised by Father and commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son. This was the normal experience of the early Christians. With it comes an enduement of power for life and service and a bestowment of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and their uses for ministry and service. (Acts 1:4 and 1:8, Luke 24:49)

8. **The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.** The baptism in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical evidence of speaking in tongues, as the Holy Spirit gives them utterance. (Acts 2:4 and Cor. 12:4-10)

9. **Sanctification.** Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil and dedication to God. Scriptures teach that without a life of holiness no man shall see God. (Romans 12:1-2 and Heb. 12:14)

10. **The Church and Its Mission.** The church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of worship, with divine appointment to fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is made up of all those who have believed on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:22-23). The purpose of God for man, is to: 1. Seek and to save the Lost, 2. To be worshipped by man, 3. To build a body in the image of Christ, 4. To demonstrate His love and compassion. The AG purposes to be an entity that facilitates the fulfillment of those purposes in the power of the Holy Spirit, by teaching/encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. (Matt 28:19)

11. **The Ministry.** A divinely called and Scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the fourfold purpose of leading the church in: 1) Evangelizing the world (Mark 16:15-20) 2) Worship, 3) Building a Body of Saints being perfected in the images of His Son, (Eph. 4:11) 4) Meeting human need with ministries of love and compassion.

12. **Divine Healing.** Divine healing is an integral part of the Gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided by the Atonement and is the privilege of all believers (Matt 8:16-17 and James 5:14-16)

13. **The Blessed Hope.** The resurrection of those who have died in Christ and their translation with those who still remain at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is the blessed hope of the Church. (1 Thess 4:16 and Romans 8:23)

14. **The Millennial Reign of Christ.** The second coming includes the rapture of the Saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on earth for one thousand years. This reign will bring about the salvation of national Israel and establishment of universal peace. (Matt 24:27 and Rev 1:7)

15. **The Final Judgment.** There will be a final judgment in which the wicked will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophets, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire (the second death). (Matt 25:46 and Rev 19:20)

16. **The New Heavens and the New Earth.** “We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, where in dwelleth righteousness”: (2 Peter 3:13 and Rev 21, 22)