

“We Believe” - The Nicene Creed, the Church, and you

All-Ages Sunday School Winter/Spring 2021

Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA) Sierra Vista, AZ

22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men ... ³¹ [David as a prophet] foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, [in Psalm 110]

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies your footstool.”

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” - Acts 2:22-23,31-36

Review:

The Nicene Creed is a confession of what ‘we’ believe as Christians. ‘Creed’ comes from the Latin *credo*, which means ‘I believe.’ It was finalized in 381 AD for continued use in the church - a function it has served in all ages and denominations.

Christianity is Monotheistic. Christians believe in one God. And we believe there are three persons in the Godhead, blessed Trinity! Today we begin to consider the second person of the Trinity, the Son.

“And [we believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ”

When we confess our belief in God the Son, we begin with how he revealed himself in history. In the Lord Jesus Christ we see the beloved, eternal Son of God incarnate.

Just as we believe in one God, we believe in one Jesus. Cults and other syncretistic religions say there will be multiple Jesus (reincarnation etc.).

Such errors - believing in multiple coming or multiple incarnations of the Son - is not an immediate error we face as modern, Western Christians, but the thought is out there. Cults form around such notions.

The one Lord Jesus Christ will come once more, in the same body he had on Easter morning.

Lord (*Acts 2:34-36; cf Luke 2:11*)

Any Greek-speaking Jew who would call Jesus of Nazareth “Lord” should know exactly what sort of claim they were making. To call Jesus “Lord” is to confess that he is God.

The Covenant Name of God, as revealed in Exodus 3 is not written in Hebrew with vowel points. This was in an effort to not use God’s name in vain (3rd Commandment).

A Hebrew reader would see the letters Y-H-W-H, but the practice is to read the word *adonai*, which is Hebrew for ‘lord’ or ‘master.’ Following this practice, your English Bibles will render the Covenant Name ‘the LORD.’ The following also: YHWH, Yahweh, and Jehovah (esp. in older hymns).

The Old Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the LXX, consistently translates YHWH as ‘kurios,’ which is Greek for ‘lord’ or ‘master.’

Jesus (*Acts 2:22,23,32,36; cf Luke 1:31*)

The angel in Joseph’s vision, “*She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*” (Matthew 1:21)

Jesus is Greek for the Hebrew name ‘Yeshua,’ or as we render it in English ‘Joshua.’ The Hebrew name Joshua literally means ‘Ye-shua,’ which is Hebrew ‘YHWH saves’ - Jesus is YHWH saving his people.

Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15 “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—*” Joshua led the people after Moses, but he did not fulfill this prophecy. In Acts 3:22 Peter says that Jesus is this prophet, in Acts 7:37 Stephen heavily implies the same.

Christ (*Acts 2:31,33,36; cf Luke 2:25-38*)

“Christ” is Greek for the Hebrew word “Messiah,” both meaning ‘anointed one.’ Kings and priests were anointed with oil to set them apart for their work. God himself additionally anointed both, at times, with his Holy Spirit.

Psalm 2:2 calls YHWH’s great king “his Anointed,” this same king is set forever on Zion (Ps. 2:6) and he is the Son (Ps. 2:12). All hopes in some coming one (as in the coming Son of David in Isaiah, whether that be Immanuel or the Suffering Servant) can be encapsulated in the term “Messiah.” God is anointing one to come and fulfill his divine purposes for the people of God.

That one is the Lord Jesus of Nazareth -> John 1:41 “[Andrew] first found his own brother Simon [Peter] and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ).”

We believe that Jesus is YHWH, he himself is God saving his people, and he is the long hoped-for anointed servant of God.