

CREED

(A Look at the Apostle's Creed)

- * Creed is a Latin word, *credo*, that means, "I Believe".
- * When using this word we are simply saying, "This is what I believe"!
- * Specifically for our study we are saying, "This is what the early church believed"!

I. The Jerusalem Council.

A. As the church began to expand to include different people groups and cultures, heated discussions arose over **what being christian means!** (Sound familiar?)

1. In about 50 A.D. the church was at a major crossroads that had to be addressed for its preservation.

Acts 15:1-2

1 While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: "Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved."

2 Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. (One translation says, "No small stir.") Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.

2. The cultural diversity that existed in the church because of evangelism had begun to affect **belief systems and doctrine.**

Acts 17:26-27

26 From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.**27** "His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us.

3. As the Council convened, Peter addressed them!

6 So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. **7** At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: “Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe. **8** God knows people’s hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us.

4. Then James, the brother of Jesus, spoke up and quoted scripture from Amos!

Amos 9:11-12 (New King James Version)

11

“On that day I will raise up
The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down,
And repair its damages;
I will raise up its ruins,
And rebuild it as in the days of old;

12

That they may possess the remnant of Edom,
And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,”
Says the Lord who does this thing.

5. James’ conclusion is this:

Acts 15:19-21

19 “And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. **20** Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood. **21** For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations.”

B. So the Jerusalem Council confirmed it’s findings and communicated it to the churches in the surrounding regions!

23 This is the letter they took with them:

“This letter is from the apostles and elders, your brothers in Jerusalem. It is **written to the Gentile believers** in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings! **28 “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us** to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements: **29 You must abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality.** If you do this, you will do well. Farewell.”

II. During the years of establishment and growth, the early Church believers wrestled with what this newly formed faith called Christianity was all about!

A. We see this debated and addressed in the writings of the letters to the churches!

1. In Corinthians Paul says they are **carnal, immature and childish!**
2. He says this because they are arguing over **who was right!**
3. They were saying, “I follow Paul, not me, I follow Apollos!”
4. Paul then explains how they are missing the whole point!
5. It’s not about Paul or Apollos!

I Corinthians 3:3-9

3 You are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn’t that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren’t you living like people of the world? **4** When one of you says, “I am a follower of Paul,” and another says, “I follow Apollos,” aren’t you acting just like people of the world?

5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God’s servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. **6** I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. **7** It’s not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What’s important is that God makes the seed grow. **8** The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own

hard work. **9** For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building.

B. So it would seem very clear that the early Church wrestled with the belief system that would form their faith!

C. We learn from history that this would be a part of the formative years of the Church. Grappling with **what to believe and how to live out our faith!**

III. One of the most important documents of the formative years of the Church was the **Apostles Creed**.

A. The earliest form of this Creed is from 341 A.D.

1. The title of Apostles' Creed wasn't mentioned until 391 A.D.
2. Until that time it was called the "Old Roman Creed".
3. To fully appreciate this, we must remember that **believers** had no written **doctrine of faith** except a few letters floating around and **illiteracy** was rampant!
4. So this Creed served believers much like the Jerusalem Council.
5. It provided for a consistent foundational belief for the Church!
6. Unfortunately it seems that over the last 1,500 years the Church of Jesus Christ has once again complicated the issue of **Christianity** and **faith in Christ** with all sorts of **demands!**

B. The Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven**

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (universal) church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**