

OF ALL THINGS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

- Newer versions of the creed say “seen and unseen” but this can confuse people.
- The creed is referring to two realms, the “unseen realm” of angels and demons; and the visible universe.
- The phrase is used biblically of Jesus Christ the One by whom “all things were created... visible and invisible” (Col. 1:16).
- The creed will affirm Jesus as the one “by whom all things were made” and so puts Jesus on the Creator side of the distinction between Creator and creature. (*Cary, p. 30*)
- The list of “all things” made would not include Jesus.
- God making “all things” does mean “there is no material out of which God made things.” And this is why the original creed of Nicaea said any who taught that Christ “came to be out of nothing” were to be accursed. (*Cary, p. 31*)
- God is not made of material himself, he is uncreated.

Everything except for God exists because God has willed it into existence. God alone exists independently, in and of himself.” (DeYoung p. 37)



Schedule:

Chap. 2 – Only Begotten	Sep. 21 – Bob
Chap. 3 – One (Same) Substance	Sep. 28 – Michael
Chap. 4 – For Us and for Our Salvation	Oct. 5 – Karl
Chap. 5 – Who Proceeds from the Father [& Son]	Oct. 12 – Michael
Chap. 6 – One Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church	Oct. 19 – Bob
Chap. 7 – One Baptism for the Remission of Sins	Oct. 26 – Karl

Resources for Further Study:

- **Class Book:** *The Nicene Creed: What You Need to Know about the Most Important Creed Ever Written* by Kevin DeYoung [Crossway, 2025]
- **Extra:** *The Nicene Creed: An Introduction* by Phillip Cary [Lexham Press, 2023]

Chapter 1: We Believe

REVIEW

- A creed is a Bible-based summary of Christian teaching, and something the Church is called to believe.
- The Nicene Creed was a response to Arius’s heresy about Jesus having a beginning & not being “one in essence with God”.
- It was first drafted in A.D. 325 (Council of Nicaea) [1700 years ago] and enhanced in A.D. 381 (Council of Constantinople).
- It is the most widely used Christian confession of faith, recited by Protestants, Roman Catholics & Eastern Orthodox.

WE BELIEVE

- The creed begins with “belief” – the word from which we get “faith” in Greek (*pistis*).
- The Latin (*credo*) form of the Creed has “I believe”, while the Greek form has “We believe”.
- When we recite or confess (“say aloud”) the creed – we affirm that we believe what it says about our God, and our Faith.
- Biblical precedent for doctrine that we believe and confess:
 - Early church marked by teaching Acts 2:42
 - Importance of correct doctrine: 1 Tim. 1:3; 4:6, 16; 6:3.
 - “Pattern of the sound words” 2 Tim. 1:13
 - “Guard the deposit” 1 Tim. 6:20; (2 Tim. 1:14)
 - Elders must teach & defend sound doctrine Tit. 1:9
 - “Hold to... traditions... you were taught” 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Cor. 11:2
- Early examples of creedal statements in the New Testament:
 - Jesus [Christ] is Lord 1 Cor. 12:3, Rom. 10:9, Phil. 2:11
 - “one God... & one mediator... Christ Jesus” 1 Tim. 2:5
 - “one God, the Father... one Lord, Jesus Christ” 1 Cor. 8:6

- Emphasizing doctrine was very unlike Roman/Pagan religion.
 - Cultic rituals emphasized – sacrifices, priests, temples.
 - Ecstatic experiences – sights, sounds, foods, sexuality, etc.
 - Mystery religions were like clubs or secret societies.
 - Civic virtue was important along with emperor worship.

“...carefully defining your beliefs, and conceiving of your whole religion as irreducibly bound up with certain beliefs—this was not how faith typically worked in the ancient world. Do the rituals (at least a few of them), pay homage to the gods and goddesses (the ones that work for you), and don’t rock the boat. That was the Roman way.” (DeYoung, p. 30)

- In some churches today doctrine is also downplayed.
 - Right living or social programs become more important.
 - Some like to be “spiritual but not religious” or prefer devotional platitudes to doctrinal precision. (DeYoung, p. 31)
- In the second century, Irenaeus spoke of “**the rule of faith**”.
 - John the Beloved taught Polycarp (69-155) who was the bishop of Smyrna and famously martyred. He taught Irenaeus (130-202) who disputed with Gnostic heretics.
 - “He appealed, ultimately, to a ‘rule of faith’ – a deposit of apostolic doctrine that had to be believed and should not be spoken against.” (DeYoung, p. 31-32)
- An early term for a creed was “symbol of the faith”.
 - A symbol was like a password to prove you were in the army – to pass through the sentry lines.
 - The term was also used to pledge allegiance when joining.
 - The traditional Christian baptism ceremony had much in common with this. And an early baptism ceremony uses language very similar to what became known as the Apostle’s Creed, an early creed which influenced Nicaea.
 - See the questions on **p. 32** in our class book.

“From the earliest days of the church, converts being baptized where required to make a confession of faith, and this involved a confessional [Trinitarian] formula...” (DeYoung, p. 33) - see also last 4 sentences on **p. 33**.

IN ONE GOD

- Christians shared a belief in One God with Jews (Deut. 6:4).
- Very few people in the ancient Roman world believed in one personal God. (DeYoung, p. 36)
- Philosophers, however conceived of a divine “first principle” and source of all things. “Aristotle actually called this principle ‘God,’ while Plato called it ‘the Good’...” (Cary, p.26)
- But the creed ultimately goes on to use Biblical language and get more specific about the God Christians believe in.

THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

- Phillip Cary points out that the term “Father Almighty” was “a term well-known among pagans” (p. 25). In the Aeneid, the term is used for Jupiter the king of the gods.
- But Jupiter is hardly “almighty” and is “easily frustrated by the scheming of other gods and the problems of mortals.” (p. 25)
- The Bible uses these terms of the true God, and the term used for “Almighty” is 9 of its 10 NT uses are in Revelation where Jesus Christ is also “Almighty.” (DeYoung, p. 36-37)
- God as “Father” speaks to a special unique personal property of God the Father. He is uniquely Father to the Son – and eternally so. His fatherhood is analogous to human relationships but they are derivative and don’t constrain God.
- See more on God’s Fatherhood on **p. 36** in our class book.

MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

- “Heaven and Earth” is a technical phrase for universe: “the whole creation from top to bottom”. (Cary, p. 27)
- Heaven is not a place we can go but a realm beyond.