

CHRISTIAN CREEDS

The Apostles' Creed:

The Apostles' Creed is a brief summary statement of Christian belief traditionally attributed to the 12 apostles. According to church legend, each of the 12 apostles contributed one clause of the creed before embarking on their respective missions. It contains three paragraphs, one for each person of the Trinity, each corresponding to the three questions addressed to candidates for baptism in the early church.

It is now thought that the creed is not of apostolic origin, and that each clause was drawn from New Testament references. Today many scholars agree that the Apostles' Creed developed as a baptismal confession of faith, which continues to be used in most Western churches; Orthodox churches prefer to use the later Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed:

The Nicene Creed (also called the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed) is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian church in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism. These heresies, which disturbed the church during the fourth century, concerned the doctrine of the trinity and the person of Christ. Both the Greek (Eastern) and the Latin (Western) church held this creed in honor, though with one important difference: the Western church insisted on the inclusion of the phrase "and the Son" (known as the *filioque* clause) in the article on the procession of the Holy Spirit; this phrase still is repudiated by the Eastern Orthodox church.

In its present form this creed goes back partially to the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) with additions by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). It was accepted in its present form at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but the *filioque* clause was not added until 589.

The Athanasian Creed:

The Athanasian Creed, also known as the "Quicumque vult," is one of the four authoritative Creeds of the Catholic Church. The Anglican Church and some Protestant Churches also hold it to be authoritative. While the Creed has always been attributed to St. Athanasius (died A.D. 373), it was unknown in the Eastern Churches until the 12th century and thus it is unlikely he is the author. St. Ambrose is one suggested author, but many authors have been proposed with no conclusive agreements reached. Current theory suggests it was composed in southern France in the 5th century. In 1940, the lost 'Excerpta' of St. Vincent of Lerins (flourished in 440: *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*) was discovered, and this work contains much of the language of the Creed. Thus, either St. Vincent or an admirer has also been suggested as author.

The earliest known copy of the creed was included in a prefix to a collection of homilies by Caesarius of Arles in the first half of the 6th century.