

The Creed – a brief statement of the Orthodox doctrine

(creed < in Latin “credo” = “I believe”)

In order to gain eternal life, we need to have **faith** in Jesus Christ, to **receive His Grace through the Sacraments of the Church**, and to **fulfill His commandments through good deeds**. The first condition of salvation is therefore *to know the content of the Christian faith and to confess it / adhere to it*. (“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned...” says Our Lord).

The teachings of the Orthodox Christian faith / the true Faith were given to us by God Himself through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through His life and deeds. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught His precepts while living on Earth, and after His Ascension to Heaven, the Holy Apostles and their successors spread it all over the world.

Over time, the teaching of faith has been lived/tested and deepened/understood through the life of the Church, but various erroneous opinions regarding some of its aspects appeared as well. These false opinions are called **heresies**, and they led to various disputes / differences / misunderstandings in the Church.

Due to the appearance of these heresies, there was a need to clearly **formulate** (explain) and **preserve** the teachings **verbally** revealed by Jesus Christ, Our Savior. This was first done by the **Holy Apostles at the Apostolic Synod from Jerusalem in the year 50** – to ensure that all will preach the same truth; then by the **Holy Church, under the supervision / inspiration of the Holy Spirit, through its bishops, at the first two Ecumenical Councils**, in order to prevent other heresies and to restore peace in the Church.

The **First Ecumenical Council** was convened in **325**, in the city of Nicaea (present day Iznik, Turkey). The **first 7 articles** of the Creed were defined at this council, based on the Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition. These articles speak about *God the Father* and our *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Who is of the Essence of God*.

The **Second Ecumenical Council** was convened in the year **381**, in the city of Constantinople (present day Istanbul, Turkey). The Creed was completed at this synod with the **last 5 articles**, speaking about *Holy Spirit* and the *Church*.

Since then, the Orthodox Church has continually proclaimed the **Creed in its original God-inspired form** at every Divine Liturgy, at the service of Baptism, but also on other occasions.

The most important teaching of faith confessed by the Creed is the teaching of the **Holy Trinity** – God is one in essence, but triple in Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, consubstantial and indivisible. Besides the teaching about the Holy Trinity, the Creed also teaches us about the **Holy Church, Holy Mysteries, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal life**.

The Creed represents a **synthesis / summary of the teaching of our Savior Jesus Christ**, which each believer must acquire, not only with the mind but also with the soul and the will.

The Creed: The Symbol of Faith

1. I believe in One God, the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
2. And in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through whom all things were made.
3. For us and for our salvation, He came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.
4. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and He suffered and was buried.
5. On the third day, He rose according to the Scriptures.
6. He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
7. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.
8. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets.
9. In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
10. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
11. I expect the resurrection of the dead.
12. And the life of the age to come. Amen!