The word **creed** comes from a Latin word, *credo*, which means “I Believe.”

A creed is simply a statement of belief. To believe means “to accept as true,” “to trust” and “to put your confidence in.”

**To believe** means not only to know *about* God (with your mind), but **to trust Him (in your heart).**

Why is it significant that we say “I believe?”

There are three “ecumenical” (universal, world-wide) creeds. In historical order, they are:

1) Apostles
2) Nicene
3) Athanasian

Ordinarily, the Apostles Creed is confessed in non-Communion services, and is the creed used during a Baptism.

Ordinarily, the Nicene Creed is confessed during Communion services.

In most Lutheran churches, the Athanasian Creed is usually confessed only once per year, on Trinity Sunday.

**APOSTLES CREED:**

The Apostles Creed was not written by the Apostles (Peter, James, John, etc.), but it does present the teaching of the Apostles as it is written in the Bible. The creed seems to have developed gradually from a simple statement, such as “Jesus is Lord,” by Christians in the first century, to a much more detailed creed, probably finalized in pretty much the form we have around 700 AD.

There are some examples of simple creeds (statements of faith) in the New Testament:

Matthew 16:13-16 –

John 1:49 –

There are three “articles” (portions) of the Apostles Creed:

1) The first article deals with *God the Father*
2) The second article deals with *God the Son*
3) The third article deals with *God the Holy Spirit*

We normally think of the:

1) Father as “Creator”
2) The Son as “Savior or Redeemer”
3) The Holy Spirit as “Sanctifier” (the One who creates and sustains faith in Jesus Christ in us, through the Means of Grace (Word and Sacraments))

**NICENE CREED**

The Nicene Creed contains a much more detailed statement of belief concerning Christ.
This is because a man named Arius (256-336 AD), who was Bishop of Alexandria, Egypt, began teaching the false doctrine that Jesus was a created being, not of the same substance as the Father. A famous quote from Arius was, “there was a time when Jesus was not.” This teaching would result in Jesus being inferior to the Father.

The Council of Nicea in 325 AD decided against Arius and his followers.

Notice how the Nicene Creed confesses that Jesus is: “the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;”

**ATHANASIAN CREED**

We do not have very clear evidence on exactly when the Athanasian Creed was written, or who wrote it. The creed is named after Athanasius, a bishop of Alexandria Egypt for 45 years (328-373 AD) and a staunch defender of the Nicene Creed and its teachings. It is unlikely, however, that Athanasius actually wrote this creed.

The Athanasian Creed is the most detailed creed concerning the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and how the three persons of the Trinity relate to one another. This is why it is usually confessed on Trinity Sunday in the church.

**The Triune God Confessed in the Creed**

The Bible teaches us that God consists of three separate and distinct “ (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The Bible also teaches that God is not three separate Gods, but one divine “ (God). We use a word that is not found in the Bible to try to describe the fact that God is three distinct persons, yet one God: Triune.

We cannot comprehend how God can be three separate persons and still be one divine essence.

The Bible states that there are not three “Gods,” but one God:

- Deuteronomy 6:4 – God is ONE
- Mark 12:29 – Jesus states that God is ONE
- John 10:30 – Jesus says that He and the Father are ONE

The Bible also teaches us that there are three “persons” (distinct beings from one another – that which exists/subsists of itself) in the one God:

- Matthew 3:16-17 – All three persons are present at the Baptism of Jesus
- Matthew 28:19 – “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Genesis 1:1-2 – At creation, Father creates and the Holy Spirit is hovering over the waters
- John 1:1-3, 14 – Christ (the Word) was at creation and everything was made “through Him”
- 2 Corinthians 13:14 – All three persons are mentioned in the benediction
All attempts to understand or explain the Trinity (Triune God) are imperfect. For example, we could say that H2O (water) could provide a comparison to the Trinity. It is H2O as a solid (ice), a liquid (water), and a gas (steam). But, it is not a perfect comparison because it can’t be all three at the same time as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist at the same time.

Qualities (Attributes) of God

Besides the fact that God is Triune, He has revealed to us in Scripture many of His qualities or attributes. They include that He is:

**Loving (love)**
- Psalm 103:8 –
- 1 John 4:7-8 –
- Romans 5:8 –

**All-Powerful (omnipotent)**
- Psalm 33:8-9 (as seen in His creation of the world) –

**All-knowing (omniscient)** –
- 1 John 3:20 –
- Proverbs 15:3 –
- Psalm 139:1-4 –

**Holy (without sin/evil)**
- Isaiah 6:3 –

**Unchanging** –
- Malachi 3:6 –
- James 1:17 –

**Eternal (no beginning and no end)** –
- Psalm 90:2 –
- 2 Peter 3:8 –

**Infinite (not limited by time or space)** –
- Jeremiah 23:24 –
- Psalm 139:7-12 –

**Truth (His words and promises are always true and trustworthy)** –
- Psalm 33:4 –
- Titus 1:2 –
Creation

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

“In the beginning” = the start of “time” as we know it and of the creation

“Created” = made out of nothing (no raw materials were used; God simply said, “Let there be...”)

Three Steps to Creation:

2. Bringing order to the creation (days, nights, etc.) – vv. 3-8 – Days 1-2
3. Filling the creation with “living things” – vv. 9-31 – Days 3-6

Day 6 – Man/Woman are created – Genesis 1:26-27

v. 26 – “Let US make...” =

v. 27 - “God created man in His own image” =

What two commands did God give to the man and to the woman? (v. 28)

1. Be fruitful and multiply
2. Have dominion (control, manage) the creation

In Genesis 2:7, how did God actually create man (Adam)?

“Adam” means “earth” or “dirt” – from how God formed him

“Eve” means “live” or “living” from the fact that she would be the mother of all living humans

Read Genesis 2:18-24 and get a more detailed picture of how God created woman.

Why did God create woman? (vv. 18-20) – it was not good for Adam to be alone – to “complete him”

What process did God follow in “making” woman? (vv. 21-22) – took a rib out of Adam while he slept and formed it into Eve – again, as with Adam, God uses raw materials to make Eve – different from when He “created” (made from nothing) the heavens and the earth.

What was Adam’s reaction when he saw the woman? (v. 23) – great happiness and pleasure – “This at last is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones”

What did God begin (institute) in Genesis 2:24? – Marriage – “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.”

Back in Genesis 1, what was God’s conclusion about His creation? (v. 31) – It was ‘very good’

What did God do on the 7th day of creation? (Gen. 2:1-3)? Rested Was He tired? No, it was just another way of saying that God stopped creating – His entire creation was complete.

What does it mean that God “blessed the seventh day and made it holy?” (2:3) – It would later be the “Sabbath” day – a day of rest, that was to be dedicated to God and man’s relationship with God. God built this into the creation for man – so that man would remain strong in his relationship with God.

What day was God establishing in Gen. 2:3 – “Sabbath Day”

What day served as the “Sabbath” Day in the Old Testament? Saturday In the New Testament? Sunday, because that was the day Christ rose from the dead.
Is there any reason to believe that the word “day” in the creation account means anything other than a “day” as we know it today? – No – it is the same word in Hebrew that is used in many other places in the Old Testament to mean a 24-hour day.

What is the “theory of evolution” how does it explain how that which is around us came into being? – That life as we know it “evolved” from tiny organisms which became more and more complex as time went on, a process that took millions of years to complete. (One has to ask, “Where did those first tiny organisms come from?)

Why is it “illogical” to believe that the earth and everything in it merely “happened” without any “master designer?” – What we observe around us is just too complex and works too perfectly to say that it just “occurred” or came into being without a designer – an intelligent designer who put it all together perfectly.

What is the “Law of Entropy” and how does it argue against the theory of evolution? – we observe items left on their own degenerating and going to lower grades of being, not getting better and more complex as evolution would suggest.

What is a good response to people who say, “these rocks and formations appear to have been here for millions of years? – That God created a mature earth, with all of the rocks, fossils, oil and mineral deposits embedded in the earth, just as He created Adam and Eve to be mature human beings (not infants).

Angels

What does the word angel mean? Messenger

How did we get “evil angels?” Led by Satan (Lucifer) they rebelled against God and tried to overthrow Him. God won and the evil angels are confirmed to be condemned with Satan on the last day.

What are some of the different “ranks” of angels? Angels, Arch Angels, Cherubim, Seraphim

Do angels have physical bodies? No, they are spirits.

What do angels do? Serve God and do His work here on earth. They bring messages and serve to protect God’s people.

Can angels appear as human beings? Yes.

When were angels created? We don’t know. It had to be during the 6 days of creation, but we are not told when.

Should we worship angels? No, this would be idolatry. They are merely created beings that serve God. They are not to be worshipped.

Law-Gospel

The two main TEACHINGS of the Bible are: Law and Gospel.

Most Bible passages can be categorized as either “Law “ or “Gospel.”

Each sermon should contain both “Law” and “Gospel” statements to the congregation.

LAW:

There are three uses of the God’s Law:

1. Curb – Societal use – our laws/rules are based upon the 10 commandments; it “curbs” gross outbursts of sin in our society – for example, it is wrong to kill, steal, etc. Keeps society on the correct path/road.

2. Mirror – Shows Our Sin – identifies our sins of thought, word, and deed – shows our need for a Savior.

3. Guide – Christian Use – tells Christians what pleases God in terms of how we should live as His children
The Law tells us what we “should” or “should not do.

The Gospel is the good news of what “God” has done for us in Jesus Christ.

The Law Shows Our Sin.

The Gospel Shows Our Savior.

The Law speaks of sin, death, and eternal condemnation.

The Gospel speaks of forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation.

Identify the following Bible verses as either LAW or GOSPEL:

Romans 3:23 - Law
John 3:16 – Gospel
Galatians 3:13 – Gospel
Matthew 5:48 – Law