

1. Why do we recite the Apostles' Creed? What is the rationale for Creeds and Confessions?

A. There is a Biblical Pattern:

Summary, verbalized, faith statements are encouraged through-out the Bible. Some became songs sung in worship services.

- *Duet. 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."*
- *2 Tim 1:13-14 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*
- *Romans 6:17 ...who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,*
- *1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*

B. There had been many teachers in Error:

Approved Confessions and Creeds protect from Scriptural error and clarify our thinking.

- Example: Four grave errors regarding the Incarnation from the first three centuries. Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism. All of these errors were made by people who believed in Scripture and Jesus Christ yet their "beliefs" about Jesus were incomplete / wrong. Each would disqualify Christ from being the Savior of humanity.
- "This is the wonder of the incarnation, the genius of the divine design. It will take a human death to undertake the death of humans – the death of an infinite person for a multitude of sinners. And so the Son of God has taken our nature without losing his own identity; the Word has become flesh without ceasing to be eternal Word; he has come to our side without leaving the side of his Father. And in the glorious mystery of his incarnation, and though his life, death, resurrection, ascension, reign, and return in our flesh, the God-man has become and will forever remain our Savior!" Sinclair Ferguson

2. What is the ongoing intended purpose of our reciting the Apostles Creed?

A. It helps us Recall and Appreciate precisely what Christians have believed for two thousand years.

B. My verbal, whole-hearted Profession reinforces my faith and is a testimony to others, both Christian and non-Christian.

C. The recited Creed expresses not only my allegiance to God's message to humanity, but Renounces / Rejects allegiance to other messages our culture promotes.



The Apostles Creed - Our Intentional Affirmation of Faith

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. ^[1]

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 ^[2] church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

1. "Descended into hell" does not refer to literally going down into the bowels of hell itself to be subject to the devil. Rather, it is a poetic way of stating that Christ truly and assuredly died on the cross.

2. The word "catholic" refers not to the Roman Catholic Church, but means the "universal" church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe...

The following are sections copied from the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) and a catechism written by Zacharias Ursinus in 1559 at the request of Elector Frederick III; later it was adopted by a Synod in Heidelberg.

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.^[1]
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^[2] church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

1. "Descended into hell" does not refer to literally going down into the bowels of hell itself to be subject to the devil. Rather, it is a poetic way of stating that Christ truly and assuredly died on the cross.
2. The word "catholic" refers not to the Roman Catholic Church, but means the "universal" church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God, the Father, Almighty, the Creator: That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them,^[1] and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence,^[2] is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father.^[3] In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul,^[4] and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow.^[5] He is able to do so as almighty God,^[6] and willing also as a faithful Father.^[7] (Heidelberg)

[1] Gen. 1 and 2; Ex. 20:11; Job 38 and 39; Ps. 33:6; Is. 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15. [2] Ps. 104:27-30; Matt. 6:30; 10:29; Eph. 1:11. [3] John 1:12, 13; Rom. 8:15, 16; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:5. [4] Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25, 26; Luke 12:22-31. [5] Rom. 8:28. [6] Gen. 18:14; Rom. 8:31-39. [7] Matt. 6:32, 33; 7:9-11.

Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature,^a with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin:^b being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance.^c So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion.^d Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.^e (Westminster)

a. John 1:1, 14; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:6; 1 John 5:20. • b. Heb 2:14, 16-17; 4:15. • c. Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal 4:4. • d. Luke 1:35; Rom 9:5; Col 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18. • e. Rom 1:3-4; 1 Tim 2:5.

born of the Virgin Mary: Q. What do you confess when you say: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary? A. The eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God,^[1] took upon Himself true human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,^[2] through the working of the Holy Spirit.^[3] Thus He is also the true seed of David,^[4] and like His brothers in every respect,^[5] yet without sin.^[6] (Heidelberg) John 1:1; 10:30-36; Rom. 1:3; 9:5; Col. 1:15-17; 1 John 5:20. [2] Matt. 1:18-23; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14. [3] Luke 1:35. [4] 11 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Matt. 1:1; Luke 1:32; Rom. 1:3. [5] Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:17. [6] Heb. 4:15; 7:26, 27.

crucified, died and was buried: Q. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble Himself even unto death? A. Because of the justice and truth of God^[1] satisfaction for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.^[2] [1] Gen. 2:17. [2] Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:9, 14, 15.

He descended into hell: Q. Why is there added: He descended into hell? A. In my greatest sorrows and temptations I may be assured and comforted that my Lord Jesus Christ, by His unspeakable anguish, pain, terror, and agony, which He endured throughout all His sufferings^[1] but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torment of hell.^[2] (Heidelberg) [1] Ps. 18:5, 6; 116:3; Matt. 26:36-46; 27:45, 46; Heb. 5:7-10. [2] Is. 53.

the Holy Spirit: Q. What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit? A. First, He is, together with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God.^[1] Second, He is also given to me,^[2] to make me by true faith share in Christ and all His benefits,^[3] to comfort me,^[4] and to remain with me forever.^[5] (Heidelberg) [1] Gen. 1:1, 2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor. 3:16. [2] 1 Cor. 6:19; 12 Cor. 1:21, 22; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13. [3] Gal. 3:14; 1 Pet. 1:2. [4] John 15:26; Acts 9:31. [5] John 14:16, 17; 1 Pet. 4:14.

the holy catholic church: The word "catholic" refers not to the Roman Catholic Church, but means the "universal" church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Resources: To read the Heidelberg Confession (1563, 1619) and it's Catechism see: <https://www.apuritansmind.com/creeds-and-confessions/the-heidelberg-catechism-by-zacharias-ursinus/>. To read the 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith see: <https://www.apuritansmind.com/westminster-standards/>