

## The Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father, Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth:  
And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary:  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate;  
was crucified, dead and buried:  
He descended into hell:  
The third day he rose again from the dead:  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:  
I believe in the Holy Ghost:  
The (universal) holy catholic church:  
The communion of saints:  
The forgiveness of sins:  
The resurrection of the body:  
And the life everlasting.  
Amen

### **“I believe in...the holy catholic church: The communion of saints...”**

*“It is by strict theological logic that the Creed confesses faith in the Holy Spirit before proceeding to the church and that it speaks of the church before mentioning personal salvation (forgiveness of sins, resurrection, everlasting life). For though Father and Son have loved the church and the Son has redeemed it, it is the Holy Spirit who actually creates it, by inducing faith; and it is the church, through its ministry and fellowship, that personal salvation ordinarily comes to be enjoyed.”*  
(Packer, 121)

#### **1. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the “creation” of the church**

-The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Creed is important. The Father is the fountain of all goodness and His sovereign election is the “starting place” of our salvation. Christ then accomplishes that salvation through His life, death, and resurrection. Christ then gathers His people together by the giving of the Holy Spirit. These people are a called-out group “from the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world.”

-The Church does not \_\_\_\_\_ the Spirit by its sacraments. The order of the Creed helps us to understand that the Spirit is responsible for the church not the other way around.

-In Catholicism, “The \_\_\_\_\_ has completely taken the place of the Spirit of God as the proximate source of grace, and the action of the divine Spirit in applying salvation is postponed to and made subject to the operations of the Church through its ordinances. Thus, the soul is removed from immediate dependence on God and taught rather to come to the Church and to expect all endowments of grace directly from it.”-B.B. Warfield, pg. 64

- So it is not, “Where the church is there is the Spirit” but “Where the Spirit is, there is the church.” B.B. Warfield writes, “Outside the body of the saints there is no salvation.” (pg. 15) This is why the statement of the early church was still declared by the reformers, “If one does not have the church as \_\_\_\_\_ they do not have God as \_\_\_\_\_.”

-By including belief in the church, the Creed shows the necessity of understanding the importance of the church (both local and universal). One must believe that the church actually exists for one to be in-line with orthodox Christianity. The church is \_\_\_\_\_-those who minimize the reality of the church do not understand how vital belief in the reality of the church is to true Christianity.

-This line of the Creed should not only be seen as belief in the universal church but also supporting belief in the reality of the \_\_\_\_\_ church. Packer writes, "Each congregation is a visible outcrop of the one church universal, called to serve God and men in humility and, perhaps, humiliation while living in prospect of glory." (125)

**-Heidelberg 54-** "What do you believe concerning the 'holy, catholic Church'?"

Answer: "That out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by His Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life a chosen communion in the unity of the true faith; and that I am and forever shall remain a living member of this communion."

## 2. It is the "holy catholic" church

-The church is called "holy" because "it is \_\_\_\_\_ to God." (Packer, 122). The church is made up of the set apart people of God. The church is made up of those who have been sealed by the Spirit and are those who have been positionally declared sanctified and are in this life being progressively sanctified. Through the work of the Spirit and ministry of the Word, God gathers His people out of the world and sets them up even now in communities of the redeemed.

-The church is called "catholic" because "it embraces all Christians \_\_\_\_\_." (122). Remember that the word "catholic" is Latin meaning "universal." Protestants make a distinction between the catholic church and the Roman Catholic Church (often called "the church of Rome"). Again, quoting the LBC-26.1 begins with "The catholic or universal church..."

## 3. The communion of saints

-This phrase has a dual meaning (as both the Heidelberg catechism and chapter 27 of the LBC demonstrate). First, all saints have communion with Christ since they have been \_\_\_\_\_ to Him through the new birth of the Spirit. Christ is their head and they are His body. The "are partakers with Him in all His treasures and gifts." All the saints have a common union with Christ. As the Apostle stated, "We all partake of the one bread." (1 Cor. 10:17)

-This phrase also deals with the communion the saints have together. We are not all simply united to the same Head but we also constitute the one body of Christ. The saints have communion together because of their \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ. Samuel Waldron writes, "The communion of the saints is not merely human alliance, nor is it direct. Rather, saints are in communion through their common union with another, Jesus Christ." (pg. 332-333). I do not look at you for you, I look at Christ then look at you.

**-Heidelberg 55:** "What do you understand by the 'communion of saints'?"

Answer: First, that believers, one and all, as members of the Lord Jesus Christ, are partakers with Him in all His treasures and gifts; second, that each one must feel himself bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and welfare of other members."