

# The Titles of J e s u s

In a previous article, we examined several names associated with the Holy Trinity. Below you will find numerous titles, their meanings, and scriptural references for Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. (This list is not exhaustive. In your travels through the Scriptures, you might want to be on the lookout for more.)

Advocate	One who pleads another's cause	1 John 2:1
Alpha and Omega	The One who is all in all; first and last; beginning and end	Revelation 22:13
Amen, the	A certainty	Revelation 3:14
Anointed One	Dedicated to a sacred purpose	Psalms 45:7; Daniel 9:26
Beginning of God's Creation	Author of God's created works	Revelation 3:14
Beloved Son	Eternal Son of God the Father	Matthew 3:17
Branch, the	God planted Himself among people	Zechariah 3:8; 6:12
Bread of Life	Bread that gives eternal life	John 6:35
Bridegroom	Christ the Bridegroom, the Church His Bride	John 3:28–30
Bright Morning Star	End of night of sin and trouble	Revelation 22:16
Chief Shepherd	The foremost Caretaker of His sheep	1 Peter 5:4
Chosen	Selected as our Redeemer	Isaiah 42:1
Christ	Anointed (see Anointed One)	Matthew 16:16
Christ, our Passover Lamb	Sacrifice bringing safety and freedom	1 Corinthians 5:7
Consolation of Israel	Comfort brought about by the inauguration of the messianic era	Luke 2:25
Cornerstone	Salvation rests in Him alone	Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6
Deliverer	Rescuer	Romans 11:26
Diadem of Beauty	Both Lord and a delight	Isaiah 28:5
Door	Access to eternity for sinners	John 10:9
Door of the sheep	(See Door)	John 10:7
Emmanuel	God with us (see Immanuel)	Isaiah 7:14
Everlasting Father	Always concerned for His people	Isaiah 9:6

Faithful	Constant, steadfast	1 Thessalonians 5:24
Faithful and True	Constant, steadfast, honest, just	Revelation 19:11
Firstborn	Of the highest rank	Hebrews 1:6
Firstborn of the dead	First of the resurrection	Revelation 1:5
Founder and Perfecter	Begins and completes our faith	Hebrews 12:2
Glory of the Lord	God's lofty majesty come to save	Isaiah 40:5; John 1:14
God with us	(See Emmanuel)	Matthew 1:23
Great High Priest	High Priest over all	Hebrews 4:14
Heir of all things	All things made through and for Him	Hebrews 1:2
High Priest	Ultimate intercessor who became the sacrifice	Hebrews 3:1; 10:11–14
Holy One	The Christ	Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27
Horn of Salvation	Has power and strength to make us safe	Luke 1:69
I Am	Eternally present	John 8:58
Image of the Invisible God	God incarnate	Colossians 1:15
Jesus	Yahweh is salvation	Matthew 1:21
King of kings	Ruler above all others	Revelation 19:16
Lamb	Sacrificial victim	John 1:29
Lamp	Source of light	Revelation 21:23
Last Adam	Giver of eternal life	1 Corinthians 15:45
Light	Enlightens all	John 1:9
Light of the world	Messianic title	John 8:12
Living Bread	Substance of eternal life	John 6:51
Man of Sorrows	World's sins placed on Him	Isaiah 53:3
Man whom He has appointed	Designated by God, vindicated by resurrection	Acts 17:31
Mediator between	Reconciles the estranged	1 Timothy 2:5
Mediator of a New Covenant	Died so we would inherit eternal life	Hebrews 9:15
Messiah	(See Christ)	John 1:41
Overseer of your souls	Watches over His people	1 Peter 2:25
Power of God	Saves as only God can	1 Corinthians 1:24
Prince of Peace	Ruler who puts away wrath	Isaiah 9:6
Prophet	Speaks for the Lord	Deuteronomy 18:15–17
Propitiation	Complete covering for sin	1 John 2:2

Redeemer	Gets us back from sin and death	Job 19:25
Resurrection	Rose to grant eternal life, soul <i>and</i> body	John 11:25
Righteous Judge	His decisions are just	2 Timothy 4:8
Rock	Spiritually steadfast	1 Corinthians 10:4
Root of David	Ideal king from David's line	Revelation 5:5
Root of Jesse	Descendant of David's father	Isaiah 11:10
Salvation of God	God's gracious gift of forgiveness	Luke 3:6
Savior	(See Deliverer)	Titus 2:13; Luke 2:11
Son of David	God, yet descended from David and seated on his throne	Matthew 9:27; Luke 18:38; Hebrews 1:5
Son of God	God's only Son	John 1:49
Source of eternal salvation	Font of eternal life	Hebrews 5:9
Stone of Stumbling	Some stumble in unbelief	1 Peter 2:8
Truth, the	Reliable; not relative or derived	John 14:6
Vine, the	We draw life from Him	John 15:5
Way, the	Only path to salvation	John 14:6
Word of God	God's Word made flesh	John 1:1, 14; Revelation 19:13

## The Name That Is above Every Name

Paul, the great evangelist, wrote that Jesus is "the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9–11).

Yet don't we curse and swear in Jesus' name? Angrily we condemn our brothers, rationalize our mistakes, or spit out "Jesus!" under our breath. We all stand condemned of the sinful misuse of our Savior's name. Sometimes we bring dishonor to Jesus through our actions and so besmirch His good name. By not loving our neighbors as ourselves our lack of action sullies the name of our Lord.

Take heart, though, and hear the Gospel from the apostle John: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Christ loves and forgives the repentant sinner. When we are wrapped in His precious names, like those found above, we find salve for our spiritual wounds.

Jesus! Name of priceless worth  
To the fallen of the earth  
For the promise that it gave,  
"Jesus shall His people save."

(LSB 900:3)

# Jesus Is the One True God



Everywhere we look in public life, people are trying to bridge the gap between religions. In 2004, President George W. Bush said he believes Christians and Muslims worship the same God in different ways. Dutch Roman Catholic Bishop Tiny Muskens made headlines in 2007 by suggesting that Christians should call God *Allah* to facilitate better relations with Muslims. Ibrahim Hooper, with the Council on American-Islamic Relations, told reporters he believes Muslims, Christians, and Jews all worship the same God. Former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, a Mormon, told voters during the 2008 presidential campaign that Jesus is his "personal Savior."

God reveals Himself to us specifically in the flesh and blood of Jesus, who won forgiveness for us with His life, death, and resurrection. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). It is tempting to believe that anyone who trusts in a god is, in fact, trusting the true God. But God's Word makes it clear: we cannot know the true God without knowing the person and work of Jesus Christ.

## Jews

The Old Testament speaks of the children of Israel as God's chosen people. Beginning with the Lord's call to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their descendants are the ones through whom God brought into the world the Savior of all the nations. Because of the role the Israelites played in God's salvation story, many Christians believe the god of Judaism today is the God of Christianity. Jesus already told the Jews of His time, though, that it's impossible to separate Him from the God of the Old Testament.

When the Jews gathered around Jesus at the Feast of Dedication, they demanded, "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly" (John 10:24). They were looking for a Messiah to bring them freedom from Roman rule. But Jesus told them He is not only the earthly Messiah; He is God Himself. In making His claim, He specifically denied that the Jews—or anyone

else—can believe in the Father without the Son.

Jesus said, "The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about Me, but you do not believe because you are not part of My flock. . . . I and the Father are one" (John 10:25–26, 30).

Jesus' statements prompted the Jews to try to stone Him for blasphemy, "because You, being a man, make Yourself God," they charged (John 10:33). Throughout Jesus' ministry, most Jews continued to reject His claims that He was the Messiah. When Jewish leaders brought Jesus before Pilate, they told the Roman governor, "We have a law, and according to that law He ought to die because He has made Himself the Son of God" (John 19:7).

Of course, some Jews believed Jesus was the Messiah, and those Jews formed the Early Christian Church. Even today, some Jews, known as *messianic Jews*, believe in the one true God, as He is revealed in Jesus.

## Muslims

Muslims, like Jews, worship one god and claim Abraham as their spiritual father. Muslims speak highly of Jesus as a teacher and prophet of Allah. For those reasons, many well-meaning Christians believe that Muslims also worship the true God, although their worship is deficient.

However, a closer look reveals that Muslims reject the true God—the God revealed to us in Jesus—as surely as the Jews do. Although the Qur'an speaks highly of Jesus as a man, it specifically denies that Jesus is God. It accuses Christians of blasphemy for believing God is "the Messiah, the son of Mary" (Sura 5:17), and it calls Jesus "no more than a messenger [of Allah] like the messengers before him (Sura 5:75). The Qur'an even denies that Allah could have an only-begotten son: "Never did He beget. Nor was He begotten" (Sura 112:3).

Islam seeks to keep Jesus on its own terms: a good man and teacher, even a prophet, who was not God. But Paul's words to the Colossians make it clear that a mere human Jesus is not compatible with belief in the true God: "For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

## Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses don't deny that Jesus was sent by God, as Jews do; and they don't deny that Jesus is God's Son, as Muslims do. They use Christian language to describe God—but their god is not the Christian God.

Jehovah's Witnesses follow the teaching of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. The society claims Jesus is the first and only being created by Jehovah, God, and that Jesus created the rest of the universe. It teaches that Jesus was not resurrected in bodily form but as a spirit being. And most important, the society teaches that Jesus is not God; He is just a man.

Jehovah's Witnesses also deny the biblical teaching of the Holy Spirit, denying that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person of the Trinity and teaching that He is merely the active force of God.

Jesus does not speak of the Holy Spirit as a "force" but as a person. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).

In speaking about the Holy Spirit, Jesus even claimed authority that no mere creature could claim: "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me" (John 15:26). Only God could send the Spirit from the Father. Jesus makes that claim for Himself.

## Mormons

On the surface one might ask what could be more Christian than a body called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Jesus plays a key role in Mormonism, as in some other false religions. But the god of Mormonism is not the true God because of what Mormons confess about all three persons of the Trinity. They teach that the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit are three separate beings. In Mormonism, the Father has flesh and blood like us. In fact, Brigham Young wrote in his *Journal of Discourses* that Adam is our flesh-and-blood god, who brought one of his wives, Eve, with him to the Garden of Eden. Their first child, conceived like any other child, was Jesus.

Besides rejecting the Trinity, Mormons also reject Christ's work for us. Mormonism teaches that Jesus is an example to all who want to follow God but that His death on the cross does not atone for our sins. A Jesus who did not die for the sins of the world is not the Jesus of history and certainly not the Jesus of Christianity.

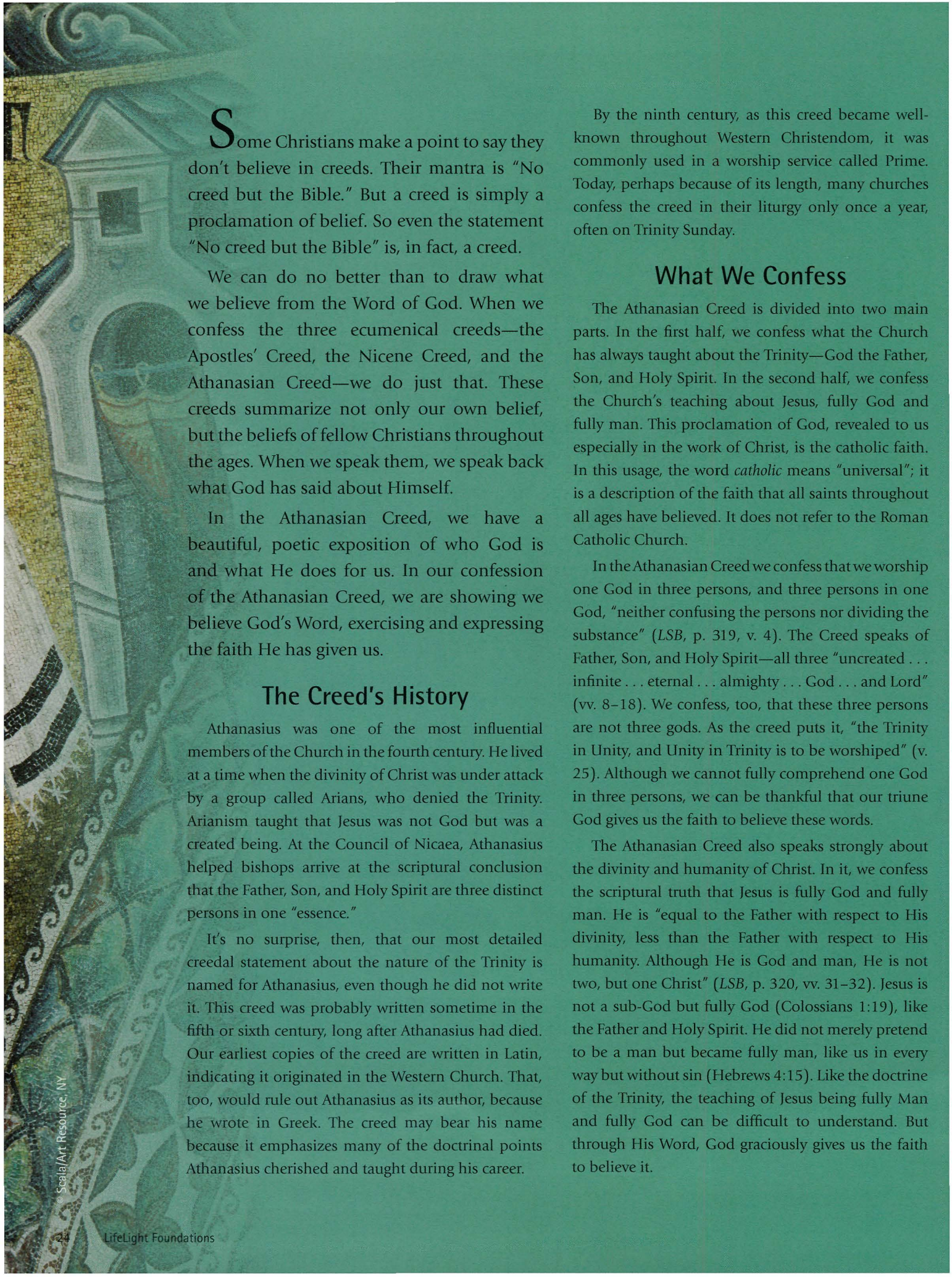
## Bridging the Gap

The impulse to bridge the gap between religious people is a noble one. We love our neighbor regardless of what our neighbor believes. But bridging the gap between religions is another matter. When we overlook religious differences for the sake of peace on earth, we sinfully and selfishly deny our non-Christian friends the opportunity for "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

That eternal peace with the Father, given to us by the Holy Spirit, is accomplished only through God-given faith in what Jesus has done for us. In helping others to see the fullness of the Trinity, we deliver the Good News of their salvation by a merciful God they do not yet know.

# This Is the Catholic\* Faith





**S**ome Christians make a point to say they don't believe in creeds. Their mantra is "No creed but the Bible." But a creed is simply a proclamation of belief. So even the statement "No creed but the Bible" is, in fact, a creed.

We can do no better than to draw what we believe from the Word of God. When we confess the three ecumenical creeds—the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—we do just that. These creeds summarize not only our own belief, but the beliefs of fellow Christians throughout the ages. When we speak them, we speak back what God has said about Himself.

In the Athanasian Creed, we have a beautiful, poetic exposition of who God is and what He does for us. In our confession of the Athanasian Creed, we are showing we believe God's Word, exercising and expressing the faith He has given us.

## The Creed's History

Athanasius was one of the most influential members of the Church in the fourth century. He lived at a time when the divinity of Christ was under attack by a group called Arians, who denied the Trinity. Arianism taught that Jesus was not God but was a created being. At the Council of Nicaea, Athanasius helped bishops arrive at the scriptural conclusion that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons in one "essence."

It's no surprise, then, that our most detailed creedal statement about the nature of the Trinity is named for Athanasius, even though he did not write it. This creed was probably written sometime in the fifth or sixth century, long after Athanasius had died. Our earliest copies of the creed are written in Latin, indicating it originated in the Western Church. That, too, would rule out Athanasius as its author, because he wrote in Greek. The creed may bear his name because it emphasizes many of the doctrinal points Athanasius cherished and taught during his career.

By the ninth century, as this creed became well-known throughout Western Christendom, it was commonly used in a worship service called Prime. Today, perhaps because of its length, many churches confess the creed in their liturgy only once a year, often on Trinity Sunday.

## What We Confess

The Athanasian Creed is divided into two main parts. In the first half, we confess what the Church has always taught about the Trinity—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the second half, we confess the Church's teaching about Jesus, fully God and fully man. This proclamation of God, revealed to us especially in the work of Christ, is the catholic faith. In this usage, the word *catholic* means "universal"; it is a description of the faith that all saints throughout all ages have believed. It does not refer to the Roman Catholic Church.

In the Athanasian Creed we confess that we worship one God in three persons, and three persons in one God, "neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance" (*LSB*, p. 319, v. 4). The Creed speaks of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—all three "uncreated . . . infinite . . . eternal . . . almighty . . . God . . . and Lord" (vv. 8–18). We confess, too, that these three persons are not three gods. As the creed puts it, "the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped" (v. 25). Although we cannot fully comprehend one God in three persons, we can be thankful that our triune God gives us the faith to believe these words.

The Athanasian Creed also speaks strongly about the divinity and humanity of Christ. In it, we confess the scriptural truth that Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is "equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity. Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ" (*LSB*, p. 320, vv. 31–32). Jesus is not a sub-God but fully God (Colossians 1:19), like the Father and Holy Spirit. He did not merely pretend to be a man but became fully man, like us in every way but without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Like the doctrine of the Trinity, the teaching of Jesus being fully Man and fully God can be difficult to understand. But through His Word, God graciously gives us the faith to believe it.

In the Athanasian Creed we also confess what we believe about Jesus' work: that He "suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead" (vv. 36–37). On that last point, the creed summarizes the Judgment Day account from Matthew 25:31–46 where Jesus noted that His followers will be recognized by their good works, even the ones they don't remember. While believers are justified through faith, it is their resulting works that identify them on Judgment Day. When we confess in the Athanasian Creed, "And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire" (v. 39), we are merely restating the biblical reality of God's judgment.

## Speaking Back to God

God tells us to be ready to give an account of our faith (1 Peter 3:15). The Christian faith is summarized, for example, in the Athanasian Creed. Because the creed is an accurate restatement of what God has revealed about Himself, to deny its words is to deny the Christian faith. One cannot claim to believe in God yet deny the things God has said: "This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved" (v. 40).

Growing in knowledge of God, we also grow in faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 3:18). As Jesus said in His high-priestly prayer: "This is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

