



The Apostle's Creed

Part 2 – The God I Believe

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

Acts 17:22-31

Christians today desperately need a robust vision of God. That is, we need our minds and hearts filled with the God who reveals himself in His Word. The sentimental, culturally accommodating god of contemporary evangelicalism will not do. He may be enough to fill a thought-for-the-day calendar. But this god is wholly insufficient to carry us when the diagnosis is cancer or the job is lost or the child becomes a prodigal.

So today we turn our attention to the God in whom we say, “I believe.” He is the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the center of his nature is ineffable mystery: the One in Three. He is the Son-sending Father who promises to save all those who believe. He is God Almighty for whom nothing is too hard. He is the Maker of all things. He lays claim to all creation as that which exists for his glory and is sustained by his power. This is the God in whom we believe.

Main Idea: The only God who can save sinners is the Almighty Father who sent his Son to die and then raised him up in victory.

1. I believe in the Triune God.

“I believe in God *the Father...*”

“For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you” (Acts 17:23).

- While preaching to the philosophers in Athens Paul made reference to the “man whom [God] has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead” (17:31). This “man” of course is a reference to Jesus Christ whose resurrection vindicated his claim to deity.
- The Trinitarian nature of God (that he is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is revealed gradually and progressively in the Bible. Beginning in the creation account there are hints to a mysterious plurality within God (reference to the “Spirit” hovering over the waters, “Let *us* make man in *our* own image,” etc). As the Old Testament progresses this mystery is unveiled further through various Christophanies, Messianic Psalms, and Messianic prophecies. In the New Testament the mystery of God’s Trinitarian nature comes to the fore with the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
- God is revealed repeatedly in Scripture as Father. This does not mean that God is male in the same sense as human males. Nevertheless God has chosen to reveal himself in primarily masculine categories. The “Father-ness” of God cannot be discarded in favor of the feminine. There are reasons God is Father and not mother. Jesus uniformly addressed God as Father. Certainly many people have suffered from either abusive, neglectful, or absent fathers. But we must not allow sinful fathers to dictate our view of God as our perfect Father. May we allow the biblical revelation of God as Father to redeem our broken visage of fatherhood.

2. I believe in the Almighty God.

"I believe in God the Father, *Almighty...*"

"...nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25).

a) God's power is without limit.

- Paul's message on Mars Hill paints a picture of the limitless power of God. This was in stark contrast to the pagan deities. While certainly possessed of power, theirs was a limited power. Paul mentions that as he passed through Athens he walked among the various temples to the gods. The pagan gods dwell in tourist attractions while God Almighty is too great to be housed in a man-made structure (17:24).
- When the Scriptures make reference to God being served it should never be understood in the typical sense. God is not served "as though he needed anything." That is, God is never dependent upon anything or anyone outside himself. Those who serve God do not do so to supply something that is lacking in him.

b) God's power extends over the lives and decisions of his human creatures.

- "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place" (17:26). God's providence extends over all creation including the free actions of humanity.

c) God's power is never out of accord with his goodness.

- That God is almighty is good news because he is also the Father. His limitless power is consistent with the goodness and protectiveness that characterize his Fatherhood. His power is never exercised in an arbitrary or capricious way. Rather, God's almighty power reflects his justice, wisdom, and goodness.

3. I believe in the Creator God.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, *Maker of Heaven and Earth.*"

"And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place" (Acts 17:26).

a) A sound doctrine of creation keeps us in our place.

- The Bible's account of creation reminds us that there is a clear distinction between God and man. We are not God's co-creators nor are we "little gods." Mankind is the work of God's hands from the dust of the ground. We owe our existence to God alone (17:24-25).

b) A sound doctrine of creation helps us love our neighbor.

- Our neighbors are not accidental products of natural selection. They are created by God and bear his image. That does not mean that their sins are not grievous. Nor does it mean that we ought to give legitimacy to their sin because it's nice to be nice. However the command to love our neighbor makes sense when we understand that every person in the world is made by God in His image (17:26).

c) A sound doctrine of creation keeps our worship from wandering.

- That is, a proper doctrine of creation reminds us that God created this world to bless humanity. He did not create it to become an object of our worship. We are to be good stewards of the world God made. But that good stewardship should never degenerate into idolatry.