

# The Apostles' Creed

***“I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.”***

## ***“I believe”***

Common faith- It is possible to have an outward profession of faith and not possess its object.

- *Historical* faith- knowledge + assent
  - Example: demons (James 2:19)
- *Temporary* faith- knowledge + assent + profession + inward joy + fruit
  - Example: Simon Magus (Acts 8:13, 21), rocky soil (Luke 8:13)
- *Miraculous* faith- possible to have experiences of faith, but not to be born again.
  - Example: Judas, “Lord, Lord have we not..” (Matt 7:22, 1 Cor 13:2)

## Saving faith

*Faith is a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence towards us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.* - John Calvin

- The **Nature** of saving faith is 1) knowledge, 2) assent, 3) trust. (Rom 10:9)
- We must know and trust God as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures.
- While we must have the **experience** of belief, if faith is ultimately defined by experience, it brings confusion. As Christ asked Peter, “Why did you doubt?” Our gaze must be steadfast on Christ, not our experience.
- Therefore, we must **examine our profession of faith.** (2 Cor 13:5) Examination is not for discouragement but rather to be sure to possess the object of faith. (Ps 17:3, 26:3, 139:23)

*“When you come to Christ, you turn your back on everything else.”* -Thomas Wilcox

## ***“in God”***

- Who is this God we believe in? (Exodus 20:3, Isa 45:4-5, 21)
- The one true God (Deut 6:4, 1 Cor 8:4-6) as revealed in the Scriptures.

## We believe in the Trinitarian God.

- Creeds are an invaluable help to define and defend the doctrine of the Trinity.
  - God is one in essence and three in persons, “*same in substance, equal in power and glory.*”(WSC #6)
- Where do we learn of the Trinity in the Scriptures?
  - Gen 1:1-2, 4. Ps. 33:6, Isa 48:16, Isa 42:1
  - Luke 3: 21, Matt 28:19, John 14:25, 15:26, 1 Cor 12: 4-6, 2 Cor 13:14, 1 Pet 1:2
- Scripture attests the same titles, attributes, and perfections to all three persons; also to each: equal honor, glory, prayer, and worship that belongs to the one true God alone.

*“The article of the Holy Trinity is the heart and core of our confession, the differentiating earmark of our religion, and the praise and comfort of all true believers in Christ.”*

-Herman Bavinck

## ***“the Father”***

- God is a father, from eternity past as he begat the Son (John 3:16), a father from creation to all humanity (Mal 2:10), and especially a father by adoption to the elect. (John 1:12)
- God as our Father is our Maker, Provider, and Sustainer.

*“If God be our Father, then we must learn to bear any cross patiently that He shall lay upon us, either in body or mind, and always look for deliverance from Him; for whom the Lord loves, them He chastises.” -William Perkins*

## ***“Almighty”***

- God is almighty and omnipotent (Psalm 115:3, 135:6). Thus, we are told “humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that He might exalt you.” (1 Peter 5:6) We must tremble at his judgements as Aaron “held his peace.” (Lev 10:3)
- God predestined history by decree and by providence governs every detail. (Eph 1:11)
- Comfort: Rest in the truth *God as a father is also almighty for my benefit, and can and will direct and make all things subservient to my salvation.* (Rom 8:28)

*“The ends of the doctrine of divine providence are: the glory of God—patience in adversity—thankfulness in prosperity, and hope in regard to future things.” -Zacharias Ursinus*

## ***“the Creator of Heaven and Earth”***

### *How did God create?*

- Through the Son, by the Holy Spirit; (John 1:3, Gen 1:2, Job 33:4); freely (Ps 33:9, 115:3); by his command (Ps 33:6); out of nothing (Rom 4:17); very good (Gen 1:31, 1 Tim 4:4); in the space of six days (Gen 2:2, Exodus 20:11, Mark 10:6); not eternally, but at a definite time (Gen 1:1).

### *Why did God create?*

- The chief and ultimate end for which all things were created, especially angels and men, is the glory and praise of God. (Prov. 16:4. Ps. 103:22. Rom. 11:36) If God would be praised, it was necessary that he should create rational beings, capable of knowing him; and that, knowing him, they might praise and honor him.

### ***Uses:***

1. That all the glory may be attributed to God, and that his wisdom, power, and goodness, may be known and acknowledged from the works of creation.
2. That we may withdraw our confidence from God’s providence in all created things, and place our trust in God alone, the author and giver of salvation.
3. The two combined, God as *Father* and *Almighty*, serve as bedrock for our faith in Christ; God is both *willing* as our faithful Father and *able* as Almighty Creator to save us to the uttermost.