Compass Life Adult Sunday School

Pastor Pete

November 3, 2019

**“The Apostle’s Creed”**

**I. History of the Apostle’s Creed**

The Apostles’ Creed was \_\_\_ written by the apostles. It was believed throughout the Middle Ages that, on the day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the twelve Apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit to pen the Apostles’ Creed—each Apostle contributing one of 12 articles. In the late 4th century, Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, stated that the Creed was “pieced together by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” This story, as far as church historians can tell, is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In early third century, Hippolytus and Tertullian recorded what would become known as the “Old Roman Creed,” which was used for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ candidates in the church at Rome. This practice of reciting the Old Roman Creed before baptism spread to other churches and became a widespread practice in the church. Early church fathers, formulated what they called the “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”, meaning a “measure” or “ruler” or orthodoxy. In the second and third centuries, this Rule of Faith was also called “the tradition,” “the preaching,” and the “Rule of Truth.” Church father Origen described it as “the teaching of the church preserved unaltered and handed down in unbroken \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from the apostles.” This “Rule” was passed on via \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and while it varied in form, the core of this Rule was similar from church to church. Similar creedal traditions are found in various forms and are discussed in the writings of others like Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen. The oral tradition that contained these core truths is possibly as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were common in the church of the second century, and almost every line of the Apostles’ Creed refute gnostic ideas. Gnostics believed the physical universe was evil, therefore God did not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and God would most certainly never \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in human history. They believed salvation was not a matter of forgiveness but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and that saving truths were meant for a select and secret few, not a universal church. The Apostles’ Creed directly \_\_\_\_\_\_ these ideas. Because Jesus commanded his apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it is not surprising that early \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ confessions were later written using this formula. The Old Roman Creed is laid out with this formula in mind: the Father as \_\_\_\_\_\_ the Son as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the Spirit as the one who \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us. The Old Roman Creed was the foundation for the Nicene Creed in AD 325. The Nicene Creed was the first creed composed by an ecumenical council of church leaders. Martin Luther published his Small Catechism for Christian families in 1529. He lamented the lack of biblical literacy in his own day, and writing to his bishops he said, “you do not care in the least whether the people know the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or any part of the Word of God. Woe, woe, unto you forever!” Luther’s catechism, which includes an explanation of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, is now part of the Book of Concord, the doctrinal standard of Lutheran churches. The Creed is still used as a confession during baptism in many churches. Converts in the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican churches, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ churches still use the Apostles’ Creed as the statement confessed by candidates for baptism.

**II. Scriptural support for Apostle’s Creed (Acts 2)**

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wrote creedal statements in the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 6:4 Shema, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Ephesians 4:4-6, 1 Timothy 3:16, Philippians 2:6-11) and passed sacred oral traditions (Romans 6:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15), to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the growing churches within the Roman Empire.

**III. Harrowing of Hell**

Did Jesus really \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ after dying on the cross? Can we support this idea based on Scripture? Option 1: “Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ In Hell” The most natural understanding of this phrase would be that Jesus suffered in hell. The creed is not saying that Jesus suffered on our behalf in the lake of fire. Secondly, this understanding would be anachronistic. The actual term used is not hell as we think of it today, but the Greek word Hades (ᾅδης), which is the place of the dead. Option 2: “Christ’s Soul Literally Descended into Hades” There are two different reasons given for why He would have gone there: 1) To bring back the souls of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who had already died, or 2) To declare victory over Satan. This is the view of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ church. Catholics teach that “Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.” Many passages in Scripture indicate that those saved before Christ’s coming would already be in heaven (Psalm 23;6; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Romans 4:1-3; Hebrews 11:10, 12:23). Old Testament believers were not in a “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” within Hades waiting to be liberated. The Lutheran Formula of Concord teaches that “Christ went to hell, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for all believers, and has redeemed them from the power of death, of the devil. By this view, Jesus descended to Hell to declare victory over Satan. Jesus did defeat Satan, but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does not say that He descended into Hades to do so. Option 3: “Describes The Agony of the Cross” The view of many Reformed theologians matches the Heidelberg Catechism, which suggests that the phrase “He descended into hell” is meant to convey “His unspeakable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, pain, \_\_\_\_\_\_, and agony, which he endured throughout all his sufferings but especially on the cross.” John Calvin likewise believed that this creedal affirmation indicated “the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God’s vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment.” Teaching that Jesus descended into hell in spite of a lack of evidence risks creating a biblical doctrine to fit a creed rather than forming a creed to reflect biblical doctrine.

**IV. Understanding the Apostle’s Creed**

God is not only our powerful Creator but is also our \_\_\_\_\_ Father. The first article gives us confidence in the power of God because all creatures are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on him for existence. It also gives us confidence in the love of God: no creature can separate us from our faithful Father. Jesus Christ is our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The second article reminds us that we are not our own but belong to Jesus who has made us his own. “My Lord and my God!” is the proper confession of a Christian (John 20:28-29). The Apostle Paul says “every knee” will “bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is \_\_\_\_\_\_, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11). What this confession means for us is that Christ’s reign and rule over us topples every other idol and god—he has saved us from bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil. We are not our own but \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus. Jesus was miraculously \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by the Holy Spirit through Mary. This third article is important because Jesus’ innocence from conception to the end of his life is what covers all of our sins. Since he was conceived, was born, and lived like us in every respect, yet \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Heb. 4:15; 7:26, 27), he is able to redeem us from the curse of God’s holy law. Jesus was sinless from conception and birth. Jesus suffered, was crucified by the Romans in the first century, and died. In this fourth article, we confess that Jesus lived the perfect life and died the death that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in order to save us from the wrath of God. We are reminded that the Christian faith is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ faith—Jesus lived and died at the same time that Pontius Pilate, an obscure Roman governor, was ruling. Jesus rose from the dead. This 5th article teaches us that by his resurrection Jesus \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ death so that he could make us partakers in his death and resurrection. His resurrection from the dead is a pledge to us that we too will be raised from the dead as he was. Jesus ascended into heaven and is exalted. In this sixth article, we affirm that Jesus is now our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in heaven before our Father, pleading and interceding on our behalf and for our sake. Jesus will return in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This seventh article is an especially great comfort to those who are suffering and who face persecution. We affirm that Jesus will come to make every wrong right. All of his people will then enter into glory and have everlasting joy and life. The Holy Spirit is a person of the Holy Trinity. The eighth article reminds us that the Holy Spirit is a person in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, just as the Son is God and the Father is God. We are also comforted by the fact that the Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus Christ who is in heaven, and makes us more and more like him each day. The church is universal. This ninth article reminds us that since the beginning of time, God has always gathered, defended, and preserved for himself hischurch. It spans across all ages and in many different places, and it is in this church that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ belong. There is a fellowship of Christians across all times and places. The tenth article concerns the communion of saints. We do not only belong to Jesus Christ, but we belong to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_—to all who share the name of the Triune God and call on the name of Jesus. Since we belong to one another, we should readily share \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and any abundance we have with those in need to bless and further Christ’s church on this earth. Our sins are truly and really forgiven in Christ. The eleventh article is perhaps the sweetest of them all. Because of what Jesus has done for us in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, God will no longer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ alone, there is no condemnation whatsoever. Our bodies will be resurrected. Heaven is real. The twelfth article finishes with a strong emphasis on the reality of our bodily resurrection. Too often we tend to think of the spiritual life as exclusively soul-related, but it also includes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Further, there is no greater comfort than to know that in Christ we soon will be in total possession of perfect blessedness—such that no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined. Heaven is for real, and we will be with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**11/10 “The Heidelberg Catechism”**