

Apostles Creed

Catechism:

I. The First Article: On Creation

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

Q. What does this mean?

A. I believe that God created me, along with all creatures. God gave to me: body and soul, eyes, ears and all the other parts of my body, my mind and all my senses and preserves them as well. God gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and land, spouse and children, fields, animals, and all I own. Every day God abundantly provides everything I need to nourish this body and life. God protects me against all danger, shields and defends me from all evil. God does all this because of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, not because I've earned it or deserved it. For all of this, I must thank, praise, serve, and obey God. Yes, this is true!

Kolb: pp. 48-86, 247-48 Kinnaman: p. 98-100

The Apostles Creed is about the Holy Trinity. The three sections of the Apostles Creed remind us of all that God does for us. The First Article reminds us of what God the Father does. The Second article reminds us what God the Son does. The Third Article reminds us what God the Holy Spirit does.

In the First Article, Martin Luther speaks of God's care for His creation. Usually this work of God is spoken of as the work of God the Father.

God created the world, and He loves it. (Gen 1:31) He loves the flowers and animals and trees and rivers and mountains. He wants us to love all of His creatures also. He asked Adam to take care of them. (Gen 2:15) God "abundantly provides" for all His creatures.

Most people in the United States are not farmers or hunters. However, in many countries and societies people are farmers and hunters. They love the land and all its creatures. They love the birds and plants and animals and fish and want to take care of them well. This makes God happy.

God is happy when anybody takes good care of His creation. This First Article is about everybody. God loves everybody and wants everybody to be happy. He wants them to have a happy family and a happy marriage. He wants them to have good food and water and home, to "nourish this body and life."

God wants to use government and courts and culture to bring happiness to the world. We know people are selfish and often do things to hurt God's creation. They hurt the land and the water and the animals. God wants governments to stop such actions. We work with everyone else to have good governments and courts and cultures to bring peace to our societies.

God also wants everyone to be safe. In some countries there are many dangers. People get attacked and hurt and killed. When you are safe, you want to thank God for your safety. You know it is simply His love that has protected you. You want to use your life to "thank, praise, serve, and obey Him." **"Yes, this is true!"**

How can we join with others to care for creation and to help the government do its work well?

Catechism:

II. The Second Article: On Redemption

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

*He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Q. What does this mean?

A. I believe that Jesus Christ is truly God, born of the Father in eternity and also truly human, born of the Virgin Mary. Christ is my Lord! Christ redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, bought and won me from all sins, death, and the authority of the Devil. It did not cost him gold or silver, but his holy, precious blood, his innocent body -- his death! Because of this, I am Christ's very own, will live under Christ in his kingdom and serve Christ righteously, innocently and blessedly forever, just as Christ is risen from death, lives and reigns forever. Yes, this is true!

Kolb: pp. 122-78 Kinnaman: pp. 36-50

Everything we know about God we know because of Jesus. We know about God's love because of what He did in Jesus. The Second Person of the Trinity became a man who was Jesus. Jesus

taught about God. He healed people in God's Name. He loved everybody, even people who were bad people and people that everyone else did not like. Because of Jesus' life, we know that God is love.

God's most important purpose in coming to us as Jesus was to forgive us our sins. Luther talks about this as "redeeming" us, just as the Bible often does (Gal 3:13, 4:5, Titus 2:14, I Peter 1:18, Rom 3:4, 8:23, I Cor 1:30, Eph 1:7, 14, 4:30, Col 1:14, Heb 9:12). What does it mean to need redemption?:

- In some societies, when people owe money, they have to give a son or daughter to work for the lender to pay off the debt.
- In some societies, people can give a valuable watch or a diamond ring or an expensive coat to a money lender or a pawn shop to borrow money.
- In some societies, bad people kidnap and steal children. They say they will not return the children until money is paid to them.
- In some societies if there is a fight between tribes or if someone is killed, the tribe must give some animals or even some children to bring peace between the tribes.
- Soldiers can be captured by an enemy. They tell the government that they must pay to get the soldiers back.

When the money is paid, the person or valuable thing is "redeemed." He or it is brought back to the owner safely.

Luther said this is what God did for us in Jesus. He redeemed us "not with gold or silver but with His holy, precious blood, His innocent body – His death!" Jesus died on the cross even though He never did any sin. Sin needed to be punished by God, but Jesus took the punishment in our place.

The Devil owned us because we had sinned just like he did, but now the price to free us had been paid. We are redeemed!

Now God does not need to punish us for our sins. Jesus took all our punishment. We are free simply because of Jesus. Now God can accept us and forgive us our sins because "we live under Christ."

Jesus' resurrection from the dead was the proof of this redemption. When Jesus rose from the dead, He told the world that the price for sin had been paid. He told the world that the devil no longer owns us. We now "are Christ's very own" and live in His love and protection.

Jesus has redeemed everyone! This is the good news that most people do not know. They still live in fear of God and fear of their sin and fear of death and fear of the devil. They do not

know what God has done for all people through Jesus. We know. We are happy. We want everyone to know and be happy. **“Yes, this is true!”**

How can we tell the world about the good news of Jesus?

Catechism:

III. The Third Article: On Becoming Holy (Sanctification)

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian (catholic) Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Q. What does this mean?

A. I believe that I cannot come to my Lord Jesus Christ by my own intelligence or power. But the Holy Spirit called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers together, enlightens and makes holy the whole Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus in the one, true faith. In this Church, he generously forgives each day every sin committed by me and by every believer. On the last day, he will raise me and all the dead from the grave. He will give eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. Yes, this is true!

Kolb: pp. 179-95, 244-75 Kinnaman: pp. 36-50, 73-85, 127-33

The work of God the Holy Spirit is to connect with me directly. God the Father takes care of the world through government and Nature. God the Son redeemed the whole world from sin, from the devil, and from death. But how do we know about all this? How do we come to believe it and accept it? This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit does His work through the Church:

- Through the church, the Holy Spirit “calls, gathers together, enlightens, and makes holy.”
- Through the church, the Holy Spirit gives everyone “His gifts” of strength and love and guidance in life.
- Through the church, the Holy Spirit “generously forgives each day every sin committed by me and by every believer.”
- Through the church, the Holy Spirit keeps us “in the true faith.”

The final work of the Holy Spirit is to get us to heaven:

- God the Father created us to be with Him forever in the joys of heaven.
- God the Son paid the price for our sin in Jesus so that we could be forgiven and received in heaven.
- God the Holy Spirit brings us to receive God into our hearts and live in it all life long so that we are with God when we die.

Then God “will give eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ.” **“Yes, this is true!”**

Do you see the church to be as important for you as God sees it?