

**23) He is completely one in the unity of his person, without confusing his natures.**  
(Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5–8; Hebrews 2:14–17)

**24) For as the rational soul and body are one person, so the one Christ is God and man.**  
(Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5–8; Hebrews 2:14–17)

**25) He suffered death for our salvation. He descended into hell and rose again from the dead.** Not only was Christ’s perfect life necessary but His atoning death was necessary for the salvation of His people as well. He lived in the perfect manner that we could not and He died in the cursed manner that we deserve. After His death and burial He rose from the grave proving that He had power and victory over sin, death, and hell.  
(Isaiah 53; Romans 3:25; 4:25; 6:4; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 5:10; Hebrews 2:17; 1 Peter 1:3; 2:24; 3:18–19; 1 John 2:2)

**26) He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.** Because Jesus perfectly completed His mission He was then rightfully exalted at the right hand of the Father in glory.  
(Psalm 110:1; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; 7:56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1)

**27) He will come again to judge the living and the dead.** There will be a day in which all will rise and be justly judged by Him who is the only just judge.  
(John 5:22; Acts 1:11; 10:42; 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

**28) At his coming all people shall rise bodily to give an account of their own deeds.** This speaks of the physical resurrection that will take place as each person will give an account to God for all that they have done.  
(Job 19:26; John 5:28–29; Romans 14:12; Revelation 20:12)

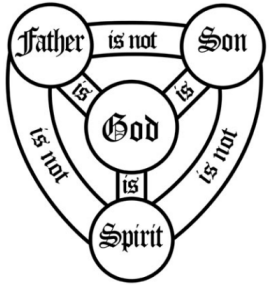
**29) Those who have done good will enter eternal life; those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.** This is indeed the final judgment. For those who are in Christ it will be glorious and for those who are left wanting it will be utter torment.  
(Matthew 16:27; 25:31–46; John 5:28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12)

**30) This is the catholic faith: One cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.**  
(John 3:18; Galatians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; Jude 3; See Scripture references from preceding sentences 1 and 2)

To Him be Glory forever and ever! Amen.

## THE ATHANASIAN CREED A Bible Study

Trinity Lutheran Church Norman, OK.  
[www.tlcnorman.org](http://www.tlcnorman.org)



### **Explanation of The Athanasian Creed and the Holy Trinity**

Source: Rev. Dr. Jayson S. Galler -Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Kilgore, Texas

- Athanasian Creed, also known as *Symbolum Quincunque* (*vult salvus esse*), and other titles. Used almost daily in Medieval morning devotions, now generally used only on Trinity Sunday. Luther called it “the most important and glorious composition since the days of the apostles.” One of the so-called “ecumenical” creeds. Included in *The Book of Concord* (the Lutheran Confessions) and therefore binding and normative.

- Since the ninth century the Athanasian Creed was thought to be the work of Athanasius, the Greek Bishop of Alexandria (d.372/373), known for anti-Arianism (Arius d.336, author of heresy that denied full Divinity of Jesus Christ, created Logos before ages, etc.) at Council of Nicea. Legend says Athanasius composed the creed during exile in Rome, but it was not known until later (e.g., not in Athanasius’s own writings) and known first in Latin. Presupposes controversies that came later.

- One theory is that the Creed originated in Southern Gaul (France) around the 5th century. The full form was known at the close of the 8th century or the beginning of the 9th. Some speculate the Creed was originally two distinct and separately composed parts later put together. Origin doesn’t really matter.

- Clear and precise summary of ecumenical councils. Brief sentences artistically arranged and rhythmically expressed. Two major parts (paragraph numbers correspond to *LSB* pp.319-320).

First ([1]3-26) gives orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity, said to be in strict Augustinian form. Explicitly rules out the subordination of the Persons, where Nicene and Apostolic don’t.

Persons are more than a form or manifestation but less than an independent separate being. (Avoids Sabellianism [a.k.a. the Modalist form of Monarchianism, named for Sabellius, who tried to safeguard monotheism and unity of the Godhead but did not do justice to the independent subsistence of the Son, related to Patripassians, who said the Father suffered as the Son] and Tritheism [which denies the unity of the substance, Monophysites who said one nature in Christ, common nature an abstraction and persons actually separate substances or natures].)

Second (27-39[40]) gives a succinct statement on Christ, as settled at Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451. Proper relation between divine and human nature, excluding Nestorian (two separate persons, one Divine and one Human, in Christ) and Eutychian or Monophysite heresies

• **Some things in the Creed may need clarifying:**

1, 3, 19, 40: “catholic” or “universal” faith, held always, everywhere, by everyone who believes. Nicene Creed’s “catholic” translated into German before Luther as “Christian”.

The “damnatory clauses” (2, 19, 40) make this faith “indispensable condition of salvation”. Not just a warning, but an exclusion from heaven of those who reject the truth confessed. Hard for some to hear, because we want to think other religions are going to the same place. Clearly Jews, Muslims, JW’s, Mormons, etc. are excluded. Saving faith is impossible without knowledge of the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, and His work of redemption

**(Acts 4:12; John 8:21; 14:6).** The “intolerance” is Biblical.

3-4: Faith = worship (seeking and receiving forgiveness), emphasized again midway (25)

4: One substance (Godhead) not to be divided.  
Three persons (Father, Son, Holy Ghost) not to be confounded

6 ff.: Godhead one, glory co-equal, majesty co-eternal. All uncreate(d), incomprehensible (“That cannot be

The Athanasian Creed, written c.a. A.D. 500-600, combatted false doctrine that was rampant in the first few centuries of the church such as Gnosticism, Sabellianism, Apollonarianism, and Arianism, to name a few. This creed continues to combat false doctrine that remains rampant even in the twenty-first century, such as Modalism, Jehovah’s Witness doctrine, Mormonism, Islam, and the New Age movement. The following analysis will examine the biblical roots of each sentence of The Athanasian Creed.

- 1) *Whoever wants to be saved should above all cling to the catholic faith.*** The word “catholic” means “universal” or “whole” therefore referring to the universal faith of the Christian church. This phrase instructs its reader or hearer that there is one true faith that anyone desirous of salvation must believe and cling to in order for his or her desire to be fulfilled. Because of sin, the entirety of mankind is in need of salvation, whether desirous of it.  
**(John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23; 10:13; Hebrews 11:6)**
- 2) *Whoever does not guard it whole and inviolable will doubtless perish eternally.*** Whoever does not hold, keep, or believe this one true faith will inherit the wrath of God, which is rightfully due to everyone because of God’s holiness and man’s sin.  
**(Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:43; Romans 2:6–8; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 21:8)**
- 3) *Now this is the catholic faith: We worship one God in trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the divine being.*** The creed now begins to share what the universal faith is. The one true God is the one Triune God who alone is worthy of worship, praise

and adoration. Three persons exist in this Godhead, yet they exist as one God. Each person is distinct from the other two, yet at the same time each person is fully God.

**(Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; Mark 12:29, 32; John 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5; James 2:19)**

- 4) *For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Spirit is still another.*** This emphasizes the distinctiveness of each person of the Godhead. Contrary to what Modalism professes, in Scripture we see all three persons of the Trinity operating at the same time, which proves that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are indeed distinct and simultaneously existent.  
**(Matthew 3:16–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:18; 6:44; 10:15; 14:16–17, 26–27; 15:26; 16:7, 13–15; Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2–4; Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:4–6)**
- 5) *But the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory, coeternal in majesty.*** Although the persons of the Trinity are clearly distinct, Scripture is very clear that they are all equally and eternally God.  
**(Genesis 1:2, 26; Exodus 3:14–15; Isaiah 44:6; John 8:58; 16:15; Acts 5:3–4; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 9:14; 10:29; 1 Peter 1:2, Revelation 5:13; 21:22–23)**

**6) *What the Father is, the Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit.*** This sentence strongly emphasizes what the sentence preceding it has already stated and what following sentences will state. The Father, Son, and Spirit are not the same in function, but they are the same in essence or nature; that is, they are all equally God. (See Scripture references from preceding sentence 5 and following sentences 7-16.)

**7) *Uncreated is the Father; uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit.*** This points to the fact that the Trinity is eternal. The Trinity has no beginning and has no end, God simply is. This creed continually restates truths from various aspects so that no nuances or subtle differences would be introduced to distort the true Trinitarian doctrine.  
**(Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; John 1:1; Ephesians 3:10-11; Colossian 1:17; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 1:8)**

**8) *The Father is infinite; the Son is infinite; the Holy Spirit is infinite.*** In other words, the Godhead is boundless, limitless, imponderable, incomprehensible, and never-ending.  
**(Genesis 1:1; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 113:4–6; 145:3; 147:5; Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 23:24; Romans 11:33; Ephesians 3:8; Revelation 4:8)**

**9) *Eternal is the Father; eternal is the Son; eternal is the Spirit: And yet there are not three eternal beings, but one who is eternal; as there are not three uncreated and unlimited beings, but one who is uncreated and unlimited.*** Closely related to sentences 7 and 8, this demonstrates the oneness of the persons of the Trinity and the fact that one did not create the others but the 3 persons have eternally coexisted as one God.

(Isaiah 9:6; 48:12; Matthew 3:11; John 1:1, 3; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 17:5; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 9:14; Titus 3:5–6; Revelation 1:8; 22:13)

**10) Almighty is the Father; almighty is the Son; almighty is the Spirit: And yet there are not three almighty beings, but one who is almighty.** While restating the three persons in one God yet again, we now see an emphasis on the almightiness of God. God is omnipotent; that is, God is all-powerful. (Genesis 17:1; 18:14; Psalm 62:11; Matthew 19:26; Mark 14:36; Luke 1:35; John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 12:4, 11; Ephesians 1:20–21; 3:20-21; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 2:9-10; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6)

**11) Thus the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God: And yet there are not three gods, but one God.** (Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:18, 23; 28:19; John 1:1, 14; 6:27; 10:30; 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 3:16; 6:19; 8:4; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 3:17; Colossians 1:15-17; 2:9; Titus 2:10)

**12) Thus the Father is Lord; the Son is Lord; the Holy Spirit is Lord: And yet there are not three lords, but one Lord.** The creed now promotes the lordship of each member of the Trinity. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 11:25; Luke 2:11; Acts 10:36; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Revelation 17:14)

**13) As Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords.** As mentioned before, the use of the word “catholic” refers to the “whole” or “universal” Christian religion. The bible clearly present the doctrine of the Trinity, therefore those faithful to the Word of God must accept this doctrine that states there is one God and three distinct persons exists as one God. (See Scripture references from preceding sentences 3-4, and 11-12.)

**14) The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten; the Son was neither made nor created, but was alone begotten of the Father; the Spirit was neither made nor created, but is proceeding from the Father and the Son.** The Triune-God is the Creator of all things therefore He cannot be created. The persons of the Godhead are therefore uncreated yet each maintains a certain distinctiveness of their eternality. This sentence addresses the relational order of the Godhead while still affirming the ontological or essential unity.

(Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 33:27; Job 38:4; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 5:26; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16–17; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 4:11)

**15) Thus there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three spirits.** Each person of the Trinity is distinctly unique in his personhood, but each person wholly, fully, and entirely has the divine essence. (Matthew 23:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4–6)

**16) And in this Trinity, no one is before or after, greater or less than the other; but all three persons are in themselves, coeternal and coequal; and so we must worship the Trinity in unity and the one God in three persons.** Although distinct in their personhood and unique in their role and function as God, each person of the Godhead is equally one God and fully deserving of worship. (John 1:1–2; 10:30; 16:14–15; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3–4; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:4–6; Hebrews 9:14; See Scripture references from preceding sentence 9)

**17) Whoever want Js to be saved should think thus about the Trinity.** Right beliefs in the profound truths of the glorious Gospel of the Triune God are necessary for salvation. (Matthew 28:19–20; John 3:18, 36; 8:34; Romans 3:28)

**18) It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believes that our Lord Jesus Christ became flesh.** Shifting from the Trinity the creed now addresses the humanity of the second person of the Godhead. It was indeed necessary that Christ would become like us that we might become like Him. In other words, Because of sin and God’s eternal decree, Christ had to become a man to live the perfect life that was required by God in order to atone for the sin and lack of perfection in mankind. (Matthew 1:23; John 1:14; 3:18; 6:40; Acts 13:38; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:6–8; 1 Timothy 2:5–6; 3:16)

**19) For this is the true faith that we believe and confess: That our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man.** Just as Scripture states, Jesus is Immanuel... God with us. This begins the portion of the creed addressing the remarkable truth that is the hypostatic union, which will extend through sentence 24. (Matthew 1:23; 3:17; 10:32–33; 17:5; Luke 2:11; John 1:14; 3:18; 6:40; 8:58; Acts 13:38; Romans 10:9; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5–11 ; Colossians 3:17; 1 Timothy 2:5–6; 3:16; Hebrews 5:5; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Peter 1:17)

**20) He is God, begotten before all worlds from the being of the Father, and he is man, born in the world from the being of his mother -- existing fully as God, and fully as man with a rational soul and a human body; equal to the Father in divinity, subordinate to the Father in humanity.** This sentence states the biblical truth that Christ both displays his divinity and humanity in the single person of Jesus. (Luke 2:52; 24:39; John 1:1–3, 14; 5:23; 7:29; 10:30; 11:35; 16:15; 17:24; 19:33–34; Romans 1:3; Galatians 4:4; Colossians 1:16)

**21) Although he is God and man, he is not divided, but is one Christ.** (Romans 5:15, 17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5; 1 John 2:22)

**22) He is united because God has taken humanity into himself; he does not transform deity into humanity.** (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5–8; Hebrews 2:14–17)