

## The Athanasian Creed

*This creed is named after Athanasius (293-373 A.D.), the champion of orthodoxy over against Arian attacks on the doctrine of the Trinity. Although Athanasius did not write this creed and it is improperly called after him, the name persists because until the seventeenth century it was commonly ascribed to him. It is also called the Quicumque, this being its opening word in the Latin original. Apart from the opening and closing sentences, it consists of two sections, the first setting forth the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity (3-28), and the second dealing with the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning the two natures (29-43). The teachings of Augustine (354-430 A.D.) in particular form the background to the Christological section. The creed itself appears for the first time in the first half of the sixth century, but the author is unknown. It is of Western origin, and is not recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Churches.*

(1) Whoever desires to be saved must above all things hold to the catholic faith. (2) Unless a man keeps it in its entirety inviolate, he will assuredly perish eternally.

(3) Now this is the catholic faith, that we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity, (4) without either confusing the persons, or dividing the substance. (5) For the Father's person is one, the Son's another, the Holy Spirit's another; (6) but the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, their glory is equal, their majesty is co-eternal.

(7) Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is also the Holy Spirit.

(8) The Father is uncreate, the Son uncreate, the Holy Spirit uncreate.

(9) The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite. (10) The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal. (11) Yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal; (12) just as there are not three uncreates or three infinities, but one uncreate and one infinite. (13) In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; (14) yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

(15) Thus the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Spirit God; (16) and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. (17) Thus the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Spirit Lord; (18) and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. (19) Because just as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each person separately to be both God and Lord, (20) so we are forbidden by the catholic religion to speak of three Gods or Lords.

(21) The Father is from none, not made nor created nor begotten. (22) The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. (23) The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. (24) So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one

Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. (25) And in this trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, (26) but all three persons are co-eternal with each other and co-equal. (27) Thus in all things, as has been stated above, both trinity and unity and unity in trinity must be worshipped. (28) So he who desires to be saved should think thus of the Trinity.

(29) It is necessary, however, to eternal salvation that he should also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. (30) Now the right faith is that we should believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is equally both God and man.

(31) He is God from the Father's substance, begotten before time; and He is man from His mother's substance, born in time. (32) Perfect God, perfect man composed of a human soul and human flesh, (33) equal to the Father in respect of His divinity, less than the Father in respect of His humanity.

(34) Who, although He is God and man, is nevertheless not two, but one Christ. (35) He is one, however, not by the transformation of His divinity into flesh, but by the taking up of His humanity into God; (36) one certainly not by confusion of substance, but by oneness of person. (37) For just as soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one Christ.

(38) Who suffered for our salvation, descended to hell, rose from the dead, (39) ascended to heaven, sat down at the Father's right hand, from where He will come to judge the living and the dead; (40) at whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies, and will render an account of their deeds; (41) and those who have done good will go to eternal life, those who have done evil to eternal fire.

(42) This is the catholic faith. Unless a man believes it faithfully and steadfastly, he cannot be saved. Amen.