

19-124-1.wpd --Our Trust in the Creator
the Creed, God, Father, omnipotence, creation, providence
Psa 124:8

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

INTRODUCTION:

--The Apostle's Creed is the Church's oldest statement of faith. It's like a divine baton that has been entrusted by one generation to the next, preserving orthodoxy within Christianity. What's written in the Creed keeps us in touch with the beliefs held and proclaimed by the earliest disciples. When Jesus promised, "I will build My church," I think one His important construction materials was the formation of this Creed.

-- The historical purpose of the Creed was to keep faith orthodox [ortho="straight" or "right"/doxa="thought" or "opinion"]. It gave the churches and new converts Scripturally orthodox statements that countered the false ideas that were infiltrating early Christianity. Those heretical beliefs have not ceased to circulate, and the need for the Creed has never diminished.

--The first statement in the Creed is this: **HOM.idea**. How it describes God is supported by numerous passages in the Bible, but the example I want to quote is Psa 124:8, Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. This verse puts two elements in our belief about God together. He is not just the Creator, but He has an omnipotent, fatherly concern for that part of creation called "the human race."

I. We Believe in God

- A. [Near the end of my senior year in HS, I heard an Anthropologist's lecture about his theory that a gene in the DNA might be responsible for the tendency of humans to believe in God. This was to explain why belief in God is universal in the human history of every geographic location.] The Bible explains it better: "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." We're part of creation, and God built into us the tendency to believe in Him.
- B. Not only is it built into us to believe in God, but the creation itself is so astronomically intricate and complex in its design that it's extremely obvious that nature did not become what it is by a series of accidents-- Rom 1:20. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

C. God went beyond making His existence obvious in nature or having it embedded into our human conscience: He communicated with us, not only indirectly but in person:

1. He spoke through spiritual leaders and prophets-- Heb 1:1, In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, (through angelic appearances, dreams, and visions)
2. Heb 1:2, but in these last days he has **spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. When God spoke through His incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, He was getting as personal and direct as He could possibly could.

TRANS: With God speaking to us in our conscience, in nature, in the mouth of prophets, and finally, out of the mouth of His Son, we have no logical defense for unbelief-- Psa 14:1a, The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." But most religions have a belief in God. The important point is, What God is the real God. In our Christian faith, we believe...

II. God is the Author of Creation

- A. When the Gospel first started to spread, there was a philosophy prevalent in the Mediterranean called Gnosticism [Gnostics taught that God created human spirits, but a false god created the material world, attaching us to physical bodies, which are mortal and corrupted. Salvation meant being set free from the physical world and totally at one with God in the spiritual world. They were called Gnostics (from the Gk. word *gnosis* or *knowledge*), because, in their view, you had to be initiated into certain progressive levels of secret knowledge that only Gnostic leaders could impart, in order to be raised to the next level in spiritual progress.] (**Satan could be called the first Gnostic teacher**, in a sense, because he convinced Adam and Eve that the forbidden fruit would open their eyes to knowledge that would make them, who were physical beings, "like God," the Ultimate spiritual Being.)
- B. When Gnosticism started infiltrating the early church, this **Creed** was developed to fight it and to keep Gnostics from being baptized by using this statement: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." (The true God was the Maker of both the spiritual world and the physical world, which meant that both worlds were **good** and both worlds were **sacred** in God's eyes.)
- C. [The theme of the most recent issue of Christian History Magazine is Gnosticism in early Christianity, and the lead article is entitled, "The Heresy

that Wouldn't Die -- Though Gnostic sects faded in the early church, Gnostic ideas have had a long shelf life."] Even today Gnostic elements are hidden in the way sine Christians view the material world.

1. *How did it happen?* Early Christian monks adopted and passed on Gnosticism's dim view of the material world, by seeing on the physical body as a corrupted source of spiritual defilement.
2. This view of our human bodies sets up a *false dualism* that still resides in Christian thought today whenever we treat the body as unimportant in God's plan. Such thinking is condemned by the fact of Christ's physical Incarnation and bodily Resurrection.

TRANS: Belief in God as "*the Maker of heaven and earth*" is very *human-friendly*, because our destiny, like Christ's, is to be heavenly spirits in glorified earthly bodies forever and ever. But the verse we started with has another extremely important aspect in God's identity-- Psa 124:8, *Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.* God is the *believer's Helper*, because...

III. God is Our Almighty Father

- A. The Fatherhood of God is a uniquely Christian concept.
 1. That the 2nd Person of the Trinity became a human Son with God as His Father goes against all other religious concepts of God.
 2. Yet, this eternal *Fatherhood* in God, stated in Christianity, offers the most human-friendly view of God among all others religions.
- B. Christ who called God "My Father," taught us to pray to Him as "Our Father," because His Incarnation and death in our place was to bring us into a relationship with God as our Father-- Heb 2:9b-10a, ...he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many *sons* to glory... (*sons* = "children").

CONCLUSION:

--Psa 124:8, *Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.* God isn't just a theological fact, but at a Real Person, the most real Person in the universe, and because He's the Maker both of our spirits and our bodies, and because He is a caring Father, we have the help we need to get through this life, and so much more in eternity-- Rom 8:32, He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?