



The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only son, our lord:
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
**suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell.**
The third day he arose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

1) “suffered under Pontius Pilate”

a) The mention of Pontius Pilate stresses the fact that the death of Jesus was an actual event under the rule of Pilate. The death of Jesus is not merely an idea but an actual event that happened in reality at a specific time in history.

b) Jesus suffered in both his body and spirit. His earthly suffering shows that God is not a distant God, but rather a loving, personal God who feels what we feel and is able to sympathize with us in every way. His suffering culminated in his crucifixion and death on the cross.

(Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12)

[4] Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. [5] But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. [6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. [10] Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. [11] Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. [12] Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

(Matthew 26:38-39)

[38] Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." [39] And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

(Hebrews 4:15)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

2) "was crucified, dead, and buried"

a) Jesus did not just die. He was betrayed, tortured, humiliated, shamed, and degraded. This method of execution was not uncommon, but the meaning of Jesus' death is infinitely more significant than anybody else's death. He bore the sins of the world and the wrath of God.

b) Jesus' death was brought about for two reasons: God's love and justice.

God is just and righteous in condemning everybody in the world for their sins. It is not necessary for God to save anybody. It is only through his love and grace that he intervenes for some, but God's justice is still in effect and needs to be carried out. This is where Jesus steps in and becomes the substitutionary atonement for us. He takes the place of sinners.

(Romans 3:23-26)

[23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24] and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25] whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. [26] It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

(Romans 5:8-9)

[8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

b) Jesus death was necessary for the expiation and propitiation of sin. Not only are our sins wiped clean, we are also viewed favorably by God as though we are perfectly clean and righteous. His one-time death has paid for all the sin of believers.

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(1 Peter 2:24)

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

(Hebrews 9:25-26)

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

(Romans 8:1)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

3) “he descended into hell”

Jesus experienced hell through his incarnation. His descent from being with God the Father to becoming a lowly man to live a life of suffering, die a humiliating and shameful death, and bearing the sins of the world by absorbing the wrath and justice of God is Jesus experiencing hell for our sake. It is through Jesus’ perfect life and death that we are made righteous and are able to inherit all the rewards of Jesus and Jesus, himself.

(Matthew 27:46)

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”