

The Augsburg Confession

Talking About Faith with Family and Friends

Emperor Charles V summoned the Protestant and Catholic theologians to Augsburg in 1530 to settle the divisions between them. The emperor asked for a concise statement of their beliefs with the intended purpose of finding areas of agreement to keep the empire united. The goal of this series is to encourage discussion about what Christians believe.



Discussion: How do you understand God? Who is God? Where is God? Do the challenges to a Triune God have any validity?

Article I: Of God

"Our Churches, with common consent, do teach that the decree of the Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the term 'person' they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself."

Importance: The Lutheran Church agrees with the Roman Catholic Church on the teaching of the Trinity. There is one invisible God who is the creator of all things and there are three Persons, Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost with the same essence and power. Martin Luther rejected all the heresies claiming that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are not distinct or equal with the Father and that there are three Persons as one God and not one person. The following beliefs about God are not supported by the Lutheran Church:

Arianism - 4th Century - Jesus Christ is not equal to the Father but was created as a finite human being. This heresy continues today in the teaching of the Jehovah's Witness and with those who deny the sacredness of life before birth.

Pelagianism - 5th Century - Man is basically good and since he is not corrupted by original sin, does not need Jesus Christ but can earn God's grace. This heresy continues with those who believe God created the world and is not actively involved today.

Islam - 7th Century - Allah is the Almighty God and Jesus is a prophet of God as is Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Mohammad, and others.

Eastern Orthodox - 11th Century 1054 A.D. - The words of the Nicene Creed refute the teaching that God is superior to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is known as the Filioque controversy.

The critical passages of the **Nicene Creed** that Christians profess weekly to prove these heresies **false are:**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**