

The Small Catechism of Martin Luther
Part Two: The Apostles' Creed

I. The First Article: On Creation

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

Q. What does this mean?

A. I believe that God created me, along with all creatures. God gave to me: body and soul, eyes, ears and all the other parts of my body, my mind and all my senses and preserves them as well. God gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and land, spouse and children, fields, animals, and all I own. Every day God abundantly provides everything I need to nourish this body and life. God protects me against all danger, shields and defends me from all evil. God does all this because of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, not because I have earned it or deserved it. For all of this, I must thank, praise, serve, and obey God. Yes, this is true!

II. The Second Article: On Redemption

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Q. What does this mean?

A. I believe that Jesus Christ is truly God, born of the Father in eternity and also truly human, born of the Virgin Mary. Christ is my Lord! Christ redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, bought and won me from all sins, death, and the authority of the Devil. It did not cost him gold or silver, but his holy, precious blood, his innocent body -- his death! Because of this, I am Christ's very own, will live under Christ in his kingdom and serve Christ righteously, innocently and blessedly forever, just as Christ is risen from death, lives and reigns forever. Yes, this is true!

III. The Third Article: On Becoming Holy (Sanctification)

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.

Q. What does this mean?

A. I believe that I cannot come to my Lord Jesus Christ by my own intelligence or power. But the Holy Spirit called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers together, enlightens and makes holy the whole Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus in the one, true faith. In this Church, he generously forgives each day every sin committed by me and by every believer. On the last day, he will raise me and all the dead from the grave. He will give eternal life to me and to all who believe in Christ. Yes, this is true!