

# [The nicene creed](https://assignbuster.com/the-nicene-creed/)

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﻿The Christian faith is based upon the Nicene creed, a profession of faith that was formulated by the ecumenical council in 325 A. D. during their meeting in the city of Nicea located in what is now known as Turkey. The name of the creed is taken from an adaptation of the name of the city where the council formulated the creed. The Nicene Creed should not be confused with the revised creed adopted by the Council of Constantinople in 381 as the two creeds contain different wordings and attest to different forms of divination, Jesus Christ for Nicea and the Holy Spirit for Constantinople (Wilhelm, Joseph. “ The Nicene Creed”)
In order to understand why the early Christians felt the need to call to order a council at Nicea in order to create the Nicene creed, we need to first understand the historical importance of the events surrounding the meeting that would change the identity of a man named Jesus, from human to divine. Although the defeat of Emperor Licinuis in 323 AD by Constantine meant an end to Christian persecution, it did not mean that everyone was in agreement with the teachings of the Christian church. In Alexandria, there was a Presbyter pastor named Arius who declared that:
... if the Father begat the Son, the latter must have had a beginning, that there was a time when he was not, and that his substance was from nothing like the rest of creation. (“ The Council of Nicea”, columbia. edu)
This declaration by Arius was seen as controversial by Bishop Alexander (also from Alexandria) and sparked a heated debate between the two churches that threatened to destroy the delicate religious peace existing amongst the devout at the time. The Council of Nicea was gathered in the Turkish city in order to develop a guideline for the Christian church pertaining to the divinity of Jesus. They condemned the teachings of Arius by stating that the Son was now “ one in being with the Father” (“ The Council of Nicea”, columbia. edu). In a way, the controversy was all about Arius and his believers bringing a new age to an old church that was determined not to change in its ways and beliefs. That is why, contrary to public belief, the Nicene Creed was not unanimously approved by the council. Of the 300 bishops in attendance, there were 17 who refused to sign and by the end of the council meeting, 14 of the 17 were convinced enough to signed the creed. (“ The Council of Nicea”, columbia. edu) Most of the argument regarding the content of the creed stemmed from the use of the word “ Homoousius” which means “ of one substance”. Their main argument is based on the misuse of the word by Paul of Samasota who had used the term to describe a division of nature coming from the same source such as “ several coins from the same metal”. (“ The Council of Nicea”, columbia. edu). The council needed to agree on one meaning for the word since most of the bishops had already used the word to describe the divinity of the father and the son.
There is some controversy regarding the authorship of the Nicene Creed. Those in the Coptic Church believe Pope Athanasius of Alexandria originally authored the creed. However, there seems to be evidence presented by F. J. A. Hort and Adolf Harnack that the Nicene Creed was instead based upon the Creed of Cesarea as presented before the council by Eusebius of Cesarea. (Grace Communion International, “ The Nicene Creed”).
The church used creeds such as the Nicene Creed to bring order to an otherwise confused and scattered ideology of the Christian church. This was the basis of Christian doctrine before the New Testament bible was invented and called the Holy Scripture. For an order which was meant to bring unity to the church, it instead divided the believers more and more because Arius had previously proven that the creed and liturgical teachings were all open to and subject to interpretation. Therefore, the Nicene Creed failed in its mission to unify the Christian Church under one belief and one God.
In modern times, the Nicene Creed has become an important tool in the Western world for affirming the validity of the New Testament bible. Those who believe in the writings of the bible give credence to the Nicene Creed. However, those who continue to believe that the Nicene Creed was nothing but a group of men who decided to make another human male a divine character in a quest for power and world dominance continue to test the validity of the New Testament. According to Reverend Ken W. Collins (“ The Importance of the Nicene Creed Today”):
... whoever denies the theology of the Nicene Creed must also deny the theology of the New Testament, and whoever upholds the New Testament as Holy Scripture must also affirm the theology of the Nicene Creed.
But whatever the questions about the beliefs contained in the creed, whatever questions about authorship exist, does not erase the fact that the Nicene Creed is the basis of most Western churches in modern times. As the official expression of faith and the final test of orthodoxy (Rev. Ken Collins, “ The Importance of the Nicene Creed Today”), the creed has become the basis of all the emerging churches. If a church were to be created sans the Nicene Creed basis, it would not be able to claim a historical significance because they would not be able to base their teachings on the widely accepted New Testament bible teachings.
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