

## The Nicene Creed – “The Father Almighty...”

- Last month we laid out what a creed is (i.e., “a fixed formula summarizing the essential articles of the Christian religion and enjoying the sanction of ecclesiastical [or church] authority”),<sup>1</sup> how creeds were used (e.g., baptismal formulas when baptism was administered, before and after Communion, teaching new converts, etc.), and why they are important (e.g., guardrails keeping us within the orthodox Christian faith and away from heresy, guides leading us into worship of our great God, etc.).
- Then we looked at the historical background of the Nicene Creed in particular...
  - We looked at the biblical-theological background of the Nicene Creed, pointing out what heresies were influencing the church during the second, third, and early fourth centuries...
  - We looked at the social and ecclesiastical, or church, background, observing some important dates leading up to both the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) and the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381)...
  - And we looked at some important Christian brothers and sisters who were used by God to defend and advance biblical trinitarianism, or what we might call Nicene Trinitarianism.
    - Some examples of those brothers and sisters are Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius of Alexandria, Hosius of Cordova, and our beloved Christian sisters who suffered beatings from the hands of Roman soldiers because of their refusal to adopt Arianism.
- Now that we’ve got those background issues behind us, let’s go ahead and read the whole of the modern Nicene Creed together so that we get the whole of its teaching before us:
  - “We believe in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not created, of the **same essence** as the Father, through whom all things were created; who for us human beings and our salvation came down from the heavens and was made flesh from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and comes again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end; and [we believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the life-giver, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son], who with the Father and the Son is worshiped together and glorified together, who spoke through the prophets; and [we believe] in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. [We]

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<sup>1</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London, 1950), 1.

acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. [We] look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.”<sup>2</sup>

- Now, the portion of the creed that we will focus on tonight is that first section:
  - “We believe in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible...”
  - We are going to be working through that section in detail, so keep your handout in front of you as it will be helpful as we go along...
- Let’s look first at, “We believe in one God, the Father almighty...”
  - Let’s not look to quickly past the opening three words, “We believe in...” The creed is a communal affirmation of historically orthodox Christian beliefs.
    - It is a communal affirmation, so that when I recite the creed and you recite the creed during our times of corporate worship, we are reminding one another of and encouraging one another with certain non-negotiable biblical truths that we love and believe...
      - As the Nicene creed begins, “We believe in,” we get the opportunity to confess before one another these truths, and it really should produce a kind of, “You too?” friendship kind-of-moment:
        - As C. S. Lewis has said, “Friendship arises out of mere Companionship when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste which the others do not share and which, till that moment, each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden). The typical expression of opening Friendship would be something like, “What? You too? I thought I was the only one.”<sup>3</sup>
      - And when the creed mentions belief, it is identifying not just cognitive understanding of the propositions themselves nor mere intellectual assent to the truths of those propositions, but a resting in, a reposing in, a recumbency in those propositional truths rightly understood. A slightly different way of translating that initial phrase, “We believe in,” would be, “We believe into...”
        - We rest into the truths contained in the Nicene Creed not because they are contained in the creed, but because they are a faithful summary of wonderfully glorious biblical truths.
    - Moving on, then, when we read, “We believe in one God,” we are initially being reminded of the biblical truth that there is only one true and living God, which is

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<sup>2</sup> Nick Needham, *2000 Years of Christ’s Power: Volume 1 – The Age of the Early Church Fathers* (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications Ltd, 2016), 240-41. Carl Trueman notes concerning the *filioque* clause, “Of course, the Western addition of the dual procession of the Spirit (‘Who proceeds from the Father and the Son’) at the Third Council of Toledo in 589 has been a source of East/West contention ever since, but, with this one exception, there is not debate about the rest of the creed’s teachings.” (Carl Trueman, *The Creedal Imperative* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2012], 95)

<sup>3</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1988), 65.

affirmed in both the OT and NT. A handful of passages of Scripture that witness to that truth are:

- Deut. 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”
    - It is important to note here that, “YHWH as God’s personal name refers to the divine Godhead in its fullness, the divine essence equally shared by the three persons. As such, YHWH can be predicated on any of the divine persons without remainder. And at the same time, the name YHWH is not the sole possession/indicator of any one person. YHWH is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their coequal sharing of the divine essence in its fulness.”<sup>4</sup>
  - Isa. 44:6, 8, “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god... Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.’”
  - 1 Tim. 1:17, “To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”
  - James 2:19, “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder!”
- And yet we know, in light of all that Scripture and the creed teach us, that this one true and living God has revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... one God who is eternally existent in three distinct, co-equal, and co-eternal Persons. So, when the creed moves immediately to the affirmation, “We believe in one God, *the Father...*” we see that the focus is actually on the eternal Father of the eternal Son... the focus is on the first Person of our triune God.
- The early church rarely fought any challenge to the deity of the Father, as it was clearly revealed throughout Scripture, but here are a few NT passages nonetheless that demonstrate the deity of the Father:
    - Matt. 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”
      - This text emphasizes the name that is equally shared between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and many commentators point to the covenantal name of God, YHWH, as that shared name.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Mark S. Gignilliat, “The Trinity and the Old Testament: Real Presence or Imposition?” in *The Essential Trinity: New Testament Foundations and Practical Relevance*, ed. Bandon D. Crowe & Carl R. Trueman (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2017), 207 (Kindle edition). Gignilliat rightly notes that one danger of “identifying YHWH as the divine essence is the introduction of the fourth member into the Trinity, to wit, the essence as in independent transcendent agent.” (Ibid., 210) This one true and living God, in the one undivided essence, is eternally tripersonal.

<sup>5</sup> Scott R. Swain, “Divine Trinity” in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 83. Cf. Charles Quarles, “Matthew” in the

- 1 Cor. 8:6, “yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”
  - This verse in particular also helps us to see why the Nicene Creed is worded the way it is... “We believe in one God, the Father... and in one Lord, Jesus Christ...”<sup>6</sup>
- 2 Cor. 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.” (cf. 11:31; Eph. 1:3)
- What’s more, the personal names of the “Father” and the “Son” (as well as the “Holy Spirit”) are supremely a matter of NT revelation.<sup>7</sup> Here are a few NT passages that demonstrate the Father’s personal relation to the Son:
  - We already looked at Matt. 28:19, but again that text clearly shows forth the relationship of the Father and the Son (and the Holy Spirit).
  - John 1:1-3, 14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”<sup>8</sup>
  - John 17:1, 5, “‘Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you... And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.’”

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*Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament*, ed. Andreas J. Kostenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 352.

<sup>6</sup> “In the NT, *theos* has virtually become a proper name for God the Father [and not simply a title]. If Christ was everywhere called ‘God’ so that in reference to him the term was not a title but a proper noun, linguistic ambiguity would be everywhere present.” (Stephen Wellum, “Systematic Theology II 27070: Class Handouts”, 88)

<sup>7</sup> “The ‘personal names’ of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit identify the distinct manner in which the three relate to one another within the being and activity of the one true God. Because the incarnation of the Son and the outpouring of the Spirit provide the occasion for manifesting the mutual relations of the three ‘east of Eden,’ the grammar of God’s triune name is supremely a matter of New Testament revelation.” (Scott R. Swain, “Divine Trinity” in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016], 98) Swain discusses the Augustinian differences between substantial predication and relational predication, saying, “these two categories of predication allow us to observe real distinctions between the three while maintaining their unity as one God: considered in relation to the Son and the Spirit, the Father is really and truly distinct; considered in himself, the Father is simply the one true God; and so forth.” (95-96)

<sup>8</sup> When we consider John 1:1-3 in light of Gen. 1:1-2, it becomes apparent that the God who created in Gen. 1:1-2 has eternally existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Father creating through the Son in/by the power of the Holy Spirit. Creation is a triune act of the one true and living God.

- Gal. 4:4-6, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”
  - We’re going to be referencing this passage near the end of our time together tonight, but for now, see how the Son of the Father makes those in him sons of the Father by adoption!
- “The creed, like Scripture, indicates that the first person of the Trinity has revealed himself to us as ‘Father.’ In other words, this is not some distant, unknowable deity but a God with whom we have a personal relationship. God is not a force or a principle or a ‘higher power.’ He has instead revealed himself as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3).”<sup>9</sup>
- Now, when considering the creedal description, “the Father,” we’ve seen how in context it should be understood as a term of personal relationship of the eternal Father with the eternal Son, but it’s important to point out that the title “Father” is not always used in Scripture to describe the Father in relation to the Son (i.e., in a trinitarian fashion).<sup>10</sup>
  - I mention this here briefly, not to try and make things more confusing, but to try and keep us from making some interpretive mistakes in reading some OT passages in particular. For example:
    - Ps. 68:5, “Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Apostles’ Creed: Discovering Authentic Christianity in an Age of Counterfeits* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2019), 5-6 (Kindle edition).

<sup>10</sup> Louis Berkhoff describes three ways in which the name “Father” may be applied to the triune God generally: “(1) Sometimes it is applied to the triune God as the origin of all created things... [cf. Ps. 68:5; Acts 17:26-28] (2) The name is also ascribed to the triune God to express the theocratic relation in which He stands to Israel as His Old Testament people [cf. Exod. 4:22-23; Deut. 32:6; Ps. 89:26; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9; Mal. 1:6; also in relation to the Davidic King; cf. 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 28:6]... (3) In the New Testament the name is generally used to designate the triune God as the Father in an ethical sense of all His spiritual children.” (Louis Berkhoff, *Systematic Theology* [Louisville: GLH Publishing], 65 [Kindle edition]) Richard Muller helpfully adds, “Given that God is so frequently identified as ‘Father’ in Scripture, distinction must be made between the ‘essential’ and the ‘personal’ use of the terms – as applied either to the Godhead generally or to the Father personally... when the word Father is attributed to God *essentially*, though all creatures are excluded, yet all three Divine persons are included, because they are co-equal, they have one nature, will and worship; they are one and the same God.” (Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* [PRRD]: *The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003], 4:246) Cf. Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2012-2014), 1:51-52.

<sup>11</sup> Allen Ross has said regarding Ps. 68:5, “The LORD is a father to the fatherless, and a judge (a protector, *dayan*) of the widows. These are people who are helpless and comfortless; they are often victims in society. Calling the LORD their father (as a metaphor) stresses his loving care for them as well as the personal relationship he has with them.” (Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 2* [42-89] [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2013], 476.

- Isa. 9:6, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”<sup>12</sup>
- Mal. 2:10, “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?”<sup>13</sup>
- So, while the creed is emphasizing the eternal Father in relation to the eternal Son when it says that, “We believe in one God, the Father,” we have to keep in mind that Scripture may at times be using the term “father” as a descriptor of the triune God generally and not the Father in distinction from the Son specifically... so just keep that in mind as you are reading and doing your own personal devotions.
- Okay, moving on we see that the creed states, “We believe in one God, the Father *almighty*...”
  - The Father is described as almighty, which is meant to “represent all God’s... perfections. All God’s attributes – omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, self-existence, and immutability – are summed up in the one word, *Almighty*. Only the God who possesses the fullness of perfection and infinite majesty can truly be almighty and sovereign over creation.”<sup>14</sup>
  - In the OT we are told of God’s names:
    - *YHWH*, the LORD:
      - Exod. 3:14-15, “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”
        - *YHWH* is the self-existent, independent, and infinite God.

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<sup>12</sup> Alec Motyer, in commenting on how this son could also be called “Father,” says, “Probably the leading idea in the name *Father* here is that his rule follows the pattern of divine fatherhood.” (J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 102) Gary Smith also notes, “Since fathers were the heads of tribes who wisely led the people, it’s a fitting title for a ruler if one wants to avoid some of the negative connotations of kingship.” (Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: Isaiah 1-39* [Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007], 241 [Kindle edition])

<sup>13</sup> Muller says of this passage, “There [is] no reference here to ‘Father’ in the sense of ‘the Father of Christ’ but only to God as the creator and governor of the world – not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who are elsewhere in Scripture identified as creating the world.” (Muller, *PRRD*, 4:246) Cf. John L. Mackay, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: God’s Restored People* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 2010), 362; Andrew E. Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 318.

<sup>14</sup> Mohler, *The Apostles’ Creed*, 10 (Kindle edition).

- *El Shaddai*, God Almighty:
  - Gen. 17:1, “When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]; walk before me, and be blameless.” (cf. Gen. 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; Exod. 6:3)
- *Shaddai*, Almighty:
  - Job 8:3, “Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right?” (cf. Job 5:17; 8:5; 13:3; 15:25; 22:17; 23:16; 27:2)
- In the LXX, *Shaddai* is often translated with the Greek word *pantokrator*, which is used in the NT to describe both the Father and the Son as Almighty, or “ruler of the universe” is another way it can be translated:
  - Rev. 1:8, “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’” (cf. Rev. 4:8; 11:17; 16:7, 14; 19:15; 21:22)
    - While Rev. 1:8 is referring to the Father as distinct from the Son, 15:3 and 19:6 seem to have the Son in focus (who is referred to as the Lamb in both of those passages).
  - “The God of Christianity is not just an ordinary god. He is the Father Almighty; the Father who can do anything [consistent with his nature]; the Father who possesses all power, the one who created by the power of his word and who rules forever.”<sup>15</sup>
  - J. I. Packer has said about the description “almighty,” “Does the adjective matter? Yes, a great deal. It points to the basic Bible fact that God is the Lord, the King, the omnipotent one who reigns over his world. Note the ecstatic joy with which God’s sovereign rule is proclaimed and praised in [the] Psalms... Men treat God’s sovereignty as a theme for controversy, but in Scripture it is a matter of worship.”<sup>16</sup>
    - He goes on to say, “The truth of God’s almightiness in creation, providence, and grace is the basis of all our trust, peace, and joy in God, and the safeguard of all our hopes of answered prayer, present protection, and final salvation.”<sup>17</sup>
- Now, that, “one God, the Father almighty,” is also, “Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible.”
  - Here we are introduced to one of the most fundamental realities of theology; the Creator-creature distinction.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 11 (Kindle edition).

<sup>16</sup> J. I. Packer, *Affirming the Apostles’ Creed* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 45.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>18</sup> Packer notes, “But the Creator-creature distinction reminds us that God does not depend on us as we depend on him, nor does he exist by your will and for our pleasure, nor may we think of his personal life as being just like ours.

- Asaph reminds us of this reality in Ps. 50:19-21, “You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.”
- The Creator must condescend to his creatures if we are to know him...
  - John Calvin has said, “And yet as [God] is incomprehensible he also fills the earth itself. But because he sees that our slow minds sink down upon the earth, and rightly, in order to shake off our sluggishness and inertia he raises us above the world... For who even of slight intelligence does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is wont in a measure to ‘lisp’ in speaking to us?”<sup>19</sup>
  - This is the grace of our Creator who created us to know and worship him.
- Now, when the creed affirms that the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth, we are not meant to read that as the Son and the Spirit were absent or passive in creation... it only takes a full reading of the creed to see that. All things, both visible and invisible, both on earth and in heaven, whether they be human beings or principalities and powers, all things come from the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit. Scripture does, however, often attribute the work of creation particularly to the Father.<sup>20</sup>
  - Eph. 3:8-9, “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things...”
    - This would have ruled out any form of Gnostic teachings that argued that the world was created by some lesser deity.
  - Heb. 2:10, “For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.”
- Albert Mohler, quoting in part from Martin Luther’s *Small Catechism of 1529*, has said, “God’s provision is perhaps never more sweetly summarized: I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my

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As creatures we are limited; we cannot know everything at once, nor be present everywhere, nor do all we would like to do, nor continue unchanged through the years. But the Creator is not limited in these ways.” (Ibid., 55)

<sup>19</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: Volume 1* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), 121.

<sup>20</sup> R. C. Sproul has noted regarding this passage, “In many places, Scripture attributes the work of creation particularly to the Father (see Eph. 3:9, for instance). However, the references to all three persons of the Holy Trinity and Their involvement in creation show us that while the work of creation may reveal the Father in particular, creation is something all three persons do in common [Gen. 2:4; Isa. 40:28; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-16].” (R. C. Sproul, “The Trinity and Creation”, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/trinity-and-creation/>, accessed on January 29, 2019)



mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. Do you so believe? We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”<sup>21</sup>

- “We believe in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible...”
  - We’ve covered some pretty deep material tonight, but like I mentioned last month, reciting the creed should make our hearts sing... so how does this first section of the Nicene Creed make our heart sing?
  - Take a look at your handout, because on page three you should have an extended question and answer from the Heidelberg Catechism printed out.
    - The question, question 26, is, “What do you believe when you say, ‘I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?’”<sup>22</sup>
    - The answer: “That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still upholds and rules them by His eternal counsel and providence, is my God and Father because of Christ His Son. I trust Him so much that I do not doubt He will provide whatever I need for body and soul, and He will turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this [beautiful but broken] world. He is able to do this because He is almighty God; He desires to do this because He is a faithful Father.”<sup>23</sup>
  - That answer comes from a proper understanding of what is meant when we say, “We believe in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible...”
    - The Father almighty, who is the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is our God and Father because of Christ his Son... that’s the beauty of Gal. 4:4-6. Through the work of Christ on our behalf and faith in him, we are adopted into the family of God, full heirs as sons and daughters of the King, the ruler of the universe, and we have been given the Holy Spirit who ministers to our spirit that we truly are children of the King.
    - Now, in our culture, and even within some segments of the church, there is a misconception about the fatherhood of God, which actually minimizes the beauty of God as Father. Kevin DeYoung has said:
      - “The old liberal credo made much of ‘the universal fatherhood of God.’ But as nice as it sounds, God is not the Father of all. He is God over all (even though many do not worship Him), and Lord over all (though many do not submit to Him), and in one sense He may be called the Father of all in that all people owe their existence to God. But in the deeper sense of the title – the way

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<sup>21</sup> Mohler, *The Apostles’ Creed*, 25 (Kindle edition).

<sup>22</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *The Good News We Almost Forgot: Rediscovering the Gospel in a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Catechism* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 54.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

Jesus used it – God is not the Father of all. He is only the Father to those who have Christ for their brother (Heb. 2:10-17). We are children of God, not by right of human birth but by virtue of divine adoption. It is those who receive Jesus and believe in His name who are given the right to be called children of God, children born not of the flesh but of God (John 1:12)... And it is only by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection we can receive 'the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!''"<sup>24</sup>

- Even more, our heavenly Father is almighty, and thus we trust him and do not doubt that he will provide whatever we need for our bodies and our souls, and that he will turn to our good whatever adversity he sends us in this beautiful but broken world...
  - No adversity, suffering, or pain we face has snuck up on God... no adversity, suffering, or pain we face got the better of him... no adversity, suffering, or pain we face is running roughshod over his promises and purposes... and if that's the case then all of those adversities, all of those sufferings, and all of those pains are under the sovereign hand of God Almighty and are accomplishing a peculiar glory for his people (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-18)...
    - He is able to do this because He is almighty God; He desires to do this because He is a faithful Father... therefore, we do not lose heart.
- May our hearts sing together, beloved, the next time we confess our one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth... Amen?

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 56-57.