



Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-10, 13-16 (NIV)

¹ Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible...

⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God...

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Background

- Christianity has its roots in Judaism.
- The first followers of Jesus were called Nazarenes, or followers of “The Way,” or Christians.
- By 4th century, Christianity had spread from Jerusalem to Europe in the west to Greece and Turkey in the east.
- Due to the vast distances and differences in cultures, arguments over theology and practice led to great conflicts.
- Bishops from all over the Roman Empire were called together to meet in the city of Nicea to hash out the essentials of the faith. The Nicene Creed was the result.
- Conflict continued around who would be the head of the church.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father, through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. Who with the Father is worshiped and gloried, who has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Background

- In 7th Century at a regional conference in Toledo, Spain, Western Christians added three words to the Creed without consulting the Eastern Christians.

*We 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 worshiped and glorified...*

- In 1054 A.D., Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael I excommunicated each other and all the other's followers!

Who are the Orthodox Christians?

- 2nd largest group of Christians – 200+ million
- Russian, Greek, Syrian, Polish, Albanian and others

How do Orthodox beliefs differ from Protestant beliefs?

- _____
- _____
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